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THE CAMBRIDGE  
BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS

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THE FIRST BOOK OF  
SAMUEL

EDITED BY

A.F.KIRKPATRICK.M.A.

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*GENERAL EDITOR*

J. J. S. PEROWNE, D. D.

DEAN OF PETERBOROUGH

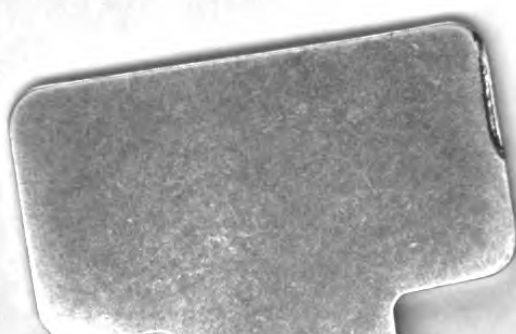






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**The Cambridge Bible for Schools.**

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THE FIRST BOOK  
OF  
SAMUEL.



**Cambridge :**

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# The Cambridge Bible for Schools

GENERAL EDITOR:—J. J. S. PEROWNE, D.D.,  
DEAN OF PETERBOROUGH.

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## THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL,

*WITH MAP, NOTES AND INTRODUCTION*

BY THE

REV. A. F. KIRKPATRICK, M.A.

FELLOW AND ASSISTANT TUTOR OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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EDITED FOR THE SYNDICS OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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MOSES and AARON among His priests,  
And SAMUEL among them that call upon His Name:  
They called upon the LORD and He answered them.



PREFACE  
BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE General Editor of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* thinks it right to say that he does not hold himself responsible either for the interpretation of particular passages which the Editors of the several Books have adopted, or for any opinion on points of doctrine that they may have expressed. In the New Testament more especially questions arise of the deepest theological import, on which the ablest and most conscientious interpreters have differed and always will differ. His aim has been in all such cases to leave each Contributor to the unfettered exercise of his own judgment, only taking care that mere controversy should as far as possible be avoided. He has contented himself chiefly with a careful revision of the notes, with pointing out omissions, with

suggesting occasionally a reconsideration of some question, or a fuller treatment of difficult passages, and the like.

Beyond this he has not attempted to interfere, feeling it better that each Commentary should have its own individual character, and being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.

DEANERY, PETERBOROUGH.

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\* \* The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH, YIELDING PLACE TO NEW,  
AND GOD FULFILS HIMSELF IN MANY WAYS.

THE GOODLY FELLOWSHIP OF THE PROPHETS PRAISE THEE.



## INTRODUCTION.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

1. *Titles and Division of the Books.* The two Books of Samuel, like the two Books of Kings, originally formed an undivided whole<sup>1</sup>. The Septuagint translators, regarding the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings as a complete History of the Kingdom from its foundation to its fall, divided the work into four books, which they styled *Books of the Kingdoms* (βίβλοι βασιλειῶν). Jerome followed this division in the Vulgate, altering the name to *Books of the Kings* (Libri Regum), which is retained as an alternative title in the English Bible. This division was first introduced into printed Hebrew Bibles by the Venice printer Bomberg in 1518.

2. *Meaning of the Title.* The title Samuel does not denote authorship, but like the titles Joshua, Ruth, and Esther, commemorates the prominent actor in the events recorded in the book. Its adoption shews a true insight into the connexion of the history it contains. It stands as a monument of the greatness of the Prophet who was Jehovah's instrument for establishing the Kingdom of Israel, and guiding the chosen people through

<sup>1</sup> The Masoretic note of the number of verses, &c., appended at the close of the Second Book in the Hebrew Bible, still treats the two books as one. Origen (quoted by Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 25. 3) mentions that the Jews of his day regarded Samuel as one book.

a crisis in its history second in importance only to the Exodus. The book begins with the account of his birth: and his direct influence extends to the close of it, in the reign of the king whom he anointed as Jehovah's choice.

3. *Who was the author of the Book of Samuel?* To this question no answer can be given. A late Jewish tradition ascribes the authorship to Samuel himself. This obviously could only apply to the first twenty-four chapters of the First Book, and as the work forms a connected whole, it is improbable that these in their present form proceeded from his pen. It is generally agreed that the Book is a *compilation* from different sources, but who was the compiler there is no evidence to shew.

4. *What then were these sources?* Ingenious attempts have been made to analyse the component parts of the book. But apart from these conjectural theories we have several indications of the sources from which the compiler drew his materials.

(a) The chief sources were probably *contemporary prophetic histories*. The compiler of the Book of Chronicles expressly names as the original authority for the history of David's reign 'the chronicle (lit. *words*) of Samuel the seer (*rôeh*) and the chronicle of Nathan the prophet, and the chronicle of Gad the seer (*chôzeh*).<sup>1</sup> It has been maintained that Samuel, Nathan and Gad were the subjects, not the authors of the works referred to. Even if this was so, it is evident that they contained much valuable material for the history of David's reign. But the corresponding reference to the original authorities for the history of Solomon's reign in 2 Chron. ix. 29 (among which the chronicle of Nathan the prophet is again mentioned), and the constant references to similar prophetic writings as authorities for the reigns of later kings<sup>1</sup>, make it almost certain that the three prophets mentioned were themselves the historians of the period.

<sup>1</sup> To the writings of Shemaiah and Iddo for the reign of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xii. 15): to the commentary (*midrash*) of Iddo for that of Abijah (2 Chron. xiii. 22). Isaiah is expressly said to have written the history of Uzziah's reign (2 Chron. xxvi. 22). See also 2 Chron. xx. 34, xxxii. 32, xxxiii. 18, 19.



It has been also maintained that the works referred to by the compiler of Chronicles actually were the present Book of Samuel. But it is evident that the document which he was using contained much more than these books, while at the same time certain sections of Samuel and Chronicles agree almost verbally. The most natural conclusion is that both compilers drew from the same authority, which the Chronicler expressly names. From this each felt at liberty to select such facts as bore upon the special object of his work.

If then the Book of Samuel was compiled largely from the chronicles of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, supplemented by other records preserved in the Schools of the Prophets, it follows that it rests upon the best possible authority. Samuel is the historian of his own life-time, which included the greater part of Saul's reign: Nathan and Gad together give the history of David's reign. The events of David's life must have been familiarly known in the Schools of the Prophets at Ramah. It is expressly mentioned that when he fled from Saul he "came and told Samuel all that Saul had done to him, and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth<sup>1</sup>," the college of prophets which Samuel had established at Ramah. To this intercourse may be referred the full and vivid account of David's friendship with Jonathan, preserved perhaps almost in the very words in which he related his story to the prophets.

An incidental notice suggests that Gad was the medium of communication between the college at Ramah and David during his outlaw life<sup>2</sup>; both Gad<sup>3</sup> and Nathan<sup>4</sup> appear to have occupied official positions in David's court; and both appear as his monitors in important crises of his life<sup>5</sup>.

(b) *The chronicles of king David* (1 Chron. xxvii. 24), which appear from this allusion to have been of the nature of statistical state-records, may also have been consulted. From them may have been derived the formal summaries of wars such as

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xix. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. xxii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Sam. xxiv. 11; 2 Chron. xxix. 25.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 2 ff., xii. 25; 1 Kings i. 8 ff.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 1 ff., xxiv. 11 ff.

are given in 2 Sam. viii. 1—15, and lists of officials such as those in 2 Sam. viii. 16—18, xx. 23—26, xxiii. 8—39.

(c) Express mention is made in 1 Sam. x. 25 of the fact that Samuel committed to writing *the charter of the kingdom*, and “laid it up before the LORD,” possibly as an addition to the book of the Law.

(d) *The national poetic literature* was laid under contribution. From this were taken Hannah’s song (1 Sam. ii. 1—10); David’s lament for Abner (2 Sam. iii. 33, 34); David’s thanksgiving (2 Sam. xxii. = Ps. xviii.); the last words of David (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7). Whether these were preserved in writing or by oral tradition is uncertain: of David’s Lament for Saul and Jonathan it is expressly said that it was written in the “national anthology” known as the Book of Jashar (2 Sam. i. 18).

(e) *Oral tradition* may perhaps have supplied some particulars, though this must be a matter of conjecture.

#### 5. *At what date was the compilation made?*

(a) The language points to an early date. It is pure Hebrew, free from Aramaisms and late forms. Constructions which are common in the later books, *e.g.* Kings, are comparatively rare.

(b) Some time however had elapsed since the events narrated in the book had occurred. The explanation of archaic terms (1 Sam. ix. 9) and reference to obsolete customs (2 Sam. xiii. 18), as well as the use of the formula “unto this day” (1 Sam. v. 5, vi. 18, xxvii. 6, xxx. 25; 2 Sam. iv. 3, vi. 8, xviii. 18) indicate this. Moreover “no grand survey of a period and selection of its events, such as is demanded from the historian, is generally possible until the period itself has retired in some degree into the background<sup>1</sup>.”

(c) It must certainly have been after the death of David, since the whole length of his reign is mentioned (2 Sam. v. 5); and if the Septuagint text is correct, there are two allusions to events in the reign of Rehoboam. In 2 Sam. viii. 7 that version reads, “And Shishak king of Egypt took them when he came up against Jerusalem in the days of Rehoboam the son of Solomon:”

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, *Hist. of Israel*, I. 139.



and in 2 Sam. xiv. 27, "And she [Tamar] became the wife of Rehoboam the son of Solomon and bare him Abia."

(d) But even if these additions are not accepted as part of the original text, other indications point to a date not earlier than the reign of Rehoboam. The mention of "the kings of Judah" in 1 Sam. xxvii. 6 presupposes the separation of the kingdoms. The distinction between Judah and Israel in several passages<sup>1</sup> has been supposed to point to the same conclusion; but this cannot be pressed as evidence. The division which existed in the early part of David's reign was quite sufficient to account for it.

(e) On the other hand there is nothing in the book which points to a later date than this: and the conclusion may fairly be arrived at that the Book of Samuel was compiled substantially in its present form soon after the Division of the Kingdoms.

6. *The Canonicity of the book* has never been questioned. Its acceptance in the Christian Church rests upon the fact that it formed an integral part of those Jewish Scriptures, which were received by our Lord and His Apostles as "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Our Lord appealed to one of the narratives contained in it as teaching the great principle that the ceremonial law must give way to the law of mercy<sup>2</sup>: the Magnificat shews evident familiarity with the Song of Hannah: St Peter, St Stephen, and St Paul refer to the history contained in it<sup>3</sup>.

7. *The historical accuracy* of the book is remarkably borne out by the internal evidence. It is not to be denied that difficulties and discrepancies exist, which it is hard, perhaps impossible to explain or reconcile. But the forcible simplicity and grace of the narrative; the vividness with which the actors in

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xi. 8, xvii. 52, xviii. 16; 2 Sam. ii. 9, 10, iii. 10, v. 1—5, xix. 41—43, xx. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 3, 4; Mk. ii. 25, 26; Lk. vi. 3, 4. Note the phrase, "Have ye not read," a regular formula of reference to the Scriptures.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iii. 24, vii. 46, xiii. 20—22.

the various events stand out before us ; the minuteness of detail with regard to time and circumstance ; the accurate descriptions of places<sup>1</sup> ; all agree to confirm the conclusion arrived at in § 4, that the greater part of the work is derived from the testimony of eyewitnesses and contemporaries, and in many cases handed down to us in their actual words. The apparent inconsistencies are in fact an evidence that the compiler faithfully embodied the authorities he consulted, instead of harmonizing them into what might have seemed a more consistent whole.

8. *The text of the book* presents some interesting problems. Our materials for determining the text are :

(a) *The Hebrew MSS.* most of which are not older than the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. They all present substantially the same text. Two points must be mentioned in order to explain some of the notes. (1) Hebrew was originally written without vowels, except such long vowels as are represented by consonants. The present elaborate vowel system, stereotyping a traditional pronunciation and reading of the Old Testament, was not reduced to writing till about the seventh or eighth century A.D. (2) In some passages the traditional method of *reading* (Qrî) did not agree with the consonants of the *written text* (Kthîbh). In such cases the scribes did not alter the text, but appended a note giving the consonants to be read with the vowels shewn in the text.

(b) *The Versions.* Of these the oldest and most valuable is the Greek Version commonly called the SEPTUAGINT (Sept. or LXX), or Version of the Seventy Elders, because it was long believed to have been made by seventy or seventy-two elders despatched from Jerusalem to Alexandria at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus. But the document on which the story with its embellishments rests is now known to be a forgery, and all that can be asserted about the origin of the Septuagint is that it was made (1) at Alexandria, (2) at different times and by different hands, (3) during the third and second centuries B.C., (4) before written vowel-points had been added

<sup>1</sup> Remarkably confirmed by the recent surveys of Palestine. See e. g. the notes on 1 Sam. xiv. 4, xvii. 3.

to the text. The reference in Ecclus. xlvi. 19 to the Sept. version of 1 Sam. xii. 3 (see note there) proves that this part of the version was in existence before 150 B. C.

The two most important MSS. of the LXX containing the book of Samuel are the Alexandrine MS. (denoted by the letter A) written in the fifth century, and now preserved in the British Museum; and the Vatican MS. (denoted by the letter B) assigned to the fourth century, and preserved in the Vatican Library at Rome. The text of the former in the Book of Samuel has been corrected for the most part to agree with the existing Hebrew text: that of the latter differs considerably from it, and although disfigured by mistakes, glosses, marginal notes inserted in the text by ignorant scribes, and similar defects, appears to preserve evidence for an original text older and in some places more correct than the existing Hebrew recension<sup>1</sup>.

That the Hebrew text of Samuel is by no means free from errors is clear from internal considerations and from a comparison of the passages which exist in duplicate elsewhere. These, with the exception of 1 Sam. xxxi. (= 1 Chr. x. 1—12) belong to the Second Book, and need not be enumerated here. The principal readings in which the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew are mentioned in the notes, partly with a view to the criticism of the text, partly to exhibit the form of the text which was current in a great part of the Christian Church for many centuries after its first foundation.

This Version, with all its defects, must be of the greatest interest: (1) as preserving evidence for the text far more ancient than the oldest Hebrew MSS.: (2) as the means by which the Greek language was wedded to Hebrew thought, and the way prepared for the New Testament: (3) because it is the source of the great majority of the quotations made from the O. T. by the writers of the N. T.: (4) because it was the version in which the O. T. was studied by the fathers of the Eastern Church, and indirectly by those of the Western, until Jerome's

<sup>1</sup> The most important instance in which the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew text is discussed in Note VI. p. 241.

new translation (the Vulgate) superseded the Old Latin versions made from the Septuagint.

Next to the Septuagint must be mentioned the Chaldee or Aramaic Version known as the TARGUM<sup>1</sup> OF JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL. This was probably not reduced to writing before the middle of the fourth century A.D., though based on much earlier oral translations. It is for the most part an accurate version ; but in some passages it becomes a loose paraphrase, interspersed with comment, illustration, and fragments of Jewish tradition. A translation of the Targum of Hannah's Song is given in Note III. p. 236 as an example of this style of paraphrase.

Second in importance only to the LXX. is the VULGATE (*Versio vulgata*) or Latin Version made by ST JEROME (Hieronymus) directly from the Hebrew. This great work was commenced by him about the year A.D. 389 when he was already sixty years of age, and took fourteen years to complete. The Books of Samuel and Kings were the part first issued. It is a valuable evidence for the state of the Hebrew text in the fourth century, and proves that that text has suffered comparatively little change since. Many of the variations found in the editions of the Vulgate are really interpolations from the Old Latin Version, which as mentioned above was made from the LXX. Jerome's work "remained for eight centuries the bulwark of Western Christianity ; and as a monument of ancient linguistic power the translation of the O. T. stands unrivalled and unique."

<sup>1</sup> *Targum* signifies *interpretation* or *translation*.



## CHAPTER II.

## ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

## PART I.

## THE CLOSE OF THE THEOCRACY: I.—VII.

DIVISION I. **The early life of Samuel: i.—iv. 1 a.**Section 1. *Samuel's birth and infancy.*

- (1) Samuel's parents .....i. 1—8.
- (2) Hannah's prayer and its answer .....i. 9—20.
- (3) Samuel's dedication .....i. 21—28.
- (4) Hannah's Song of Thanksgiving.....ii. 1—11.

Section 2. *Samuel at Shiloh.*

- (1) The faithless priests .....ii. 12—17.
- (2) Samuel's ministry in the Tabernacle .....ii. 18—21.
- (3) Eli's fruitless expostulations with his sons.....ii. 22—26.
- (4) The doom of Eli's house and the calling  
of a faithful priest foretold by the man of  
God .....ii. 27—36.
- (5) The call of Samuel .....iii. 1—10.
- (6) The message to Eli .....iii. 11—18.
- (7) Samuel established as a prophet .....iii. 19—iv. 1 a.

Note (a) the contrast throughout between Samuel and the sons of Eli; (b) Samuel's steady growth; (c) Eli's weak though amiable character; (d) the decay of religion.

DIVISION II. **The period of national disaster: iv. 1 b—vii. 1.**Section 1. *Judgment on the nation and the house of Eli.*

- (1) Defeat of the army and loss of the ark.....iv. 1 b—11.
- (2) The doom of Eli's house.
  - (a) Death of Eli's sons .....iv. 11.
  - (b) Death of Eli. ....iv. 12—18.
  - (c) Death of Eli's daughter-in-law.....iv. 19—22.

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- (1) Chastisement of the Philistines .....v. 1—12.
- (2) Their resolution to restore the Ark .....vi. 1—9.
- (3) Return of the Ark.....vi. 10—18.
- (4) The penalty of irreverence .....vi. 19, 20.
- (5) Settlement of the Ark at Kirjath Jearim .....vi. 21—vii. 1.

Note (a) the punishments of sin; (b) Jehovah's defence of His Ark; (c) religious apathy of the people; (d) no mention of Samuel in this period.

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- (2) Rout of the Philistines at Ebenezer .....vii. 7—12.
- (3) Summary account of Samuel's judicial activity vii. 13—17.

Note (a) the brevity of this account, because the narrative is hastening on to Samuel's chief work; (b) restoration of religious, political, social life implied, though not fully recorded; (c) Samuel the last of the Judges.

## PART II.

## THE FOUNDATION OF THE MONARCHY : VIII—XXXI.

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- (1) Misgovernment of Samuel's sons, and consequent request of the people .....viii. 1—5.
- (2) Jehovah's answer .....viii. 6—9.
- (3) Description of an Oriental Despot.....viii. 10—18.
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- (2) His search for the asses .....ix. 3—10.
- (3) He inquires for Samuel .....ix. 11—14.
- (4) He is entertained by Samuel .....ix. 15—24.
- (5) He is anointed by Samuel, and promised three signs in confirmation of his call .....ix. 25—x. 8.
- (6) Fulfilment of the signs .....x. 9—16.

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- (1) The assembly at Mizpeh .....x. 17—19.
- (2) Saul chosen by lot .....x. 20—23.
- (3) Installation of Saul as king .....x. 24—27.

Note (a) Samuel's self-abnegation; (b) the wilfulness of the people; (c) the king after the people's heart.

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- (2) Saul's disobedience and its penalty .....xiii. 8—14.
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- (5) Jonathan's exploit at Michmash.....xiv. 1—15.
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Section 4. *The rejection of Saul.*

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- (2) The penalty of disobedience .....xv. 10—23.
- (3) The kingdom rent from Saul .....xv. 24—31.
- (4) The execution of Agag.....xv. 32, 33.
- (5) Samuel's parting from Saul.....xv. 34, 35.

Note (a) the gradual development of Saul's wilfulness; (b) Saul's superstitious formalism; (c) the miserable condition of the nation; (d) Samuel's continued prophetic labours.

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<sup>1</sup> On the sections in brackets see Note VI. p. 241.



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     (c) Saul's momentary remorse.....xxiv. 16—22.  
 (8) Samuel's death and burial .....xxv. 1.  
 (9) Nabal and Abigail.  
     (a) Nabal's churlish folly .....xxv. 2—13.  
     (b) Abigail's timely prudence.....xxv. 14—35.  
     (c) The death of Nabal .....xxv. 36—38.  
     (d) Abigail's marriage to David .....xxv. 39—44.  
 (10) Saul's fresh pursuit of David.  
     (a) Treachery of the Ziphites .....xxvi. 1—4.  
     (b) Saul's life again spared by David ...xxvi. 5—12.  
     (c) David's final expostulation with Saul xxvi. 13—25.  
 (11) David as a Philistine vassal.  
     (a) His flight to Achish .....xxvii. 1—4.  
     (b) His residence at Ziklag .....xxvii. 5—7.  
     (c) His raids on the neighbouring tribes...xxvii. 8—12.

Note (a) David's providential escapes; (b) his growing power and influence; (c) his generosity towards Saul; (d) Saul's continuous hardening.

Section 6. *The last scenes of Saul's life.*

- (1) The Philistine muster .....xxviii. 1, 2.
- (2) Saul resorts to the witch of Endor.....xxviii. 3—25.
- (3) David's dismissal from the Philistine army ...xxix. 1—11.
- (4) David finds Ziklag plundered .....xxx. 1—6.
  - (a) The pursuit .....xxx. 7—15.
  - (b) The rescue .....xxx. 16—20.
  - (c) The distribution of the spoil .....xxx. 21—31.
- (5) The battle of Gilboa.
  - (a) Death of Saul and his sons .....xxxi. 1—6.
  - (b) Exposure of their bodies .....xxxi. 7—10.
  - (c) Their rescue and burial by the men of  
Jabesh.....xxxi. 11—13.

Note (a) Saul's final desertion by Jehovah; (b) David's providential escape from a perilous dilemma.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

1. The period covered by the First Book of Samuel is little less than a century. It nearly coincides with the life of Samuel, whose death did not long precede that of Saul. There is no systematic chronology, and the arrangement of the dates depends in great measure upon conjecture.

2. The earlier part of the period coincides with part of the Book of Judges. The 20 years of Samson's judgeship (Jud. xv. 20) may have been simultaneous with the last 20 years of Eli's life, and in all probability the Philistine oppression of 40 years mentioned in Jud. xiii. 1 was that which was brought to an end by the battle of Ebenezer (1 Sam. vii. 12, 13).

3. Samuel's judgeship must have lasted some time, and a further period must be allowed for the development of his sons' misgovernment. His life lasted till nearly the end of Saul's

reign. David's flight to Naioth (1 Sam. xix. 18 ff.) cannot have been many years before the battle of Gilboa.

4. If the 40 years named by St Paul<sup>1</sup> in Acts xiii. 21 is to be taken as a trustworthy Jewish tradition of the length of Saul's reign (or that of his dynasty, Saul  $32\frac{1}{2}$  + Ishbosheth  $7\frac{1}{2}$ ), a considerable period at the beginning of Saul's reign must be passed over in silence. Even if a shorter reign is assumed, this is probably the case.

(a) David was 30 years old at his accession (2 Sam. v. 4). He cannot have been much less than 20 when he fought with Goliath, so that about 10 years is all that can be assigned to the period of Saul's reign after David's introduction. We may conjecture that 4 years were spent in Saul's service, and 4 years in outlaw life. He was 16 months in Philistia (1 Sam. xxvii. 7), and perhaps a short time elapsed between Saul's death and his coronation at Hebron.

(b) Saul appears to have been a young man at the time of his election. But in the Philistine war of chaps. xiii., xiv., his son Jonathan is already a trusted warrior (1 Sam. xiii. 2), 20 years old at least. The impression produced by the narrative is that he was not much older than David, and this is corroborated by the fact that his son Mephibosheth was only 5 years old at the time of his death (2 Sam. iv. 4).

The natural inference is that a period of at least 10 or 15 years is passed over in silence between ch. ix. and ch. xiii.

This interval allows time for the development of Saul's character. It would be strange indeed that he should at once flatly disobey the prophet to whom he owed his elevation (1 Sam. xiii. 8 ff.): but if some time had elapsed since his election, the act becomes much more intelligible.

5. Those who place the events of 1 Sam. xiii., xiv., at the beginning of Saul's reign, must assume that he was at least 40 years old at his accession, and that his reign did not last more than 20 years at the most.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* vi. 14. 9, makes the same statement, adding however that he reigned 18 years during the lifetime of Samuel, and 22 years after his death, which does not agree with the facts of the history.

6. The following table is suggested as a conjectural arrangement of the dates, reckoning back from 1055 as the date of David's accession.

|   | B.C.      |
|---|-----------|
| Birth of Samuel . . . . .                       | 1149      |
| Call of Samuel at the age of 12 . . . . .       | 1137      |
| Death of Eli . . . . .                          | (?) 1127  |
| Philistine oppression (1 Sam. vii. 1) . . . . . | 1127—1107 |
| Samuel's judgeship (? 18 years) . . . . .       | 1107—1089 |
| Rule of Samuel's sons (? 10 years) . . . . .    | 1089—1079 |
| Saul's election . . . . .                       | 1079      |
| David's anointing . . . . .                     | 1065      |
| Samuel's death, at the age of 90 . . . . .      | (?) 1059  |
| Saul's death and David's accession . . . . .    | 1055      |

Only 24 years are here assigned to Saul's reign. If the longer period of 32 or 40 years is taken, it must be done by curtailing the judgeship of Samuel and his sons, or by placing Samuel's birth earlier and lengthening his life. His death cannot be placed earlier, for the reasons pointed out in § 3.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PLACE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL IN THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

1. The Old Testament differs from ordinary histories (1) in its *subject*, because it is the history of the special training and discipline of God's chosen people: (2) in its *method*, because it is "a history of facts as God sees them referred to their true centre in Him, explained by His dealings with men, and His workings within them<sup>1</sup>:" or, in other words, its writers were inspired by God the Holy Ghost to discern the true significance of events, and to relate such parts of the national

<sup>1</sup> Barry's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 45.



history as should truly set forth the gradual evolution of God's purpose towards His people<sup>1</sup>.

2. The Old Testament is the history of a dispensation which was partial, progressive, preparatory. It can only be rightly understood in view of the great fact to which it looked forward. It must be studied as the record of the Divine Preparation for the Incarnation of the Son of God, which is the central event of the world's history, the hope of all humanity, the final revelation of God to the world<sup>2</sup>. "It does not simply *contain* prophecies of Christ: it *is* from first to last a prophecy of Him."

3. This preparation included three main elements which must be carefully traced in each successive epoch of Jewish history: (i) the discipline and training of the chosen nation of Israel that it might be "the home<sup>3</sup>" to which in "the fulness of the times" God might send His Son<sup>4</sup>; and the instrument by which the knowledge of God might be communicated to the world at large<sup>5</sup>: (ii) the gradual development under the various types of Priest, Prophet, and King, of the expectation of a Deliverer who should unite in himself all these offices, and be at once a Mediator, a Teacher, a Monarch: (iii) God's progressive revelation of Himself, "in many parts and in many fashions<sup>6</sup>," that men might at length be enabled to recognise "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ<sup>7</sup>."

We must examine how the period which we have to study in this book contributed to the preparation in each of these respects.

4. (i) The book of Samuel is the record of a most critical epoch in the training of the nation of Israel. To understand its significance a brief survey of their whole history is necessary.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Jewish arrangement the books of the Old Testament are divided into three classes: The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings: a division which is already recognised in Lk. xxiv. 44. It should be remembered that the so-called "historical books" of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings belong to the second group, and are entitled "The Former Prophets." True history is prophecy.

<sup>2</sup> There is a most suggestive sketch of the Preparation for Christianity in chap. I. of Prof. Westcott's *Gospel of the Resurrection*.

<sup>3</sup> John i. 11, *εἰς τὰ ἴδια*.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. iv. 4.

<sup>5</sup> John iv. 22.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. i. 1, *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Three great periods must be distinguished in the history of Israel; the Theocracy, the Monarchy, the Hierarchy; corresponding in some degree to the three divisions of the Old Testament, the Law, the Prophets, the Writings.

(a) *The Theocracy.* The history of the Jewish nation begins with Abraham, the friend of God, the father of the faithful, "the ancestor of all nations which have held a monotheistic belief practically." With him and with his family was made the first covenant of promise. In Egypt the family became a nation. The stern discipline of toil and suffering in the presence of their common enemy bound them together. The great signs and wonders of the Exodus declared their high destiny. At Sinai the covenant made with their forefathers was renewed, confirmed, and amplified to the nation. The Law was given as a schoolmaster for the childhood of the new-born nation, "a kind of external conscience" to train it to obedience. The Israelites entered Canaan, and the first part of the promise to Abraham was fulfilled.

But for a long time the nation seemed to make no progress. The period which intervened between the Entry into Canaan and the Life of Samuel was a time of anarchy and apostasy. The Book of Judges is a record of two centuries of national disintegration and religious declension. It was necessary, humanly speaking, in order that they might learn their weakness. They were unable as yet to bear the pure Theocracy, the direct government of God without the intervention of an earthly ruler. Some visible bond must be found to unite into a solid mass the scattered tribes which could not as yet be firmly bound together into one by the invisible tie of a common allegiance to Jehovah. Material and political means must prepare the way for the spiritual and religious end. Otherwise the nation must cease to exist, ground to pieces between the enemies which surrounded it on all sides. In order to make solid advance, retrogression was inevitable.

At this critical juncture God raised up Samuel, "a prophet second only to Moses," to guide the nation through this crisis in its existence, and effect the transition to the second stage of its education.

(b) *The Monarchy.* The sovereignty of a visible monarch was a declension from the ideal of the Theocracy. Yet a king might have been given by God in His own time as a necessary factor in the training of the nation. But the demand for a king, as made by the Israelites at this period, was the direct outcome of faithlessness. It was a defection from God. Nevertheless the request was granted. God first gave them a king according to their own ideal, that bitter experience might teach them lessons they would not otherwise learn: and then a king "after His own heart," a true representative of the Kingdom of God. In his hands such a monarchy as we may conceive might have been asked for without sin, fulfilled important purposes by consolidating the scattered tribes into a body strong enough to maintain its independence, thus saving the nation from destruction, and preserving it to fulfil its great destiny of blessing to the world.

(c) *The Hierarchy* at length took the place of the Monarchy and resumed the ideal of Theocracy. When the Kingdom fell, and the discipline of the Captivity had done its work, "the unity of a Church succeeded to the unity of a nation." The voice of prophecy ceased. In the absence of new revelations, the people pondered on the past, till at length "the time was fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God came."

5. (ii) In what respects did the period we have to study contribute to the formation and development of the Messianic expectation? The Law with its elaborate ritual of sacrifice had pointed forward to One who should be at once Priest and Victim, and make atonement for the sin of man. Now the Kingdom turned the national thoughts to the hope of a King who should reign in righteousness, and "have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth<sup>1</sup>." The kingdom of David and Solomon was a type of the kingdom of that Son of David to whom in the fulness of time was given in a spiritual reality the throne of His father David<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxii. 7, 8. Psalms ii., xlv., lxxii., cx. should be studied as illustrating the growth of the Messianic Hope in connexion with the kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> Lk. i. 32, 33.



It is in the book of Samuel that the title of Messiah, the LORD'S Anointed, the Christ, is first applied to the king<sup>1</sup>, whose visible majesty kindled prophetic hopes of a glorious future.

6. (iii) It remains to inquire how God's revelation of Himself was carried forward in this period. (a) One result of the establishment of the kingdom was the building of the Temple. As the king was a visible representative of the Divine government, so a centralised sanctuary testified to the unity of Him whom Israel worshipped, and both combined to present spiritual ideas in a fixed and definite shape. Monotheism was not, as has sometimes been wrongly said, an instinct of the Semitic races. The repeated idolatries of the Jewish nation prove the contrary. Only through long discipline and with constant relapses was the lesson learnt. The period of the Monarchy taught this truth in a visible and material manner, and when once learnt it was afterwards spiritualised by the destruction of the visible Monarchy and the discipline of the Captivity.

(b) Closely connected with the establishment of the Monarchy was the institution of the Prophetic Order. This was Samuel's second great legacy to his nation. By the agency of the prophets the Will of Jehovah was made known to men; new revelations of His character and His claims were communicated; the spiritual meaning of the Law was interpreted<sup>2</sup>.

(c) In this period was deepened the consciousness of the individual's personal relation to God. The intimate communing with Him in prayer and praise, which is characteristic of the Psalms of David, marks a new advance in the relation of man to God. Now was laid the foundation of that Psalter in which for all succeeding time men have found the expression and the echo of their deepest thoughts and highest aspirations.

7. To sum up briefly, the Monarchy preserved the existence of the nation, foreshadowed the kingdom of the Messiah, witnessed to the reality of the Divine government. At the same

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 10, where the Septuagint has *χριστός*. The same word both in Heb. and Greek is applied to the *high-priest* in Lev. iv. 5, 16, vi. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See further in chap. vi.



time Prophecy and Psalmody interpreted the past, spiritualised the present, stimulated hope for the future.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE LIFE AND WORK OF SAMUEL.

1. The Book of Judges closes with the significant remark, "In those days there was no king in Israel : every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. xxi. 25). The Book of Samuel opens with the birth of the Prophet who was raised up by the Providence of God to usher in a new regime which should reduce this chaos to order. Eli appears on the scene only so far as he is connected with the early life of SAMUEL.

2. Samuel's childhood saw the period of Jewish history which Josephus calls the Theocracy, closed with the overthrow of the Sanctuary at Shiloh<sup>1</sup>. The characteristics of the age of the Judges, with which that period ended, have been noticed above (ch. iv. § 4). It had been clearly demonstrated that the people were as yet unfit for so lofty a form of government. If the national life was to continue, a change must be effected. Samuel was the divinely appointed instrument of that change.

3. (i) *The Preparation.* The son given in answer to Hannah's prayers was dedicated to Jehovah before his birth. The training for his life-work began from his infancy. As soon as he could leave his mother, he was placed in Eli's charge at the Tabernacle in Shiloh. The holy childhood of the boy who "grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD and also with men" was a strange contrast and a sharp rebuke to the scenes of shame which desecrated the sanctuary. At the age of twelve (according to tradition) he received his first revelation from Jehovah, the stern message of doom against his foster-father's guilty house. The blow fell. The disastrous battle of Aphek

<sup>1</sup> As the fall of the Monarchy coincided with the destruction of the First Temple, and the final dispersion of the nation with that of the Second Temple. See Stanley's *Lectures*, 1. 328.

brought Israel once more under the Philistine yoke. The Ark was captured, and though sent back after a brief interval, remained unnoticed in a private house. The twenty years which followed are a blank in the history of the nation. The people appear to have abandoned themselves to despair, and sought a vain refuge in the worship of Baalim and Ashtaroth. During those twenty years God was training Samuel to be the Deliverer of His people. "All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD."

4. (ii) *The Reformation.* At length he broke the lethargy of despair, and summoned the nation to repent and return unto the LORD with all their hearts. He assembled them at Mizpah, and in one of those acts of intercession for which his name was famous<sup>1</sup>, he besought the LORD to pardon them. The Philistines, suspecting rebellion, marched against them. God once more fought for Israel, and the Stone of Help between Mizpah and Shen attested to posterity that the LORD'S Presence was once more among His people.

Now commenced Samuel's Judgeship. He established law, and order, and regular religious worship<sup>2</sup> in the land. No breath of slander could impeach the integrity of his administration. He has been called the Jewish Aristides.

5. (iii) *The Foundation of the Kingdom.* But his sons brought disgrace upon their father's age. Alleging their misconduct as the ostensible motive, the people came to Samuel and demanded a king. He felt that it was an act of ingratitude to himself: still more keenly did he feel that it was an act of unfaithfulness to Jehovah. In this strait he prayed for counsel. The answer came, "Make them a king." Why that sinful request was granted has been discussed above (ch. iiii. § 4). Here we are concerned with Samuel's conduct. It was a proof of his true greatness. Sharp as was the conflict of feeling when the request was made, as soon as he learned what the will of God was, he cheerfully obeyed it. Without

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xcix. 6. See note on ch. vii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. 1 Chr. ix. 22.

murmuring or questioning he acquiesced in being the instrument of his own deposition. He accepted the truth that

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,”

and prepared to guide the nation through this crisis of its history. So quietly was the change effected, that we scarcely realise the importance of the movement which developed the tribal confederacy of Israel into a regularly constituted monarchy.

6. (iv) *Samuel as prophet-counsellor*. Though Samuel had resigned his office of judge, he did not cease to exercise his function of prophet. He still stood by Saul to convey to him the messages of God, to counsel, to admonish, to rebuke. It must have been a bitter disappointment to watch that heroic heart with the seeds of so much that was noble and brave and hopeful, marred by growing self-will and impatience of restraint, from the first failure at Gilgal to the crowning act of disobedience in the matter of Amalek. He ceased not to intercede for Saul; he mourned for Saul: till at length he was sent to anoint a worthier successor to the king who had been tried and found wanting.

7. The establishment of the kingdom was but half the legacy which Samuel left to Israel. The age of the monarchy was to be the age of the prophets. From the time of Samuel onwards<sup>1</sup> till the voice of prophecy ceased with Malachi there was a regular succession of prophets, maintained by the institutions commonly known as the Schools of the Prophets. The character of these bodies, and the influence of the Prophets upon the nation, are discussed in Chapter vi.

8. Samuel, although only a Levite and not a Priest, performed priestly functions. He constantly offered sacrifice, and that in various places, though the Law prescribed that sacrifice should be offered by the priests and in one place only. This double anomaly is to be explained (*a*) by the exceptional character of Samuel's commission, and (*b*) by the exceptional

<sup>1</sup> “All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after” (Acts iii. 24).

circumstances of the age. (a) The sins of Eli's sons had so degraded the priesthood, that Samuel received an extraordinary commission to supersede the priesthood for a time. From the battle of Aphek till the middle of Saul's reign<sup>1</sup> we do not so much as hear of a priest. The prerogative of Aaron's family was in abeyance, and the high-priest's place was practically taken by Samuel<sup>2</sup>. (b) The existence of numerous places for religious worship was a result of the abandonment of Shiloh. The old centre ceased to exist with the fall of the old order of things (cp. § 2); the choice of a new one would have been premature before the new kingdom was firmly established.

9. Samuel passed to his rest in a good old age, followed by the universal reverence of the nation. "All the Israelites," says the narrative with peculiar emphasis, "were gathered together and lamented him<sup>3</sup>." "All had known him—the tall figure, mantle-clad, the long white locks, the reverend countenance—they should see them no more; no more hear that voice of wise counsel and of brave rebuke. Another mighty one had passed away; one who, like Moses and Joshua, had inaugurated a new dispensation; he too was gone—the great prophet, the gifted seer, the upright judge, the inspired hero, he had passed away: the very heart of the nation sighed out its loving, weeping requiem<sup>4</sup>."

10. So passed away one of the preeminent "Heroes of Hebrew History." The last representative of the old Judges, the first of the regular succession of Prophets, the inaugurator of the new monarchy, he occupied the most trying of all positions, to stand between the Old and the New, and to mediate successfully between them. He lived from one age into another, and threw his full sympathy—most difficult of achievements—into the wants of both periods. "Because in him the various parts of his life hung together without any abrupt transition; because in him 'the child was father of the man,' and his days had been 'bound each to each by natural piety,' therefore he was

<sup>1</sup> From 1 Sam. iv. to xiv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> See note on 1 Sam. ii. 35.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Wilberforce's *Heroes of Hebrew History*, p. 227.



specially ordained to bind together the broken links of two diverging epochs<sup>1</sup>."

His sublime figure stands out in the pages of Holy Writ as a signal example of Faith, of Patience, of Integrity, of Self-sacrifice, through a long and trying career, fulfilling the promise of those early days in Shiloh when "he grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PROPHETIC ORDER<sup>2</sup>.

1. Samuel was the Founder of the Prophetic Order. Individuals in previous ages had been endowed with prophetic gifts, but with Samuel commenced the regular succession of prophets<sup>3</sup> which lasted all through the period of the Monarchy, and did not cease until after the Captivity. The degeneracy into which the Priesthood had fallen during the period of the Judges demanded the establishment of a new order for the religious training of the nation.

2. For this purpose Samuel founded the institutions known as *The Schools of the Prophets*. The "company of prophets" at Gibeah (1 Sam. x. 10), and the scene at Ramah described in 1 Sam. xix. 18 ff., imply a regular organization. These societies are only definitely mentioned again in connexion with the history of Elijah and Elisha<sup>4</sup>, but doubtless continued to exist in the interval. By means of these the Order was maintained. Students were educated, and common religious exercises nurtured and developed spiritual gifts (1 Sam. xix. 20). But it was not all members of the Order who possessed special prophetic gifts;

<sup>1</sup> Stanley's *Lectures*, I. 350.

<sup>2</sup> See Stanley's *Lectures*, vol. I., Lect. XIX.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iii. 24.

<sup>4</sup> They existed at Bethel (2 Kings ii. 3), Jericho (2 Kings ii. 5), Gilgal (2 Kings iv. 38). Cp. 2 Kings vi. 1, 2.

nor was it among them only that the gifts of inspiration were to be found (Amos vii. 14).

3. The value of the Prophetic Order to the Jewish nation was immense. The prophets were the privy-councillors of kings, the historians of the nation, the instructors of the people. It was their function to be preachers of righteousness to rich and poor alike: to condemn idolatry in the court, oppression among the nobles, injustice among the judges, formality among the priests. They were the interpreters of the Law, who drew out by degrees the spiritual significance which underlay ritual observance, and laboured to prevent sacrifice and sabbath and festival from becoming dead and unmeaning forms. Strong in the unshaken consciousness that they were expressing the divine will, they spoke and acted with a fearless courage which no threats could daunt or silence.

Thus they proved a counterpoise to the Despotism of Monarchy and the Formalism of Priesthood. In a remarkable passage in his *Essay on Representative Government*, Mr J. S. Mill attributes to their influence the progress which distinguished the Jews from other Oriental nations. "The Jews," he writes, "had an absolute monarchy and a hierarchy. These did for them what was done for other Oriental races by their institutions—subdued them to industry and order, and gave them a national life. But neither their kings nor their priests ever obtained, as in those other countries, the exclusive moulding of their character. Their religion gave existence to an inestimably precious institution, the Order of Prophets. Under the protection, generally though not always effectual, of their sacred character, the Prophets were a power in the nation, often more than a match for kings and priests, and kept up in that little corner of the earth the antagonism of influences which is the only real security for continued progress<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Mill's *Representative Government*, pp. 41, 42.

## CHAPTER VII.

## SAUL.

1. "Amongst all the noble creations of Greek poetry there is no single figure more vividly portrayed than is that of Saul the son of Kish, as he stands before us in the inspired records of Israel.

Every line of his character is as fresh as if he lived yesterday; there is the grand hero-like beauty of his early manhood, the lofty stature, the strong arm, the unflinching nerves, the quick eagle-eye of the successful general, the generosity to unworthy opponents, which makes success so graceful and imperial command so easy to endure<sup>1</sup>."

2. With picturesque detail the narrative describes the circumstances—apparently accidental, really providential—which led him into the presence of the great prophet who was commissioned to anoint him to be captain over God's people (1 Sam. ix. 3). The predicted signs which met him on his homeward path indicated that common cares were now to cease (x. 2), offered an earnest of the homage that awaited him (x. 3, 4), and gave him assurance of divine inspiration to fit him for his new calling (x. 5, 6; 9—13).

A formal election by lot ratified the prophet's choice. For a brief space the new king returned to his old occupations; but soon the savage threat of Nahash goaded him to action, and the rescue of Jabesh confirmed his title to the kingdom. In a second assembly at Gilgal his reign was inaugurated afresh with solemn ceremony (xi. 15).

3. It seems most probable that we have no record of the first part of Saul's reign, and that it was not until ten or fifteen years had elapsed, that the war of independence against the Philistines began. In it there appear all too plainly the signs of that rashness and self-will which proved his ruin. (a) At

<sup>1</sup> Wilberforce's *Heroes of Hebrew History*, p. 229.

the outset in defiance of Samuel's express command he failed to wait for his arrival at Gilgal to sanction the commencement of the war. Wherein lay the sin of this conduct? It was a forgetfulness *from* whom he held and *for* whom he wielded all his power. It was a transgression of the fundamental principle of the new monarchy, that the king was to be subject to the will of God as communicated by the Prophet. It was the act of a superstition which inverted the true order, and reckoned sacrifice better than obedience. (b) Later on his rash vow on the battle-field nearly cost Jonathan his life, hindered the effectual pursuit of the Philistines, and tempted the people into sin.

4. The warlike character of his whole reign is proved by the brief summary given in 1 Sam. xiv. 47. But only those wars are related at length which bear directly on the history of his own downfall and the rise of David.

The warning of Gilgal was unheeded, and when the crowning trial of his life came in the commission to smite Amalek, he failed miserably. The sentence which discrowned him was pronounced, and from that day forward the clouds began to thicken round his path. "The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him" (1 Sam. xvi. 14).

5. At this juncture David was brought to court to soothe Saul's madness by his minstrelsy. The presence of one in whom as the years went on he could not fail to recognise the "man after God's own heart" who was to succeed to his throne, aggravated the disease. At one moment the demon of passion would gain the mastery, and a murderous hatred for the son of Jesse possess his mind; at another his generous and loving nature reasserted itself, and he saw in David a loyal servant and an affectionate son-in-law. But the madness grew worse. In his ungovernable fury he slew the priests of God, and massacred the Gibeonites, to whom the faith of Israel had been plighted. David was driven from his home to range as an outlaw in the mountains, and finally compelled to take refuge in the court of a heathen prince.

6. At length the end came. Deserted by God, Saul became



the prey of dark superstition, and sought counsel from one of those necromancers whom in his early zeal he had striven to extirpate. "All human history has failed to record a despair deeper or more tragic than his, who having forsaken God, and being of God forsaken, is now seeking to move hell since heaven is inexorable to him; and infinitely guilty as he is, there is something unutterably pathetic in that yearning of the dis-anointed king now in his utter desolation to change words once more with the friend and counsellor of his youth; and if he must hear his doom, to hear it from no other lips but his<sup>1</sup>." The last scene on Gilboa, when

"In the lost battle borne down by the flying,  
Where mingles war's rattle with the groans of the dying,"

the once brave hero's heart fails him, as he leans upon his spear, and he seeks death by his own hand, is a sad conclusion to a life which opened with such brilliant promise.

7. Saul's history is a stern warning of the fatal consequences of uncontrolled self-will, of the inevitable descent of an unrepentant heart from bad to worse, of the hopeless hardening which results from neglect to use grace given.

"There is no history," writes Archbishop Trench, "which as we read it brings home to us a stronger sense of this life as a life of probation: no history which makes us so vividly to realise the fact that God takes men and puts them in certain conditions to try them: to see how they will bear themselves under these conditions; how far they will profit by the opportunities for good, and resist the solicitations to evil which these will inevitably offer them<sup>2</sup>."

Yet in thinking of him we may surely follow the example set by David in his touching elegy, and dwell on the brighter aspects of his life, and forbear to pass a harsh judgment on one whom the victim of his malice could regard to the last with such warm affection<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Abp. Trench's *Shipwrecks of Faith*, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Shipwrecks of Faith*, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> See Maurice's *Prophets and Kings*, p. 32 ff.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## DAVID.

1. The life and character of David are presented to us with a completeness which has no parallel in the Old Testament. Not only have we a full biography of his outward life, written in all probability by the companions who shared his perils and his exaltation<sup>1</sup>, but the secrets of his inner life with its hopes and fears, its struggles and triumphs, are revealed to us in the outpourings of his heart preserved in the book of Psalms<sup>2</sup>.

In the First Book of Samuel we are concerned only with that period of his life which was the divine education for his future office. In this three stages are clearly marked.

2. (i) *Home life at Bethlehem.* The solitary hours spent by the shepherd lad on the hills of Bethlehem left a deep impress on his character. Even in that simple duty he was conscious of a divine call. He kept his flock as a charge from God. In conscious dependence upon God he knew no fear in the path of duty. "The solitariness of the life braced up his spirit and its dangers formed within him the habit of ready action based on simple trust in his God." This was the secret of the courage which emboldened him to face Goliath<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See ch. i. § 4 a.

<sup>2</sup> The Psalms connected with this period by their titles are: lix., "When Saul sent and they watched the house to kill him" (1 Sam. xix. 11—18): liv., when the Ziphites betrayed him to Saul (1 Sam. xxiii. 19 ff., or xxvi. 1 ff.): lvi. and xxxiv., on the occasion of his first flight to Gath (1 Sam. xxi.): lvii. and cxlii., "in the cave," either of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1), or Engedi (xxiv. 3): lii., on Doeg (1 Sam. xxii. 9): lxiii., in the wilderness of Judah (1 Sam. xxii. 5). Of these, lix. and xxxiv. are doubtful: lxiii. more probably belongs to his flight from Absalom.

We should probably add vii. (see on xxiv. 9) as written sometime during his outlaw life: vi. (?): xi., perhaps at Engedi: possibly xxxv. (cp. 1 Sam. xxiv. 9 ff.).

Psalms viii., xix., xxiii., xxix. reflect his early life, though perhaps not written till later.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. xvii. 32—37. See Wilberforce's *Heroes*, p. 239 ff. Maurice's *Prophets*, p. 40 ff.

Here he lived "with God and nature communing : " here

" The earth  
And common face of nature spake to him  
Rememberable things."

That spirit of the religious interpretation of Nature which breathes in Pss. viii., xix., xxix., was kindled as he gazed into the depths of the star-lit sky while he guarded his flock, or watched the splendours of an eastern sunrise, or heard the crashing thunder which is "the voice of Jehovah" reverberate among the rocks. The imagery of danger drawn from wild beasts reflects this period (Ps. vii. 2, xvii. 12, &c.). Here he acquired the skill in music which led to the transference to Saul's court with which the second period of his life begins. But before that change, the Anointing oil of the Prophet had already marked him out for his future dignity. The special gift of the Spirit of God had already begun to train him for that special task.

3. (ii) *Life at court.* The simplicity of shepherd life was now exchanged for the temptations of the court : the quiet experiences of youth for "the terrible discipline of flattery." The minstrel shepherd became the conqueror of the giant, the hero of Israelite song. A rapid promotion raised him successively to be a royal armourbearer, a successful captain, the king's son-in-law. Steadily he rose in favour with the people, but the growth of Saul's jealousy kept pace with the advance of popular good-will, till at length persecution drove him from the court, and the third period of his discipline commenced.

4. (iii) *Life as an outlaw.* At first he took refuge with Samuel in the prophetic school at Ramah. But a final test proved that reconciliation with Saul was impossible, and he fled by way of Nob to the court of Achish. Here his stay was brief and perilous : he soon escaped, and gathered a band of men about him in the cave of Adullam. For a time he seems to have crossed over into Moab, but returning to the land of Judah by Gad's direction, he wandered up and down, hunted from time to time by Saul. There is no continuous history of his life at this period ; only a series of scenes which illustrate his pro-

vidential escapes from the hand of his pursuer, his pious regard for the anointed king, the divine control which restrained him from hasty revenge.

Driven at length to flee the country, he established a miniature kingdom at Ziklag, where he practised himself and his men in the arts of war and peace. Once more God's care was manifested in extricating him from the perplexing dilemma into which his own conduct had brought him. This period of his life and the First Book of Samuel close simultaneously with the death of Saul and his sons on Mount Gilboa. All that concerns his reign belongs to the Second Book<sup>1</sup>.

5. This long and varied discipline was designed to fit David for the duties of the throne. His residence at Gibeah, surrounded by envious courtiers, developed his prudence: Saul's persecution tested his generosity and self-control: the perils of his wanderings strengthened his sense of dependence upon God.

His position as an outlaw chief trained him in knowledge and government of men: familiarity with the victims of Saul's misgovernment taught the future ruler to know the heart of his subjects, their sorrows, their wrongs, their crimes: even the residence in Moab and Philistia contributed to nurture larger sympathies which might fit him for his wider mission as king of Israel.

6. David is a striking contrast to Saul. With all his native generosity and courage, Saul had a hard and narrow heart. He was incapable of wide sympathy or deep contrition. David's heart was thoroughly human. The endless variety of his Psalms reaches through all the range of the emotions, has some affinity for every type of character. David fell into sin, but sincere penitence ever restored him to communion with God: Saul's regret for his sin was prompted by a fear lest he should be degraded in the eyes of his people<sup>2</sup>.

Saul's religion was a slavish formalism, leading to a super-

<sup>1</sup> The consideration of David as a type of Christ belongs to that period.

<sup>2</sup> Contrast 1 Sam. xv. 30 with 2 Sam. xii. 13 and Ps. li.



stitious fear. He never loved God. David "thoroughly believed in God as a living and righteous Being." "In all his works he praised the Holy One most high with words of glory; with his whole heart he sung songs and loved Him that made him<sup>1</sup>."

7. A sketch of this period of David's life would be incomplete indeed without mention of his friendship with Jonathan. The darkest days of trial were brightened by "the sunshine of that pure, disinterested love which has embalmed for all time the name of Jonathan." This deep love was based on a common faith. Jonathan like David found his strength in God. Their covenant was a "covenant of Jehovah<sup>2</sup>." Jonathan rejoiced in the prospect of David's advancement without a shadow of jealousy, because he saw it was God's will. No suspicion of selfishness tainted that noble friendship. The tenderness of the son in some measure effaced the hard treatment of the father: and when they fell together on the fatal field of Mount Gilboa, David could enshrine their memories together in the most touching requiem of the whole Bible. Yet perhaps Jonathan was "fortunate in a timely death<sup>3</sup>," and it was well that his anticipation of being "next to David" in his kingdom was not realised.

"Ah! had he lived before thy throne to stand,  
 Thy spirit keen and high,  
 Surely it had snapped in twain love's slender band,  
 So dear in memory;  
 Paul, of his comrade left, the warning gives,  
 | He lives with us who dies, he is but lost who lives<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus xlvii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. xiv. 6, 12; xx. 8.

<sup>3</sup> As Tacitus said of Agricola, "felix non vitae tantum claritate sed etiam opportunitate mortis," Tac. *Agric.* c. 45.

<sup>4</sup> J. H. Newman in the *Lyra Apostolica*.

The LORD shall judge the ends of the earth;  
And HE shall give strength unto HIS KING,  
And exalt the horn of HIS ANOINTED.



# THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED,

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

CH. I. 1—8. *Elkanah's household and devotion.*

**N**OW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of 1  
mount Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah, the son

CH. I. 1—8. ELKANAH'S HOUSEHOLD AND DEVOTION.

1. *Now]* **And.** The conjunction implies that the book of Samuel is a continuation of the history contained in the book of Judges which it immediately follows in the order of the Hebrew Bible, Ruth being placed among the Hagiographa.

*Ramathaim-zophim]* The name *Ramathaim* (= "the two heights") is found here only, and is no doubt another name for *Ramah* (= "the height") the birthplace (*v.* 19), residence (*vii.* 17), and burial-place (*xxv.* 1) of the prophet Samuel. Its site "is the most disputed problem of sacred topography." Probably it is to be placed either (*a*) at *Er-Ram*, a conical hill about 5 miles due north of Jerusalem, in which case it will be identical with Ramah of Benjamin (*Josh.* xviii. 25): or (*b*) at *Neby Samwil* (= "the prophet Samuel") a conspicuous eminence 5 miles N. W. of Jerusalem, on which is still shewn the traditional tomb of Samuel: or (*c*) at *Ram Allah*, east of Beth-horon on the western slopes of Mount Ephraim.

The epithet *Zophim* distinguishes the town from others of similar name, as *Ramathaim in Zuph* (*ix.* 5), a district probably named after Elkanah's ancestor, Zuph or Zophai (*1 Chr.* vi. 26).

Ramathaim is possibly the same as Arimathaea in the N. T. The form Armathaim in which it appears in the LXX. gives the link of connexion between the names.

*of mount Ephraim]* The central mountainous district of Palestine, in which the tribe of Ephraim settled (*Josh.* xvii. 15), was "a good land." The limestone hills are intersected by fertile valleys, watered by innumerable fountains, and still remarkable for their fertility. See Stanley's

of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of  
 2 Zuph, an Ephrathite: and he had two wives; the name of  
 the one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah:  
 and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.  
 3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and

*Sinai and Palestine*, p. 229, ff. The name extended southwards to the territory of Benjamin in which Ramah lay. Thus Deborah's palm tree was "between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim" (Jud. iv. 5).

*Elkanah*] In 1 Chr. vi. 22—28, 33—38, Samuel's descent from Kohath the son of Levi is given at length. *Shemuel* in v. 33 is the Hebrew form of the name for which the E. V. usually substitutes the Latinized form Samuel. The discrepancies in these genealogies may be partly due to corruptions of the text, partly to the same individuals bearing different, though in some cases synonymous, names.

*an Ephrathite*] The Levite Elkanah is called *an Ephrathite*, i.e. *Ephraimite*, because his family had originally belonged to the Kohathite settlements in the territory of Ephraim (Josh. xxi. 20). It is suggested in the *Speaker's Commentary*, that as Salmon, the 7th from Judah, entered Canaan with Joshua, Zuph, who was the 7th from Levi, according to the genealogy in 1 Chr., may very probably have lived at the time of the settlement of the land. The genealogy would naturally stop with the first settler in Canaan, who gave his name to "the land of Zuph" (ix. 5). If so, we must suppose that he at once migrated from the residence assigned him in the tribe of Ephraim.

2. *two wives*] Polygamy, though at variance with the original institution of marriage (Gen. ii. 24), was tolerated by the Mosaic law as an existing custom (Deut. xxi. 15—17), and the fact that Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, David and Solomon were all polygamists, shews that no moral blame attached to the practice in this period. It gradually became less frequent, and no case is on record in the Biblical history after the Captivity, but it was reserved for Christianity to re-establish the primeval ideal.

*Hannah*] i.e. "Grace." The same name is borne in the N. T. by "Anna, a prophetess" (Luke ii. 36): and according to tradition the wife of Joachim and mother of the Virgin Mary was named Anna. In the Phoenician colony of Carthage, where a language closely akin to Hebrew was spoken, the sister of the queen Dido was named Anna (Verg. *Aen.* iv. 9).

*Peninnah*] i.e. "Coral," or "Pearl." The name may be compared with our *Margaret*, which means *pearl*.

3. *yearly*] The Law required every male to present himself "before Jehovah" at the central sanctuary of the nation at each of the three great Feasts (Ex. xxxiv. 23; Deut. xvi. 16), but there is no evidence that this command was ever strictly observed, and Elkanah's practice was probably that of a pious Israelite of the time. "All his household" (v. 21) went with him, in obedience to the injunctions of Deut. xii. 10—12. To which of the Feasts he went up must remain a matter of

to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there. And when the time was that Elkanah <sup>4</sup> offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons

conjecture. Our Lord's parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover (Luke ii. 41).

*the LORD of hosts*] See Note I. p. 235, for a discussion of the meaning of this title.

*in Shiloh*] The position of Shiloh is defined with remarkable exactness in Jud. xxi. 19. It was in Ephraim, "on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." This agrees perfectly with the situation of the modern *Seilân*, which is about ten miles north of Bethel, and east of the main road. It is thus described by Lieut. Conder (*Tent Work in Palestine*, I. 82): "The ruins of a modern village occupy a sort of tell or mound. On the east and north the site is shut in by bare and lofty hills of grey limestone, dotted over with a few fig trees; on the south the plateau looks down on the plain just crossed. A deep valley runs behind the town on the north. Below the top of the hill there is a sort of irregular quadrangle. The rock has here been rudely hewn in two parallel scarps for over 400 feet, with a court between, 77 feet wide, and sunk 5 feet below the outer surface. Thus there would be sufficient room for the court of the Tabernacle in this area."

Here in the territory of the most powerful tribe, in the heart of the promised land, the whole congregation of Israel met and set up the Tabernacle of the congregation, the last relic of their wanderings in the desert (Josh. xviii. 1). The name is appropriate. Shiloh signifies "Rest." Shiloh continued (with temporary exceptions, see e.g. Jud. xx. 27) to be the religious centre of the nation, "the place which Jehovah had chosen to put his name there," until after the loss of the Ark in the disastrous battle of Ebenezer. Possibly it was destroyed or occupied by the Philistines: at any rate it ceased to be the national sanctuary. Samuel sacrificed at Mizpeh, at Ramah, at Gilgal, never, so far as we read, at Shiloh. The tabernacle was removed to Nob (I Sam. xxi.), and the once holy place was utterly desecrated. Jeremiah points to its desolation as the standing witness of God's judgments. "Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel" (Jer. vii. 12).

*And the two sons*] Better, **And Eli's two sons Hophni and Phinehas were there priests to Jehovah.** They are mentioned rather than their father because in his old age he had resigned the active duties of his office to them. The name Hophni occurs nowhere else in the O. T.: for Phinehas it was reserved to sully the honour of one of the most illustrious names in Israel, borne by him whose bold act of judgment "was counted unto him for righteousness" (Ps. cvi. 30, 31).

<sup>4</sup>. *offered*] **sacrificed**, as in v. 3. His sacrifice was a thank-offering, L



5 and her daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had  
 6 shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up  
 7 her womb. And *as* he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; there-  
 8 fore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I better to thee than ten sons?

9—20. *Hannah's Prayer and its answer.*

9 So Hannah rose up after *they* had eaten in Shiloh, and after *they* had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat

for it was only of the thank-offerings that the worshippers partook (Lev. vii. 11—18).

*he gave*] The tenses in vv. 4—7 express *repeated* action: “**he used to give**: her adversary **used to provoke her**.”

*portions*] Of the victims sacrificed. Cp. ix. 23.

5. *a worthy portion*] Lit., *one portion for two persons*: **a double portion**. If the text is sound, this seems to be the best explanation of an obscure expression. Elkanah marked his love for Hannah by giving her a double portion. Similarly Joseph distinguished Benjamin by sending him a fivefold portion (Gen. xlii. 34). But the Sept. points to a different reading which would give the following sense: “And to Hannah he gave a single portion, because she had no child: nevertheless Elkanah loved Hannah most: but the Lord had shut up her womb.”

*had shut up her womb*] Hannah's faith might have been strengthened by the recollection that Sarah (Gen. xvi. 1), Rachel (Gen. xxx. 1), Manoah's wife (Jud. xiii. 2), all had to bear the reproach of childlessness for a time, and all eventually bore illustrious sons.

6. *her adversary*] Peninnah. The cognate verb is used in Lev. xviii. 18, “Thou shalt not take a wife to her sister *to vex her*.”

7. *as he did so*] Peninnah's spitefulness was evoked by the display of Elkanah's affection. Exultation at another's misfortune is one of the most detestable forms of malice.

*did not eat*] Refused to take any part in the rejoicings of the sacrificial feast.

8. *better to thee than ten sons*] Cp. Ruth iv. 15.

9—20. HANNAH'S PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER.

9. *So Hannah rose up*] Simply **And**. Hannah left the feast for which she had not heart, and went to pray.

*Eli the priest*] Eli belonged to the house of Ithamar Aaron's fourth

by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she *was* in <sup>10</sup> bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, <sup>11</sup> if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him

son, as is clear from a comparison of 1 Chr. xxiv. 3 with 2 Sam. viii. 17 and 1 Kings ii. 27, and from the omission of his name in the genealogy of Eleazar in 1 Chr. vi. 4—15. The last high-priest mentioned before him was Phinehas the son of Eleazar (Jud. xx. 28); but when or why the succession passed into the family of Ithamar, we are not told. The office did not return to the line of Eleazar until Solomon deposed Abiathar in fulfilment of the doom pronounced upon the house of Eli, and appointed Zadok in his place (1 Kings ii. 27). Eli united the offices of Priest and Judge.

*upon a seat by a post of the temple*] Rather, “upon the seat (or, his seat) by the doorpost of the temple.” “The sanctuary itself was so encased with buildings, as to give it the name and appearance of ‘a house’ or ‘temple.’ There was a gateway with a seat inside the doorposts or pillars which supported it. It was ‘the seat’ or ‘throne’ of the ruler or judge, as afterwards in the Palace of Solomon. Here Eli sat on days of religious or political solemnity, and surveyed the worshippers as they came up the eminence on which the sanctuary was placed.” Stanley’s *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, I. 321.

*the temple*] The Heb. word denotes a *spacious and stately building*: hence (a) a royal palace; (b) the temple; (c) heaven, as the true temple of Jehovah. It is applied to the *tabernacle* only here and in iii. 3, and possibly in Ps. v. 7. Its use in the present passage may indicate that the book was written at a time when the religious nomenclature had been coloured by the construction of Solomon’s temple.

**11.** *vowed a vow*] The law of vows, with special limitations in the case of married women, is given in Num. xxx.

*look on the affliction of thine handmaid*] The rendering of the LXX. “If thou wilt indeed regard the low estate of thine handmaiden” (ἐὰν ἐπιβλέπων ἐπιβλέψῃς ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῆς δούλης σου) gives the words adopted by the Virgin Mary (Luke i. 48).

*I will give him*] The vow is twofold, involving (1) the *lifelong* consecration of the child to the service of Jehovah, for as a Levite he would serve from the age of 25 or 30 to 50 only, and very possibly at this time many Levites, e.g. Elkanah himself, had no official duties: (2) the special Nazirite vow, the characteristics of which were (a) abstinence from intoxicating drinks, as an act of self-denial and a protest against sensual indulgence: (b) the free growth of the hair, symbolizing apparently the complete dedication of all the man’s powers to Jehovah: (c) the avoidance of defilement by a dead body, as a token of absolute purity of life. See Num. vi. The vow was usually taken for a limited time



unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no  
 12 razor come upon his head. And it came to pass, as she  
 continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her  
 13 mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her  
 lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli  
 14 thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her,  
 How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from  
 15 thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am*  
 a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine  
 nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the  
 16 LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial:  
 for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I

only, but Samson, Samuel, and St John the Baptist were dedicated to a perpetual Nazirate from their birth.

12. *continued praying*] Lit. "multiplied to pray," i.e. "prayed long and earnestly."

13. *Eli thought she had been drunken*] Silent prayer was not usual at the time. Eli's ready suspicion makes it probable that such excesses were not uncommon at the sacrificial feasts. His hasty and uncharitable judgment points to some of the defects of his character.

15. *of a sorrowful spirit*] Lit. "heavy of spirit." "Consider the modesty of Hannah, who, though she suffered injury from the High Priest, nevertheless answers with reverence and humility." *Calvin*.

16. *a daughter of Belial*] Rather, **a worthless, or, wicked woman**. Our translators have wrongly treated this word as a proper name in the historical books, but not elsewhere, though the alternative is generally given in the margin. It means *worthlessness*, and according to the usual Hebrew idiom *a son or daughter of worthlessness* signifies "a worthless man or woman," and with positively bad sense, a lawless, ungodly, wicked person. If "naughty," by which the word is rendered in Prov. vi. 12, had retained its archaic sense, it would be a fair equivalent. "Belial," or more correctly "Beliar," is used by St Paul in 2 Cor. vi. 15 as a name of Satan, the personification of all lawlessness and worthlessness. Milton naturally follows the E. V. in regarding Belial as the name of a spirit.

"Belial, than whom a spirit more lewd  
 Fell not from heaven, ... to him no temple stood,  
 Or altar smoked, yet who more oft than he  
 In temples and at altars, when the priest  
 Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled  
 With lust and violence the house of God."

*Paradise Lost*, I. 490, ff.

*grief*] Lit. "provocation" (cp. v. 6), or "vexation" as the consequence of provocation.

spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in <sup>17</sup> peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid <sup>18</sup> find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*. And they <sup>19</sup> rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was <sup>20</sup> come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

21—28. *Samuel's infancy and dedication to Jehovah.*

And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to <sup>21</sup> offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But <sup>22</sup> Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring

18. *grace*] i.e. **favour**, as in xxv. 8.

19. *the LORD remembered her*] Cp. Gen. xxx. 22.

20. *Wherefore*] Simply **And**.

*to Ramah*] See note on Ramathaim-Zophim in v. 1.

*Samuel*] This name, in Hebrew *Shemuel*, is familiar to us only in its Latin dress. It was borne by two other persons in the O. T. (Num. xxxiv. 20; 1 Chr. vii. 2). Three explanations of it are proposed: (a) "Name of God": (b) "Asked of God": (c) "Heard of God": of which the last is the most probable; compare *Ishmael* = "God heareth." Hannah gives the child a name which will be a continual memorial of God's answer to her prayer. It found a subsequent appropriateness in the fervency and efficacy of his own prayers.

21—28. SAMUEL'S INFANCY AND DEDICATION TO JEHOVAH.

21. *his vow*] This assumes that Elkanah as well as Hannah had made a vow. The Sept. reads "his vows and all the tithes of his land." Cp. Deut. xii. 11.

22. *until the child be weaned*] He would then be two or three years old. It is still a common practice in the East to suckle children for two years: and in ancient times they were sometimes not weaned till three years old. See 2 Macc. vii. 27, "O my son, have pity upon me that gave thee suck three years and nourished thee." The weaning was made an occasion of festivity (Gen. xxi. 8). The objection has been made that so young a child would have been troublesome to Eli, but there were women engaged in the tabernacle service (ii. 22), to whose care he might have been committed. It was important that he should be

him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide  
 23 for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do  
 what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned  
 him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman  
 24 abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And  
 when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with  
 three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of  
 wine, and brought him *unto* the house of the LORD *in*  
 25 Shiloh: and the child *was* young. And they slew a bullock,

dedicated as soon as possible. The house of God was to be the only home he knew; the earliest impressions of his boyhood were to be those of the sanctuary.

*for ever*] Equivalent to "as long as he liveth" of v. 28.

23. *his word*] No express promise of a son has been mentioned; Eli's blessing in v. 17 can scarcely be understood as such. But Samuel's birth implied that Hannah's prayer was heard, and Elkanah prays that it may receive a complete fulfilment. The Sept. reads "The Lord establish that which is gone forth out of thy mouth."

24. *three bullocks*] We may conjecture that one was intended for a burnt-offering, one for the "sacrifice in performing a vow," and one for a peace-offering. See Num. xv. 8.

*one ephah of flour*] According to Josephus, the ephah contained about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  gallons, according to Jewish authorities about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  gallons. The smaller estimate is probably correct. Three tenth parts of an ephah of flour were to be offered with each bullock (Num. xv. 9) as a "meat-offering" (*minchah*).

*a bottle of wine*] i.e. a skin-bottle, which would hold a considerable quantity. The prescribed drink-offering with each bullock was half an hin of wine (Num. xv. 10), or about three pints, the *hin* being a sixth part of the *bath*, which was of the same capacity as the *ephah* (Ez. xlv. 11).

*the house of the LORD*] See note on v. 9.

*the child was young*] Lit. "the child was a child." The term is quite vague, and gives no clue to Samuel's age at the time. See however the note on v. 22.

25. *they slew a bullock*] **The bullock**; viz. the one which had been brought as a dedicatory offering with the child: the sacrifice of the others is taken for granted. We may try to picture the scene. Elkanah leads the bullock to the north side of the altar of burnt-offering, in the court before the door of the tabernacle, and binds it to the horns of the altar. Hannah brings her child, and lays his hand on the head of the victim in token that it is his representative; at that moment Elkanah or one of the priests slays it (Lev. i. 5). Its blood is sprinkled and its limbs burnt upon the altar, as an emblem of the complete dedication of the child to Jehovah.

The Sept. version differs widely from our present Heb. text, and



and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my lord, <sup>26</sup>  
*as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by  
 thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; <sup>27</sup>  
 and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of  
 him: therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long <sup>28</sup>  
 as he liveth he *shall be* lent to the LORD. And he worshipped  
 the LORD there.

describes the presentation of Samuel as combined with the yearly sacrifice. "And she went up with him to Selom with a bullock of three years old, and bread, and an ephah of fine flour, and a bottle of wine; and entered into the house of the Lord in Selom: and the child was with them." And they brought him near before the Lord: and his father slew the sacrifice, which he used to offer year by year unto the Lord. And he brought the child near and slew the bullock. And Anna the mother of the child brought him near to Heli, and said," &c. This may represent a different original text, or be a loose paraphrase.

**26.** *as thy soul liveth*] An oath peculiar to the books of Samuel and Kings.

*that stood by thee*] Prayer was offered either (a) *standing*, as by Hannah, and Abraham (Gen. xviii. 22): (b) *kneeling*, as by Solomon (1 Kings viii. 54), and by Daniel (Dan. vi. 10): (c) *prostrate*, as by Moses and Aaron (Num. xvi. 22), and by our Lord (Matt. xxvi. 39).

**28.** *therefore also, &c.*] Render, **And I on my part have given him to Jehovah as long as he liveth: because he was one asked for Jehovah.** The exact translation of the Heb. is doubtful, and the remarkable play upon words in it is lost in translation. But the general sense is clear: 'Jehovah gave me the child, and I restore him in accordance with my vow.' The word translated *lend* occurs elsewhere only in Ex. xii. 36, where it means *give* rather than *lend*. A loan may be reclaimed at the will of the lender. Hannah's surrender of Samuel was complete. See v. 11 and ch. ii. 20.

*he worshipped*] Who? Not Samuel, who was too young: but Elkanah, as head of the household, worshipped, while Hannah poured out her heart in the hymn which immediately follows. The Sept. however omits the words, and the Vulg. reads "And **they** worshipped the LORD there."

## CH. II. 1—11. THE SONG OF HANNAH.

Hannah's song is a true prophecy. She is inspired "to discern in her own individual experience the universal laws of the divine economy, and to recognise its significance for the whole course of the Kingdom of God." The deliverance from her proud adversary which had just been vouchsafed to her was but one instance of the great principles of Jehovah's moral government of the world, principles which receive their fullest illustration in the exaltation of the Lord's Christ through humiliation to victory, and which will only be fully realised when "the

CH. II. 1—11. *The Song of Hannah.*

- 2 And Hannah prayed, and said,  
 My heart rejoiceth in the LORD,  
 Mine horn is exalted in the LORD:  
 My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;

kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Hence it is that her own peculiar circumstances are so soon lost sight of in the wider view of the dealings of God's Providence. The failure to recognise this has led critics to deny the authenticity of the song, and to conjecture that some ancient triumphal war-pæan has been erroneously placed in Hannah's mouth by the compiler of the book.

A brief analysis will help to explain the connexion of thought.

"JEHOVAH is the sole author of my deliverance. He shall be the theme of my song.

There is none to be compared with Him for holiness, power, faithfulness: be silent before him, all ye proud boasters! He knows your thoughts and weighs your actions.

Observe the vicissitudes of human fortune: the haughty are humbled, the humble exalted: this is JEHOVAH's doing: for He is the Almighty Governor of the universe. He guides and guards His saints, and destroys the wicked.

May He finally discomfit his adversaries, judge the world, and establish the kingdom of His Anointed One!"

The Magnificat (Luke i. 46—55) should be carefully compared with Hannah's song, of which it is an echo rather than an imitation. The resemblance lies in thought and tone more than in actual language, and supplies a most delicate and valuable testimony to the appropriateness of this hymn to Hannah's circumstances. The 113th Psalm forms a connecting link between the two.

1. *And Hannah prayed*] This description of the Psalm is not inappropriate, for prayer includes thanksgiving and praise. Cp. the "prayer of Habakkuk" (Hab. iii. 1): and the "prayers of David" as a general designation of his psalms (Ps. lxxii. 20).

*rejoiceth*] **Exulteth** or **triumpheth**, a strong word.

*mine horn is exalted in the LORD*] = 'I am brought to great honour, and the author of that honour is Jehovah.' The *horn* is frequently used as a symbol (a) of *strength* (Deut. xxxiii. 17): (b) of *honour* (Job xvi. 15). "To exalt the horn" signifies "to raise to a position of power or dignity." Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 17, cxlviii. 14. The figure is probably derived from horned animals, tossing their heads in the air, and there is no allusion to the horns worn by women in the East at the present day. It is found in Latin poets, e.g. Ov. *A. A.* i. 239, "Tum pauper cornua sumit" = "plucks up courage."

*my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies*] "My mouth is **opened wide against** mine enemies;" I am no longer put to silence in their presence.



Because I rejoice in thy salvation.  
*There is none* holy as the LORD:  
 For *there is none* beside thee:  
 Neither *is there* any rock like our God.  
 Talk no more *so* exceeding proudly;  
 Let *not* arrogance come out of your mouth:  
 For the LORD *is* a God of knowledge,  
 And by him actions are weighed.  
 The bows of the mighty *men are* broken, 4  
 And they that stumbled are girt with strength.  
*They that were* full have hired out themselves for bread; 5  
 And *they that were* hungry ceased:



Cp. Ps. xxxviii. 13, 14. In ch. i. 7, 8 it is implied that Hannah made no answer to Peninnah's taunts.

*thy salvation*] Cp. Luke i. 47. "Salvation" in the O. T. means (a) *deliverance*, rescue from dangers or adversities of all kinds (ch. xiv. 45); (b) *help*, the power by which the deliverance is effected, whether divine or human (Ps. xxxv. 3).

2. *rock*] A frequent metaphor to describe the strength, faithfulness, and unchangeableness of Jehovah. See Deut. xxxii. 4; 2 Sam. xxii. 32.

3. *arrogancy*] The old form of the word *arrogance* (cp. *innocency* for *innocence*) from the Lat. *arrogantia*. It signifies "claiming more than one's due," "assumption," "pride."

*knowledge*] The Heb. word is plural, denoting *varied and extensive knowledge*.

*by him actions are weighed*] Jehovah knows the hearts of men and estimates men's actions at their true value. See Prov. xvi. 2, xxiv. 12. This explanation is probably right, but the Heb. may also be rendered, "**His** (i.e. God's) actions are weighed," or, "measured:" i.e. are just and right. Cp. the use of the same word in Ezek. xviii. 25, "Is not my way *equal*?" "By him" is the *Qrî* or traditional read text. (See p. 14.) The *Kthîbh* or written text has "not" instead of "by him," the words being similar in pronunciation though differently spelt. This may be rendered either, "though actions be not weighed," or interrogatively, "and are not actions weighed?"

4, 5. This knowledge and justice apportion to all their due, and reverse conditions of life contrary to all expectation. Sennacherib's host is annihilated: Gideon's handful triumphs.

4. *The bows of the mighty men are broken, &c.*] The bow was one of the chief weapons of war (2 Sam. i. 22). Its being broken is a natural symbol of defeat. "To be girded with strength" (Ps. xviii. 39) is a figure derived from the practice of "girding up the loins" in preparation for active exertion.

5. *ceased*] i.e. are at rest: need toil no more: or, cease to be hungry.

- So that the barren hath born seven ;  
 And she that hath many children is waxed feeble.  
 6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive :  
 He bringeth down *to* the grave, and bringeth up.  
 7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich :  
 He bringeth low, and lifteth up.  
 8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,  
*And* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill,  
 To set *them* among princes,  
 And to make them inherit the throne of glory :  
 For the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD'S,  
 And he hath set the world upon them.

*seven*] A perfect family. Cp. Ruth iv. 15.

*is waxed feeble*] By the loss of her children. Cp. Jer. xv. 9.

6—8. In Jehovah's hand are the issues of life and death, prosperity and adversity. All history illustrates this truth. Hezekiah is recalled from the gates of the grave: Job is tried by affliction: David is taken from the sheepfolds to be king: Nebuchadnezzar sinks to the level of a beast: Haman is degraded, Mordecai honoured: and chiefest example of all, He who "was despised and rejected of men," was "highly exalted, and given a name that is above every name."

6. *the grave*] The Heb. word *Sheol*, variously rendered in the E. V. *grave*, *hell*, *pit*, denotes the mysterious unseen world, the abode of all departed spirits, righteous and wicked alike. *Hell*, from A. S. *helan*, to cover, hide, would be a fair rendering if we could strip the word of all the associations with which it has been invested: but as we cannot do this, it is best to retain the Heb. word *Sheol*, or take its N. T. equivalent *Hades*.

There is no direct allusion here to the resurrection: death and *Sheol* are figuratively used for the depths of adversity and peril: life for deliverance and prosperity. See Ps. lxxi. 20, lxxxvi. 13.

8. *out of the dust*] "To sit in the dust" (Is. xlvii. 1), or "on the dunghill" (Lam. iv. 5) are Oriental figures for a condition of extreme degradation and misery, derived probably from the practice of mourners (Job ii. 8): to share the company of princes, and occupy a throne of honour (Job xxxvi. 7) are metaphors for advancement and prosperity. Ps. cxiii. 7—9 is copied almost verbatim from these verses. Cp. too Ps. lxxv. 6, 7.

*for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S*] The creation and maintenance of the natural framework of the earth by Jehovah are a guarantee for His moral government among men. Cp. Ps. lxxv. 3. The expression "pillars of the earth" (cp. Job. ix. 6) is a poetical metaphor derived from the construction of a house (see Jud. xvi. 26), and need not imply any theory as to the earth's shape.

9. It is JEHOVAH who guards His chosen ones from stumbling in their walk through life (Ps. lvi. 13, xci. 12); it is He who leaves the

He will keep the feet of his saints, 9  
 And the wicked shall be silent in darkness ;  
 For by strength shall no man prevail.  
 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces ; 10  
 Out of heaven shall he thunder upon them :  
 The LORD shall judge the ends of the earth ;  
 And he shall give strength unto his king,  
 And exalt the horn of his anointed.

wicked to languish in adversity (Job v. 14) or perish miserably (Ps. xxxi. 17, lv. 23); for apart from Him or in opposition to Him human strength is impotence (Zech. iv. 6).

*his saints*] Rather, **His beloved**, or, **His chosen**. The Heb. word means (a) *one who is the object of mercy*, and does not in itself imply holiness of character, but is used of Israel as the covenant people, the objects of Jehovah's lovingkindness: (b) in an active sense, *merciful*, of God (Jer. iii. 12): of men (2 Sam. xxii. 26).

*shall be silent*] "Shall be silenced," or, "perish."

10. *The adversaries of the LORD*] Render,

**Jehovah, they that strive with Him shall be broken to pieces :  
 against them in heaven let Him (or, He shall) thunder :  
 Jehovah shall judge the ends of the earth :  
 and may He (or, He shall) give strength unto His king,  
 and exalt the horn of His Anointed.**

The conclusion of the hymn is partly a prayer for the destruction of Jehovah's enemies, partly an expression of confidence that this will surely be effected. The mention of Jehovah's judgments leads up naturally to the thought of those who are his instruments for executing them. Hannah's prophetic prayer was but partially fulfilled in the king soon to be anointed by her son as the deliverer of Israel: it reaches forward to Him whom the Jewish kings foreshadowed, the King Messiah, in whom alone the lofty anticipations of the prophetess are to be completely realised.

*shall be broken to pieces*] The Sept. here inserts the greater part of Jer. ix. 23, 24. The passage may have been originally placed in the margin as an illustration, and afterwards incorporated in the text.

*his anointed*] Here first in connexion with the kingly office do we meet the word which was to become the characteristic title of the expected deliverer, the "Messiah" or "Anointed One," "the Christ." The Sept. renders "*ὁψώσει κέρας χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ*" (cp. Lk. ii. 26); the Vulgate "*sublimabit cornu Christi sui*." See the notes on x. 1 and xii. 3.

It has been alleged that the mention of the king stamps the song as of later date, posterior to the establishment of the monarchy. This is by no means the case. The idea of a king was not altogether novel to the Israelite mind. The promise to Abraham spoke of kings among his posterity (Gen. xvii. 6): the Mosaic legislation prescribes the method of election and the duty of the king (Deut. xvii. 14—20): Gideon had



11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

12—17. *The faithless priests of Shiloh.*

12 Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not  
13 the LORD. And the priests' custom with the people *was*,  
*that* when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant  
came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of  
14 three teeth in his hand; and he strooke *it* into the pan, or

been invited to establish a hereditary monarchy (Jud. viii. 22). Anointing too was recognised as the regular rite of admission to the office (Jud. ix. 8). Amid the prevalent anarchy and growing disintegration of the nation, amid internal corruption and external attack, the desire for a king was probably taking definite shape in the popular mind. The prophet who came to Eli speaks again of "Jehovah's anointed" (ii. 35). But who so worthy to be first chosen to anticipate the future as the mother of him who was destined to guide the chosen nation through this critical epoch of its existence, and superintend the foundation of the Davidic-Messianic kingdom?

Chapters i. and ii. to v. 10 form the *Haphtarah* or lesson from the prophets, appointed to be read in the Jewish synagogues on the first day of the new year.

A translation of the *Targum* or Chaldee Paraphrase of Hannah's Song is given in Note III. p. 236.

12—17. THE FAITHLESS PRIESTS OF SHILOH.

12. *sons of Belial*] **Worthless men.** See note on i. 16.

*they knew not the LORD*] Were ignorant of His character and so despised His laws. Cp. Jud. ii. 10; Job xviii. 21; Hos. iv. 1.

13. *the priests' custom*] The law directed the worshipper to present to the priest the fat of the victim along with the breast and shoulder (Lev. vii. 29—34). The fat was to be burned on the altar to Jehovah (Lev. iii. 3—5): the breast and shoulder, after being 'waved' and 'heaved,' a ceremony of dedication to Jehovah, became the priest's portion. Hophni and Phinehas were guilty of a double sin. (a) They robbed the people: not content with the share assigned them, they sent a servant to interrupt the preparation of the sacrificial meal, and seize a further portion. (b) They insulted Jehovah by demanding their share before the parts consecrated to Him had been duly burned upon the altar (v. 15).

*priests'*] Misprinted *priest's* in most editions of the Bible.

*seething*] i.e. *boiling*.

14. *strooke*] An old form of *struck*. Cp. Milton's *Ode on the Nativity*,

"Such music sweet  
As never was by mortal finger *strook*."

kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. Also before they burnt the <sup>15</sup> fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And *if any* man said <sup>16</sup> unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force. Wherefore the sin of the young <sup>17</sup> men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

### 18—21. *Samuel's ministry in the tabernacle.*

But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, <sup>18</sup> girded *with* a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him <sup>19</sup>

**15. Also] Even.** The climax of their transgression was the offence against Jehovah.

*sodden]* *Boiled*: the perf. of 'seethe' is 'sod' (Gen. xxv. 29), and the past partic. 'sodden.'

**16. presently] "Immediately:" the usual meaning of the word in the E. V., e.g. Matt. xxvi. 53.**

*he would answer him, Nay]* The correct reading of the Heb. gives "Nay" in place of "him." Cp. note on v. 3.

**17. the young men] Hophni and Phinehas.**

*men abhorred]* Rather, **the men despised**, or, **brought into contempt the offering of Jehovah**. The Sept. omits *the men*. Corruption in the priesthood begets profanity in the people. Cp. Mal. ii. 8, 9. "They made it vile in the eyes of the people by shewing how vile it was in their eyes."

### 18—21. SAMUEL'S MINISTRY IN THE TABERNACLE.

**18. Samuel ministered] The writer dwells upon the contrast between Samuel and the sons of Eli. We see the child attending upon Eli in the sanctuary, growing before the LORD, in favour both with the LORD and with men, chosen to be God's messenger to Eli, and finally re-establishing the broken intercourse between Jehovah and His people. On the other hand we see Hophni and Phinehas abusing their sacred office, sinking from rapacity and profanity to open profligacy, unchecked by rebuke or warning, and at last perishing miserably by the hands of the Philistines.**

*a linen ephod]* The ephod was a garment covering the shoulders, (Lat. superhumerales), and secured round the waist by a girdle. It was the distinctive dress of priests (v. 28, ch. xxii. 18), but was occasionally



a little coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.  
 20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to  
 21 the LORD. And they went unto their own home. And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

22—26. *Eli's fruitless expostulations with his sons.*

22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congre-

worn by others engaged in religious ceremonies, e.g. David (2 Sam. vi. 14). The High Priest wore a special ephod (Ex. xxviii. 6 ff.).

19, 20. *Moreover, &c.*] Lit. "And Hannah used to make...and bring it to him...And Eli used to bless...and they used to go unto his home." The verbs are frequentative, describing an annual practice often repeated.

19. *a little coat*] The Heb. *mē'il* denotes a kind of long upper tunic, worn by kings (1 Chr. xv. 27), prophets (1 Sam. xv. 27), men of position (Job ii. 12), women of rank (2 Sam. xiii. 18). The term is applied to a part of the High Priest's dress, *the robe of the Ephod* (Ex. xxviii. 31), and it is suggested in the *Speaker's Comm.* that "the mention of the ephod and the robe as worn by the youthful Samuel taken in connexion with his after acts seems to point to an extraordinary and irregular priesthood to which he was called by God in an age when the provisions of the Levitical law were not yet in full operation."

*the yearly sacrifice*] See note on i. 3.

20. *for the loan which is lent*] Better as in the margin, **in return for the petition which she asked for Jehovah**: i.e. in place of Samuel, for whom she prayed in order to dedicate him to God. Cp. i. 11, 27, 28, and note on v. 28.

*unto their own home*] Lit., "to his (Elkanah's) place." Cp. Gen. xviii. 33.

21. *grew before the LORD*] Three stages of physical, moral (v. 26), and spiritual (iii. 19—21) growth are marked.

22—26. ELI'S FRUITLESS EXPOSTULATIONS WITH HIS SONS.

22. *heard*] "**Used to hear** all that his sons **were doing**," constantly and habitually.

*the women that assembled*] Rather, **that served**. The word is applied to (a) military service: (b) Levitical service (Num. iv. 23, viii. 24): and it seems probable that the women mentioned here and in Ex. xxxviii. 8, where the same words are used, had regular duties in con-

gation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? <sup>23</sup>  
 for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my <sup>24</sup>  
 sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: *ye* make the  
 LORD's people to transgress. If one man sin against <sup>25</sup>  
 another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against  
 the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they  
 hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the  
 LORD would slay them. And the child Samuel grew on, <sup>26</sup>

nexion with the tabernacle service. The example of the abominations connected with the Phoenician worship of Ashtaroth may have helped to corrupt the priests of Shiloh.

*the tabernacle of the congregation*] Rather, **the tent of meeting**, where Jehovah would meet and hold communication with the priests, and the people. See Ex. xxix. 42, 43.

**23.** *for I hear of your evil dealings*] Rather, **for I hear evil things of you from all this people.**

**25.** *If one man, &c.*] Better,

**If a man sin against a man, then Elohim shall judge him:**

**but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall intercede for him?**

For man's offences against his fellow-man, there is a third superior party to arbitrate and rectify the wrongs, namely God, or God's representative, the duly appointed judge: but for man's offences against Jehovah, there is no third superior party to intercede as a mediator.

This is most likely an ancient proverb, quoted by Eli to impress his sons with a sense of the enormity of their sins, which were committed against Jehovah. The point is obscured by the impossibility of translating the paronomasia of the Hebrew which expresses "judge" and "intercede" by different voices of the same verb.

*the judge*] Heb. *Elôhîm*, i.e. God. Judges, as the representatives of God in executing justice on earth (Deut. i. 17), are sometimes styled *gods* (Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 8, 9; Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6), but it seems best not to limit the present passage to human judgments.

*because the LORD would slay them*] Literally, **was pleased to slay them.** Compare the language of Ex. iv. 21, and Josh. xi. 20, where we read that the LORD *hardened the hearts* of Pharaoh and the Canaanites; and 1 Sam. xvi. 14, where it is said that "an evil spirit *from the Lord* troubled Saul." Yet we are assured that "the LORD delighteth in mercy" (Mic. vii. 18), and "hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth" (Ez. xviii. 32). This coexistence of mercy and judgment in the divine will (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7) is a mystery which necessarily transcends our comprehension. But it must be carefully noted that it is not till Pharaoh has turned a deaf ear to repeated warnings, not till the Canaanites have polluted themselves with intolerable abominations, that God hardens their hearts; not till Eli's sons have ignored His existence and defied His laws does He determine to slay them: not till Saul has set at naught his calling and deserted God, is he deserted by Him. Obstinate

and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

27—36. *The doom of Eli's house.*

- 27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's  
28 house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the  
29 children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my habita-*

impentence may be judicially punished by the withdrawal of the grace which leads to repentance.

26. *grew on, and was in favour*] A childhood like that of Jesus (Luke ii. 52). Again Samuel's progress is contrasted with the declension of Hophni and Phinehas.

27—36. THE DOOM OF ELI'S HOUSE.

27. *a man of God*] i.e. a prophet commissioned by God. Even in the general decay of religion (iii. 1) God still had his messengers. The title "man of God" is applied to Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and others. It is specially frequent in the Books of Kings.

*Did I plainly appear*] Better, **Did I indeed reveal myself**. See Ex. iv. 14 ff., 27, xii. 1, 43 for revelations made to Aaron.

*in Pharaoh's house*] **In bondage to Pharaoh's house.**

28. *him*] Perhaps we should read, **it** (the house of Aaron) **to be my priests** (Ex. xxviii. 1—4). The priestly functions are mentioned in an ascending scale: (a) the common sacrificial duties, (b) offering incense in the Holy Place (Ex. xxx. 7, 8), (c) wearing an ephod, i.e. serving as High-priest, for probably the High-priest's ephod (the only one mentioned in the Pentateuch) is meant here, and not the ordinary linen ephod worn at this time by all priests. See note on v. 18.

*to offer upon mine altar*] or perhaps, "to go up to mine altar," to minister at it. But the E. V. seems best.

*all the offerings made by fire*] See Lev. x. 12—15.

29. *Wherefore kick ye*] Better, **Wherefore do ye trample upon**, i.e. treat with contempt.

*at my sacrifice and at mine offering*] When the words are distinguished, that rendered *sacrifice* (literally *slaying*) includes as a general term all sacrifices of slain animals: that rendered *offering* (literally *a gift*) is applied to unbloody sacrifices, the so-called *meat-offerings*; but the latter is often used in a wide sense to include all kinds of sacrifice, e.g. in v. 17. The distinction between the words is fairly observed in the E. V.



tion; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* <sup>30</sup> thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come, <sup>31</sup> that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou shalt see an enemy *in my habitation*, in all *the* <sup>32</sup> *wealth* which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be

*in my habitation*] The word is used again in v. 32, and in Ps. xxvi. 8, of the tabernacle. The Heb. is obscure, and the Sept. rendering diverges considerably from the present text, thus, "And wherefore didst thou look upon my offering and my sacrifice with a shameless eye?"

*with the chiefest of all the offerings*] "With the **first**," or, "**best** part of every offering," which should have been God's. See note on v. 13.

**30. saith**] The Heb. word is one rarely used except of a *solemn divine utterance*, as in Gen. xxii. 16, and very commonly in the prophets.

*I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever*] God had promised that the family of Aaron in all its branches should serve perpetually as priests in His presence (Ex. xxix. 9; Num. xxv. 13): but now the decree must be reversed, for the faithlessness of Eli's sons had broken the covenant.

**31. I will cut off thine arm**] = I will destroy thy strength. "The arm" is a common expression for "might," "strength." Cp. Ps. x. 15; Zech. xi. 17. One signal fulfilment of this doom was the massacre of the priests at Nob (xxii. 18, 19).

**32. thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation**] Or, a **rival**, the same word as that rendered "adversary" in i. 6. The best explanation of this difficult passage appears to be this: 'Thou, in the person of thy descendants, wilt see another take thy place as priest in my habitation (cp. v. 29), at the time when the nation shall be most prosperous and the office most honourable;' the reference being to Abiathar's deposition by Solomon (1 Kings ii. 27). The words might also be translated "*Thou shalt behold the distress of my habitation*" (cp. E. V. margin), and would then refer to the neglect which the tabernacle suffered owing to the loss of the Ark, even while the nation was prospering under Samuel and Saul. Such neglect would be a punishment on the house of Eli, because the High-priest for the time would lose his position and influence.

The Sept. however omits v. 32, and there are other grounds for suspecting that the present Heb. text of this verse as well as of v. 29 is corrupt.

*wealth*] Here in the sense of "weal," "well-being," as in the Litany 'In all time of our *wealth*.'



- 53 an old man in thine house for ever. And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.
- 34 And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they
- 35 shall die both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that* shall do according to *that* which *is* in my heart

33. *And the man, &c.*] or, Yet every man of thine will I not cut off from mine altar, to consume thine eyes and to vex thy soul; i.e. some will still survive to mourn over the ruin of their family. "Thine eyes," "thy soul," because Eli is identified with his posterity. But the Sept. has "his eyes," "his soul."

*increase*] = offspring, Lat. incrementum.

*in the flower of their age*] Heb. *men*: i.e. when they come to manhood.

34. *this shall be a sign unto thee*] The immediate fulfilment of one prediction will serve as a sign or assurance that the rest will not fail to come to pass. Such signs were often given by prophets as the credentials of their mission. Cp. ch. x. 7—9; 1 Kings xiii. 3; 2 Kings xx. 8, 9; Luke i. 18, 20.

*in one day they shall die*] See ch. iv. 11.

35. This verse forms no part of the sign, but is to be connected with v. 33.

*a faithful priest*] The prophecy is commonly supposed to have been fulfilled in Zadok, whose descendants retained the High-priesthood till the end of the monarchy (1 Chr. vi. 8—15). But that Samuel is meant seems clear on the following grounds.

(a) The faithful priest is obviously contrasted with the unfaithful sons of Eli. This points to Samuel not Zadok. The account of his call is given immediately in ch. iii. and it concludes by saying (v. 20), "all Israel knew that Samuel was *established* to be a prophet of the LORD," a connecting link with the present passage, for it is the same Heb. word which is rendered "faithful," "sure," and "established." This is followed by the death of Hophni and Phinehas (ch. iv.).

(b) The "sure house" which is promised does not necessarily imply succession to the priesthood. But if it had originally done so, might not the privilege have been forfeited by the sin of Samuel's sons (ch. viii. 3), as in the case of the exactly similar promise to Jeroboam (1 Kings xi. 38)? That Samuel's descendants flourished is clear, for his grandson Heman (1 Chr. vi. 33) was David's chief musician, and father of fourteen sons and three daughters (1 Chr. xxv. 1, 4, 5).

(c) "He shall walk before mine anointed (not, *for ever*, but) *all the days* of his life" (cp. i. 22). This is most naturally referred to Samuel, who was God's instrument for establishing the kingdom, and occupied a unique position as the authorised adviser of Saul.

and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. And it shall <sup>36</sup> come to pass, *that* every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that *I* may eat a piece of bread.

### CH. III. 1—10. *The Call of Samuel.*

And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before <sup>3</sup> Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision. And it came to pass at <sup>2</sup>

(*d*) But it will be said, Samuel was no priest, only a prophet-judge. True he was not a priest by descent, and is nowhere expressly so called. But the expression 'I will raise up' (used so commonly of the judges) implies an extraordinary office. And during his lifetime Samuel filled the place of High-priest. The prerogative of the line of Aaron was in abeyance for a time, as a punishment for the corruption of Eli's sons. Ahitub the son of Phinehas never appears in the history. Ahiah is not mentioned till after Saul's first rejection in Samuel's extreme old age (xiv. 3). Samuel exercised priestly functions by intercession (vii. 9), by offering sacrifice (vii. 9, 10), by benediction (ix. 12, 13), by anointing Saul and David (x. 1, xvi. 13, cp. 1 Kings i. 34). He may be compared with Moses who though not strictly a priest was sometimes regarded as such (Ps. xcix. 6).

*mine anointed*] See notes on ii. 10, x. 1, xii. 3.

**36. crouch**] Lit. **bow himself down**.

*a piece of silver*] The Heb. word means *such a coin as beggars would receive*.

*a morsel of bread*] Rather, **a cake of bread**. The same word is used in x. 3 (E. V. *loaves*), and denotes a round flat cake or loaf.

### CH. III. 1—10. THE CALL OF SAMUEL.

**1. the child Samuel**] According to Josephus, Samuel had just completed his twelfth year when the word of Jehovah came to him. In later times this age was a critical point in the life of a Jewish boy. He then became 'a son of the Law,' and was regarded as personally responsible for obedience to it. It was at the age of twelve that "the child Jesus" first went up to Jerusalem along with his parents (Luke ii. 42).

*ministered*] Cp. ii. 11, 18.

*was precious*] Rather, **was rare**. In the general decay of religion, prophetic communications from God had almost entirely ceased. Cp. Amos viii. 11; Ps. lxxiv. 9. We read of two prophets only in the days of the Judges (Jud. iv. 4, vi. 8).

*there was no open vision*] Rather, **there was no vision published abroad**. The word is used in 2 Chr. xxxi. 5 of the publication of a

that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes  
 3 began *to wax* dim, *that* he could not see; and ere the lamp  
 of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark  
 4 of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*; that the  
 5 LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I. And  
 he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me.  
 And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went  
 6 and lay down. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel.

decree (E.V. *came abroad*). There was no publicly acknowledged prophet, whose 'word came to all Israel.'

2. *at that time*] This rendering is possible, but the Heb. literally means *on that day*, the memorable day which left such a deep mark upon Samuel's life. So the LXX. and Vulg.

The words from '*when Eli*' to '*was laid down to sleep*' form a parenthesis, describing the circumstances under which Samuel's call took place. (1) *Eli was lying down in his place*. (2) *His eyes had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see*. These clauses serve to explain why Samuel ran to Eli when he heard the Voice. He would naturally suppose that the infirm and half-blind old man required some assistance. (3) *The lamp of God was not yet extinguished*. This marks the time of night as shortly before daybreak, when the sacred light in the Sanctuary would burn dim or be put out. (4) *Samuel was lying down in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was*. The order of the Hebrew requires this translation. The term 'temple' includes the buildings round the Tabernacle (see note on i. 9), in some of the chambers of which Eli and Samuel were sleeping, not of course in the Tabernacle itself. The *Ark* is expressly mentioned because it was the visible symbol of the Presence of Him from whom the Voice proceeded.

*to wax*] i.e. to grow, from A. S. *weaxan*, Germ. *wachsen*. The word has passed out of general use in modern English. Wiclif has 'Bihold ye the lilies of the feeld hou thei *wexen*.'

*the lamp of God*] The seven-branched golden candlestick, now mentioned for the last time, stood on the south side of the Holy Place, opposite the Table of Shewbread (Ex. xxv. 31—37). It was lighted every evening (Ex. xxvii. 20, 21, xxx. 7, 8), and was extinguished in the morning. In Solomon's temple it was superseded by ten separate candlesticks, but in the second temple the single candlestick was restored. It was carried to Rome by Titus after the capture of Jerusalem, and figures conspicuously among the trophies sculptured on his triumphal arch, from which the familiar representation of it is derived.

4. *Here am I*] Heb. *Behold me*, the regular formula for expressing attention to a call and readiness to obey. Cp. Gen. xxii. 1; Is. vi. 8.

5. *And he ran*] Note Samuel's alacrity to serve the aged priest, his spiritual father.



And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I ; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son ; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the <sup>7</sup> LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. <sup>8</sup> And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I ; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie <sup>9</sup> down ; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD ; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, <sup>10</sup> and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak ; for thy servant heareth.

#### 11—14. *Announcement of the Doom of Eli's House.*

And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in <sup>11</sup> Israel, *at* which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which <sup>12</sup> I have spoken concerning his house : when I begin, I will

6. *thou didst call me*] Simply, **thou calledst**, as in v. 5, and again in v. 8. There is no additional emphasis in the original.

7. *Now Samuel, &c.*] This verse explains why Samuel failed to recognise the Voice. 'Knowing the LORD' here denotes not the general religious knowledge of a pious Israelite, but the special knowledge communicated by a personal revelation. The phrase is used in a different sense in ii. 12.

10. *And the LORD came, and stood*] The Heb. is emphatic : **presented himself**. The Voice became a Vision (v. 15). Cp. Gen. xv. 1 ; Num. xii. 6—8. The visible manifestations of Jehovah or the Angel of Jehovah in the O. T. were foreshadowings of the Incarnation.

#### 11—14. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DOOM OF ELI'S HOUSE.

11. *I will do*] **I am doing**. The catastrophe is certain. With God the future is as the present.

*at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle*] This expression is found again in 2 Kings xxi. 12, and Jer. xix. 3. In the latter passage there may be a tacit reference to this passage, suggesting a comparison between the destruction of Shiloh and the destruction of Jerusalem, such as is found elsewhere in Jeremiah (vii. 12—14, xxvi. 6).

The appalling catastrophe thus predicted was the impending defeat of Israel by the Philistines, the death of Eli's sons and Eli himself, the capture of the Ark, and the desolation of the national Sanctuary.

12. *all things which I have spoken*] See ch. ii. 27—36.



13 also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained  
14 them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

15—18. *The Message delivered to Eli.*

15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors

*when I begin, I will also make an end*] Literally, 'beginning and ending,' i.e. **from beginning to end**, fully and completely.

13. *For I have told him*] The Hebrew may be translated either (a) **And I have shewed him that I do judge his house for ever:** or (b) **And I will shew him that I do judge his house for ever.** If the first rendering is adopted, the words refer to the doom already pronounced by the prophet: if the second, the words are to be taken in connexion with the previous verse, to signify that the impending catastrophe would be a sign to Eli that the judgment upon his house was permanent and irreversible. Cp. ii. 34.

*judge*] i.e. punish, as in Ezek. vii. 3, &c.

*for the iniquity which he knoweth*] The Vulgate, followed by Luther, renders 'for his iniquity because he knew that his sons dealt shamefully:' describing the judgment as inflicted upon Eli for his own sin in neglecting his duty as father (Deut. xxi. 18), high-priest (Deut. xvii. 12), and judge, and failing to restrain the misconduct of his sons. But the rendering of the E.V. which makes the iniquity of Eli's sons the ground of judgment, is possible, and agrees better with v. 14.

*made themselves vile*] Elsewhere the Heb. word always means *to curse*, or *to blaspheme*, and is here best rendered **made themselves accursed**. 'There is a Jewish tradition that the original reading was 'cursed me,' which was altered by the scribes from motives of reverence. The rendering of the LXX. 'because his sons were blaspheming God,' gives the same sense, corresponding to a slight alteration of the present Hebrew text. Eli's sons had blasphemed God and made light of him by their infamous conduct in His very presence.

*he restrained them not*] But contented himself with gentle expostulation (ii. 23), instead of thrusting them out of the sacred office they had so grossly abused. By this weak indulgence he became partaker of their sins.

14. *shall not be purged*] Lit., *shall not cover itself*; shall not make atonement for itself. The sons of Eli had sinned, 'with a high hand,' against light and warnings, and for such unrepentant presumptuous offenders the Law had no atonement. See Num. xv. 27—31. The doom of their house is pronounced, and ratified by the oath of God. Clearly however it is only to *the temporal punishment of Eli's family* that the words refer in the first instance. Cp. Is. xxii. 14.

*sacrifice nor offering*] See note on ii. 29.

of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, <sup>16</sup> my son. And he answered, Here *am* I. And he said, <sup>17</sup> What *is* the thing that *the LORD* hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, <sup>18</sup> and hid nothing from him. And he said, It *is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

19—CH. IV. 1. *Samuel established as a Prophet in Israel.*

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did <sup>19</sup>

#### 15—18. THE MESSAGE DELIVERED TO ELI.

15. *the doors of the house of the LORD.*] As the tabernacle was closed by a curtain only, we must suppose that the doors of the enclosure in which it stood are meant. See note on i. 9. We here learn incidentally the nature of the service which Samuel performed at Shiloh. He acted as a subordinate Levite. Cp. 1 Chr. xv. 23; Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

*Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision*] He naturally shrank from delivering the fatal message to one whom he loved and revered.

17. *What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee?*] The word LORD is not in the Hebrew. As in v. 9 it is tacitly assumed that the speaker was Jehovah.

Observe how Eli first simply *asks* for an account of what had passed, then *demand*s a complete statement, and finally *adjures* Samuel to conceal nothing from him.

*God do so to thee, and more also*] Literally, “so shall God do to thee and so shall He add.” This form of adjuration is characteristic of the books of Samuel and Kings, in which it occurs eleven times. Elsewhere it is found in Ruth i. 17 only.

18. *every whit*] Heb. ‘all the words,’=every thing. *Whit* is derived from A.-S. *wiht*, thing.

*It is the LORD*] **He is Jehovah.** For the depth of meaning involved in this confession, see Ex. xxxiv. 5—7. Eli, with all his faults, was still at heart faithful to God. He submits without a murmur to the divine sentence, leaving himself and his house in the hands of God. Compare the resignation of Aaron (Lev. x. 3), Job (Job i. 21, ii. 10), and Hezekiah (Is. xxxix. 8). But it is the passive resignation of a weak character. Though he *submits* himself patiently to the will of God, he would not rouse himself to *do* it.

#### 19—IV. 1. SAMUEL ESTABLISHED AS A PROPHET IN ISRAEL.

19. *The Lord was with him*] This was the one source of strength for all the “heroes of Hebrew history;” for Abraham, Gen. xxi. 22; Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 15; Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 2; Moses, Ex. iii. 12;

20 let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel *was* estab-

Joshua, Josh. i. 5; Gideon, Jud. vi. 16; David, 1 Sam. xvi. 18, xviii. 14.

*did let none of his words fall to the ground*] The fulfilment of his prophetic utterances was the attestation of his divine mission. Cp. Deut. xviii. 21, 22. 'Falling' is a natural metaphor in all languages for 'failing.' Comp. Gk. *πίπτειν*, Lat. *cadere*. The word rendered 'perform' in v. 12 is the exact opposite, literally meaning 'to raise up.'

20. *from Dan even to Beer-sheba*] The regular formula to denote the whole extent of the land of Israel. It is first found in Jud. xx. 1, and is common in the books of Samuel, but naturally disappears after the Division of the Kingdoms, occurring only once again, and that after the fall of the northern kingdom (2 Chron. xxx. 5).

*Dan*—originally Leshem or Laish, a Sidonian colony—was captured, colonized, and re-named by a band of Danites (Josh. xix. 47; Jud. xviii.). It was the northernmost town of the Holy Land, and stood upon a hill from the base of which springs one of the main sources of the Jordan, to flow through a rich and fertile plain towards the Lake of Merom. Here Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves (1 Kings xii. 29, 30), but shortly afterwards it was sacked by Ben-hadad (1 Kings xv. 20), and we hear no more of it. Its name, however, probably survives to this day. *Dan*=*judge*, and the hill is still called *Tell-el-Kady*=*"mound of the judge,"* while the stream bears the name *el-Leddân*, which may possibly be a corruption of *Dan*. See Robinson's *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, III. 390 ff.

*Beer-sheba*=*"well of the oath,"* so named from the covenant which Abraham and Abimelech made there (Gen. xxi. 31; cp. Gen. xxvi. 31—33): or possibly=*"well of seven,"* in allusion to the *seven* ewe lambs with which the covenant was ratified (Gen. xxi. 29, 30). It was situated at the southernmost extremity of the land, on the confines of the desert. It was a notable place in the history of the patriarchs.

(1) Here Abraham, Isaac and Jacob often dwelt (Gen. xxii. 19, xxviii. 10, xlv. 1). (2) Here Samuel's sons were established as judges (1 Sam. viii. 2). (3) Hither came Elijah when he fled from Jezebel (1 Kings xix. 3). (4) It was apparently the seat of an idolatrous worship in the days of Amos (Amos v. 5, viii. 14). (5) It is mentioned for the last time as one of the towns reoccupied by the Jews on their return from the Captivity (Neh. xi. 27).

The site of Beer-sheba is beyond question, for the name still survives in the Arabic *Bîr es-Sebâ*=*"well of seven,"* or *"well of the lion."* There are two principal, and five lesser wells. "The water in both [the principal wells] is pure and sweet and in great abundance: the finest indeed we had found since leaving Sinai. Both wells are surrounded with drinking-troughs of stone for camels and flocks; such as were doubtless used of old for the flocks which then fed on the adjacent hills. The curb-stones were deeply worn by the friction of the ropes in drawing up water by hand." Robinson, *Bib. Res.* I. 204. But Lieutenant Conder



lished to be a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

#### CH. IV. 1—11. *Defeat of Israel by the Philistines and Loss of the Ark.*

Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and

made the disappointing discovery that the masonry is not very ancient. There is a stone in the large well with an Arabic inscription bearing a date in the twelfth century A.D. *Tent Work*, II. 96.

*was established*] or, "*found faithful*," "*approved*." The Heb. word is the same as that which, in ch. ii. 35, is rendered 'a faithful priest,' 'a sure house;' and the use of it here seems to indicate that Samuel's call was the beginning of the fulfilment of that prophecy.

21. *appeared again*] Manifested himself in visions. Cp. vv. 10, 15; and the ancient prophetic title of *Seer* (ix. 9).

*by the word of the LORD*] By the communication of prophetic messages to Samuel. The state of things described in v. 1 was now reversed. The "word of Jehovah" was no longer "rare," there were visions "published abroad."

CH. IV. 1. *And the word of Samuel came to all Israel*] Samuel communicated to all Israel the divine revelation which he had received. This clause should form the conclusion of ch. iii, not the commencement of ch. iv. In the latter position it would naturally mean that it was Samuel who summoned all Israel to the disastrous war against the Philistines. But he is never once mentioned in connexion with the war, and does not reappear on the scene for twenty years at least (vii. 2, 3), though in all probability his prophetic activity here recorded was in part contemporaneous with the Philistine oppression, during which his growing influence was marking him out as the future national deliverer.

The Sept. here differs considerably from the present Hebrew text. Omitting obvious repetitions, v. 21 stands as follows: "And the Lord appeared again in Selom, for the Lord was revealed to Samuel. And Eli was very old, and his sons walked perversely, and their way was evil in the sight of the Lord."

#### CH. IV. 1—11. DEFEAT OF ISRAEL BY THE PHILISTINES AND LOSS OF THE ARK.

1. *Now Israel went out*] The Sept. and Vulgate contain an additional clause, which softens the abruptness of the transition: "And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel."

The abruptness of the narrative may be explained (1) because the historian only wishes to give an account of the war so far as it bears



pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in  
 2 Aphek. And the Philistines put *themselves* in array against  
 Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten  
 before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field  
 3 about four thousand men. And when the people were come  
 into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the  
 LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us

upon his main subject, the fulfilment of the prophecies against Eli's house: (2) because probably the account of the battle with the Philistines is extracted from some other book, in which it came in naturally and consecutively.

The last mention of the Philistines was in Jud. xiii—xvi. In Jud. xiii. 1 we read that "the LORD delivered the children of Israel into the hand of the Philistines forty years," and the best solution of the difficult question of the chronology of the Judges is to suppose that we are now at the middle of this period of Philistine oppression. The first twenty years of that oppression will then coincide with the last half of Eli's judgeship, and probably with Samson's judgeship of "twenty years in the days of the Philistines" (Jud. xv. 20). There is no difficulty in supposing that Eli, who was a civil judge during this time and permanently resident at Shiloh, was contemporaneous with Samson, the military leader of a guerilla warfare on the frontiers of Philistia. The second half of the period of Philistine oppression coincides with the twenty years during which the Ark remained at Kirjath-jearim (ch. vii. 2).

Might we not conjecture that the present renewal of the war was connected with Samson's death? Either the Israelites took the aggressive to avenge their champion, or the Philistines thought to profit by the opportunity and reduce them to more complete subjection.

*the Philistines*] See Note IV. p. 238.

*Eben-ezer*] = "*the stone of help*." The name is used by anticipation. It was not given till twenty years afterwards, on the occasion of the great defeat of the Philistines, ch. vii. 12.

*Aphek*] = "*stronghold*," the name of several places in Palestine. This Aphek was close to Eben-ezer (v. 6), in the neighbourhood of Mizpeh of Benjamin, near the western entrance of the pass of Bethhoron, and probably distinct from the Aphek of ch. xxix. 1.

2. *of the army*] Rather, **in the battle array**, (Lat. *in acie*). In the first encounter the Israelites, though defeated with severe loss, were not put to flight, but retired to the camp (v. 3).

3. *And when, &c.*] Connect closely with v. 2 by rendering, **And the people came to the camp, and the elders, &c.** The use of the term *people* for *army* is characteristic of the time when there was no standing army, but a levy of all the men capable of bearing arms in time of war.

*the elders of Israel said*] The officers of the army held a council of war, and resolved to fetch the Ark. On the *Elders* see note on viii. 4.

3. *Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us*] The Israelites assume that

fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, 4 that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth *between* the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark 5 of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted *with* a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they 6 said, What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the

their defeat came from Jehovah. Cp. Joshua vii. 7, 8. But instead of enquiring the cause of His displeasure, they fancy that His aid can be secured by the presence of the Ark. They may have recollected the words which Moses used when the Ark set forward, "Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee" (Num. x. 35): and how the Ark had led them to victory against Jericho (Josh. vi. 6).

Possibly the Philistines, as upon a later occasion (2 Sam. v. 21), had brought the images of their gods into the field, and this suggested the idea of fetching the Ark. The superstition which confused the Symbol with the Presence was the natural result of the decay of religion.

4. *that they might bring*] Rather, **and brought**.

*the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims*] Or, **who sitteth enthroned upon the cherubim**. The full title is chosen to describe the Ark (*a*) as the symbol of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, in virtue of which they expected his help unconditionally; (*b*) as the seat of the presence of the Lord of Hosts, which they thought would infallibly accompany it, and ensure victory to the armies of Israel. Cp. note on v. 21.

*the two sons of Eli . . . . . were there with the ark*] It seems best to follow the Sept. and Vulg. in omitting the word 'there.' The narrative requires the statement that Hophni and Phinehas *accompanied* the Ark, not merely that they were at Shiloh, which we know already.

*rang again*] Cp. 1 Kings i. 45.

6. *the Hebrews*] This name is used (*a*) by foreigners, as here (cp. ch. xxix. 3): (*b*) by the Israelites in speaking of themselves to foreigners (Ex. ii. 7): (*c*) when the Israelites are contrasted with foreigners (1 Sam. xiii. 3, *note*, 7). It is either (1) a derivative from *eber*, a word meaning *beyond*, and was originally applied to Abraham as coming *from beyond* the Euphrates: or (2) a patronymic from Eber (Gen. x. 21, 24), signifying *the descendants of Eber*.

6—9. Observe how vividly the successive emotions of the Philistines are painted: *astonishment*, when they heard the triumphant

- 7 LORD was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us: for there hath not been such *a thing*
- 8 heretofore. Woe unto us: who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote
- 9 the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to
- 10 you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for
- 11 there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

shout of the vanquished army: *dismay*, when they learnt its cause: manly *resolution*, when they had recovered from the first panic.

8. *these mighty Gods*] The heathen polytheists naturally suppose that Israel like themselves had 'gods many.'

*with all the plagues*] Better, **with an utter overthrow**, lit. 'with every kind of smiting.' The word used is the same as that rendered *slaughter* in v. 10, and the allusion is to the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the shores of which are called *wilderness* in Ex. xiii. 20, not to the ten plagues, for which a different word is used in Exodus. The effect of the news of the destruction of Pharaoh *upon the Philistines* is alluded to in the Song of Moses, "Sorrow shall take hold upon the inhabitants of Palestina" (Ex. xv. 14): and Rahab speaks of it as inspiring the Canaanites with terror (Josh. ii. 9—11).

9. *quit yourselves*] i.e. behave. Cp. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. "To quit oneself" = "to acquit oneself," to release oneself from obligation by meeting the claims upon or expectations entertained of oneself. It is derived from Lat. *quietare*, through Fr. *quitter*. Cp. Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 1709,

"Samson hath quit himself  
Like Samson."

*servants*] Tributary vassals. See Jud. xiii. 1. The Philistines appear to have had some Israelites as actual slaves (ch. xiv. 21).

10. *they fled every man into his tent*] The battle ended in a *sauve qui peut*, every man who could escaping to his own home. The use of the word *tent* is a relic of the nomad life in the wilderness. Cp. 2 Sam. xx. 1.

11. *Hophni and Phinehas were slain*] The "sign" given by the man of God that the whole doom pronounced against Eli's house would be executed (ch. ii. 34).

The Psalmist's account of the catastrophe should be compared, Ps. lxxviii. 56—64.



12—18. *The Death of Eli.*

And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and <sup>12</sup> came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and *with* earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon <sup>13</sup> a seat *by* the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told *it*, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise <sup>14</sup> of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult?

## 12—18. THE DEATH OF ELI.

12. *there ran a man of Benjamin*] Cp. 2 Sam. xviii. 19. The distance from Ebenezer to Shiloh was probably not more than twenty miles, so that a swift runner could easily arrive the same evening. Cp. *to-day* in v. 16.

There is a strange Jewish tradition that the man was Saul, who seized the tables of the law out of the hand of Goliath and fled!

*out of the army*] Out of the **battle-array**, as in v. 2.

*with his clothes rent and with earth upon his head*] Signs of the deepest mourning. Cp. Josh. vii. 6; 2 Sam. i. 2; Homer, *Il.* xviii. 23, and an exact parallel in Virg. *Aen.* xii. 609—611, describing the mourning of Latinus on the suicide of his queen Amata:

“It scissa veste Latinus  
Coniugis attonitus fatis urbisque ruina,  
Canitiem immundo perfusam pulvere turpans.”

“Bowed to the earth with woe on woe,  
His consort dead, his town brought low,  
The hapless king his raiment tears,  
And soils with dust his silver hairs.”



13. *Eli sat upon a seat*] **Was sitting upon the seat**, (or, **his seat**). We must imagine him sitting upon his official seat by the outer gate of the tabernacle enclosure (v. 18, cp. i. 9, note), not by the town gate on the road by which the messenger entered, for the news does not reach Eli until after it has been published in the town (v. 14).

The Sept. represents a slightly different text, “Eli was on his seat by the side of the gate, watching the way.”

*all the city cried out*] The opening stanzas of Aytoun’s ballad “Edinburgh after Flodden” in *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers* give a vivid picture of the effect of the news of a defeat.

“A murmur long and loud,  
And a cry of fear and wonder  
Bursts from out the bending crowd.  
For they see in battered harness  
Only one hard-stricken man...”

14. *he said*] The Sept. adds ‘to the men that stood by him.’



- 15 And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. Now Eli *was* ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he  
 16 could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army.  
 17 And he said, What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are  
 18 dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

19—22. *Death of Eli's Daughter in Law.*

- 19 And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God *was* taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed;

*came in hastily]* **Made haste and came** through the town to the tabernacle enclosure which stood on a slight eminence.

15. *his eyes were dim]* **Were set**, a different word from that of ch. iii. 2, found again in this sense only in 1 Kings xiv. 4. Eli was now totally blind.

16. *I am he]* He has to announce himself to the blind old man who cannot see the tale of disaster which his dust-soiled, blood-stained garments tell all too plainly to the people.

*the army]* Better, as in v. 12, **the battle-array.**

*What is there done]* Lit., *What was the affair?* Vulg. quid actum est? David uses the same phrase to the Amalekite in 2 Sam. i. 4.

17. Observe the climax. Each blow is heavier than the preceding one. The rout of the army, the slaughter of the people, Eli's personal bereavement, the loss of the most precious treasure of Israel. The last blow is more than the aged High-priest can bear.

18. *the ark of God]* National defeat and disgrace, family bereavement, were but trifles compared to the loss of the Ark, which seemed to prove that Jehovah had forsaken the people of his choice. "Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?"

*he had judged Israel forty years]* See note on v. 1.

19—22. DEATH OF ELI'S DAUGHTER IN LAW.

19. *his daughter in law]* Her death is recorded (a) as being a further fulfilment of the doom of Eli's house: (b) for the sake of her pathetic dying words about the Ark.

for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her <sup>20</sup> death the *women* that stood by her said *unto her*, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*. And she named the child Ichabod, say- <sup>21</sup> ing, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: <sup>22</sup> for the ark of God is taken.

CH. V. 1—12. *Chastisement of the Philistines for the Removal of the Ark.*

And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it <sup>5</sup> from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. When the Philistines took <sup>2</sup>

**20.** *Fear not*] Cp. Gen. xxxv. 16—19. But the attempt to comfort her was vain. The loss of the Ark so absorbed her mind, that even a mother's greatest joy (John xvi. 21) could not rouse her.

**21, 22.** The connexion will be made clearer by a literal translation as follows. **And she called the child I-chabod, (saying, [The] Glory is departed from Israel), with reference to the ark being taken, and with reference to her father in law and her husband. And she said, [The] Glory is departed from Israel, because the ark of God was taken.** Thus v. 22 is not mere tautology. In v. 21 the narrator connects the name I-chabod with the triple loss, and inserts her words "Glory is departed from Israel" parenthetically. In v. 22 he repeats them with an explanation. The E.V. appears to be wrong (though the Hebrew is not decisive) in regarding "for the ark of God is taken" as the words of Phinehas' wife.

**21.** *I-chabod*] The name means *No-glory*, or *Where is glory?* Cp. Rachel's significant name for Benjamin, *Ben-oni* = "Son of my sorrow" (Gen. xxxv. 18).

*The glory is departed from Israel*] In Ex. xvi. 10, xl. 34, 35, and many other passages, "the glory of the LORD" denotes the visible manifestation of the Presence and Majesty of Jehovah, known in later times as the *Shechinah*. The promise in Lev. xvi. 2, "I will appear in the cloud on the mercy seat," (cp. Ex. xxv. 22; Num. vii. 89), connects this manifestation specially with the Ark, and though it does not appear that the Cloud rested continually between the Cherubim, yet along with the Ark the Glory which was the pledge of Jehovah's Presence 'had departed from Israel.' In Rom. ix. 4 St Paul mentions *the glory* as one of the special privileges of his nation.

CH. V. 1—12. CHASTISEMENT OF THE PHILISTINES FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE ARK.

**1.** *Ashdod*] Ashdod (in Greek *Azotus*, Acts viii. 40), one of the five cities of the Philistine league, was situated on an eminence near the

the ark of God, they brought it *into* the house of Dagon,  
 3 and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose  
 early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his  
 face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they  
 4 took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when  
 they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon  
*was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the  
 LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his  
 hands *were* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump of*  
 5 Dagon was left to him. Therefore neither the priests of

sea, about 35 miles W. of Jerusalem. It was a place of great strength, and special importance, from its position on the high road between Syria and Egypt. It was assigned to Judah (Josh. xv. 47), but never conquered till the reign of Uzziah (2 Chr. xxvi. 6). The Assyrian king Sargon's 'Tartan' (i.e. General) took it about B.C. 716, and about B.C. 630 it proved its strength by resisting Psammitichus king of Egypt for 29 years. It was destroyed by Jonathan Maccabaeus (1 Macc. x. 84), but rebuilt after the Roman conquest of Judaea. The village of *Es-dûd* still preserves the ancient name and site.

2. *When the Philistines, &c.]* Better, **And the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it.** The repetition is characteristic of the Hebrew historical style.

*Dagon]* Dagon (a diminutive of endearment from *dâg*=fish) was the national god of the Philistines, worshipped also at Gaza (Jud. xvi. 21—30), and elsewhere, as the name Beth-dagon (Josh. xv. 41, xix. 27) indicates. The statue of Dagon had the head and hands of a man, and the body of a fish. The fish was an emblem of fruitfulness. See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, I. 381, or Layard's *Nineveh*, II. p. 466, for a representation of a fish-god, which is probably the Philistine Dagon, as the bas-reliefs at Khorsabad from which it is taken record the wars of Sargon with Syria. A corresponding goddess Derceto or Atargatis was worshipped at Askelon.

The ark was placed in Dagon's temple as a votive-offering (cp. 1 Chr. x. 10), and to mark the supposed victory of Dagon over Jehovah.

3. *Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth]* In the attitude of homage to the ark. Jehovah does not leave the Philistines to fancy that their god has conquered Him. He will shew that He is "the living God." "The idols shall be moved at his presence" (Is. xix. 1).

4. *cut off upon the threshold]* i.e. cut off and lying upon the door-sill, probably not of the main entrance to the temple, but of the chapel or recess in which the statue stood. In this position they would be liable to the indignity of being trampled upon by the priests and worshippers who entered the shrine.

*only the stump of Dagon was left to him]* Lit., *only Dagon was left upon him.* Either some word for 'trunk' or 'body' has been lost in



Dagon, nor any that come *into* Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day. But the hand <sup>6</sup> of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, *even* Ashdod and the coasts thereof. And when the men of Ashdod <sup>7</sup> saw that *it was* so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. They sent therefore and <sup>8</sup> gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and

the original, or 'Dagon' is used to denote the fish-shaped body of the idol, from which the god derived his name.

"Next came one

Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark  
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopped off  
In his own temple, on the grunsel edge,  
Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers."

*Paradise Lost*, I. 457.

5. *Therefore neither the priests, &c.*] As a mark of reverence for the spot where their idol had lain. Zeph. i. 9 does not appear to contain any reference to this practice, which was peculiar to the temple at Ashdod.

*unto this day*] The practice was still observed when the historian wrote.

6. *But the hand of the Lord*] Rather, **And**. "The hand of the LORD" = the putting forth of His might. Chastisement now overtook the people as well as the god.

*he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods*] A double calamity fell upon them. (1) Their land was ravaged by a plague of mice. The present Heb. text leaves this to be inferred from ch. vi. 5, but the Sept. inserts here "And mice sprang up in the midst of their land, and there was a very deadly destruction in the city." This may be merely an inference from v. 11 and vi. 5, but the numerous divergences of the Sept. from the existing Heb. text in chaps. v. and vi. (making full allowance for obvious glosses and errors of transcription) seem to shew that the Greek translators employed a text which had not been subjected to the final revision which fixed our present Heb. text.

(2) Their bodies were attacked by a loathsome and painful disease, either (a) *emerods* = *haemorrhoids* or bleeding piles; or more probably (b) *boils*, which are a characteristic symptom of the oriental plague. The latter explanation agrees better with the infectiousness and fatality of the scourge.

*the coasts thereof*] = the *borders* thereof. *Coast* is derived from *costa*, a rib, or side, and originally meant any border or frontier-line, not the sea-line only, cp. Josh. i. 4.

7. *is sore*] i.e. *severe*.

8. *all the lords of the Philistines*] A peculiar term *Seren* is used



said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about *unto* Gath. And they carried the ark of the  
 9 God of Israel about *thither*. And it was *so*, that after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city *with* a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in  
 10 their secret parts. Therefore they sent the ark of God *to* Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came *to* Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay

exclusively to denote the five 'lords' who ruled in the five cities of the Philistine confederacy. In all probability it preserves their native title. They had all equal rights, for though Achish is called "*king* of Gath" in ch. xxi. 10, xxvii. 2, this is only from a foreign point of view, and he could not overrule the decision of his colleagues (xxix. 6—11). Here we find one city appealing to the rest for counsel in the calamity which had befallen it.

*unto Gath*] Gath may have been chosen because there was no Dagon-temple there, the Philistines attributing the plague to the antagonism between Jehovah and Dagon.

The site of Gath cannot be fixed with certainty, but Mr Porter and Lieut. Conder agree in the conclusion that it probably stood on the conspicuous hill now called *Tell-es-Sâfi*, 12 miles E. of Ashdod, at the foot of the mountains of Judah. "The position is one of immense strength, guarding the mouth of the valley of Elah." Hence its importance as a border fortress, commanding one of the main approaches from Philistia to Judaea. It was captured by David (1 Chr. xviii. 1), fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr. xi. 8), taken by Hazael (2 Kings xii. 17), retaken and dismantled by Uzziah (2 Chr. xxvi. 6). There is no further notice of it in the Bible: but the Crusaders occupied Tell-es-Sâfi, and built the fortress of Blanche Garde upon it.

Gath was the native place of Goliath (ch. xvii. 4): and the refuge of David from the persecutions of Saul (ch. xxi. 10, xxvii. 3).

9. *with a very great destruction*] Better, **with an exceeding great panic**, causing utter consternation.

*both small and great*] i.e. both young and old: all the inhabitants.

*and they had emerods in their secret parts*] Better, **and boils broke out upon them**.

10. *they sent the ark of God to Ekron*] The most northerly of the five confederate cities, about 11 miles north of Gath. It was allotted to the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 45, 46), and was temporarily occupied (Jud. i. 18). Baal-zebub was the local deity (2 Kings i. 2). The site is marked by the modern village of *Akir*.

*to us, to slay us and our people*] Lit., as in the margin, "to **me**,

us and our people. So they sent and gathered together all <sup>11</sup> the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten <sup>12</sup> with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

# CH. VI. 1—9. *The Philistines resolve to send back the Ark.*

And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the <sup>6</sup> Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for <sup>2</sup> the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. And they said, If ye send away the <sup>3</sup> ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any

to slay **me** and **my** people." So too in v. 11. The singular seems to indicate that the 'lord' acted as spokesman.

**11.** *and gathered together all the lords]* A second council of state was held, but the protest of the Ekronites was not listened to. The league was unwilling to part with the trophy of its victory.

*a deadly destruction]* A **deadly panic**: dismay caused by the fatal character of the disease.

**12.** *the cry of the city went up to heaven]* Cp. Ex. ii. 23. The word used always denotes a *supplication*, a *cry for help*.

Each city was visited with a heavier judgment than the preceding one. "The longer the Philistines resisted and refused to recognise the chastening hand of the living God in the plagues inflicted upon them, the more severely would they necessarily be punished." So when Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let the Israelites go, the hand of the LORD grew heavier and heavier, till an unwilling consent was wrung from him.

# CH. VI. 1—9. THE PHILISTINES RESOLVE TO SEND BACK THE ARK.

**1.** The Sept. adds, at the end of the verse, "And their land swarmed with mice," probably an explanatory gloss in anticipation of v. 4.

**2.** *diviners]* Men who professed to predict future events or interpret the will of heaven by the observation of omens. See Ex. vii. 11; Dan. ii. 2. Philistine diviners seem to have been celebrated. Cp. Is. ii. 6.

**3.** *send it not empty]* Cp. Ex. xxiii. 15. All religions regard *offering* as a necessary part of worship.

*in any wise]* i.e. "at all events," "certainly." *Wise* means "way of acting," "manner," "mode."

wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed  
 4 from you. Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague *was* on  
 5 you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: perad-

*return him a trespass offering]* A satisfaction or compensation in return for the injury done him by the removal of the Ark.

*it shall be known to you]* If the removal of the plague followed the restoration of the Ark with due propitiation, they would know for certain that its detention was the cause of the continuance of the plague. They were not yet convinced that their misfortune was more than "a chance" (v. 9).

4. *emerods]* Or, *bolts*. See note on ch. v. 6.

*according to the number of the lords of the Philistines]* The number of the confederate cities was naturally chosen to represent the whole people.

5. *images of your mice that mar the land]* The Heb. text now first definitely speaks of the plague of mice, which was alluded to in ch. v. 6. The Sept. as we have seen mentions it in v. 6 and vi. 1. The extraordinary voracity of field-mice, and the incredible rate at which they multiply, are noticed by many ancient writers on Natural History. Aristotle, in his *History of Animals* (vi. 37) says, "In many places mice are wont to appear in the fields in such unspeakable numbers, that scarce anything is left of the whole crop. So rapidly do they consume the corn, that in some cases small farmers have observed their crops ripe and ready for the sickle on one day, and coming the next with the reapers, have found them entirely devoured."

In 1848, it is said, the coffee crop in Ceylon was entirely destroyed by mice.

These images are not to be compared with the *talismans* or *amulets* made by magicians and astrologers in later times to effect cures or avert evils, as is done by Kitto, who gives many examples of such charms (*Bible Illustrations*, p. 84): nor with the *thank-offerings for recovery* in the form of the injured members which may be seen suspended at the altars of Roman Catholic churches in Switzerland and Italy at the present day: but with "a custom which according to the traveller Tavernier has prevailed in India from time immemorial, that when a pilgrim takes a journey to a pagoda to be cured of a disease, he offers to the idol a present, either in gold, silver, or copper, according to his ability, of the shape of the diseased or injured member. Such a present passes as a practical acknowledgment that the god has inflicted the suffering or evil." Thus in the present case the Philistines offered



venture he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Wherefore then do ye <sup>6</sup> harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, <sup>7</sup> on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: and take the <sup>8</sup>

“representations of the instruments of their chastisements” as an acknowledgment that the plagues of boils and mice were inflicted by the God of Israel, and were not “a chance.” Thereby they would “give glory to the God of Israel.” Cp. Rev. xvi. 9.

The question has been raised, whether there was a plague of mice at all. The mouse was the Egyptian symbol of destruction, and the two kinds of images were, it is said, emblematic of the same thing, the pestilence. The words *that mar the land* may mean no more than “mice such as are commonly found in the country.” The theory is more ingenious than probable. The natural inference from the text certainly is that there was a plague of mice, and it is quite in accordance with the practice of Hebrew writers that in a condensed narrative like the present, the *fact* of the desolation of the country should be barely mentioned in ch. v. 6; and the *cause* of it stated incidentally afterwards.

We should compare (though with caution) the Brazen Serpent (Num. xxi. 8). (a) It too represented the instrument of chastisement: (b) Looking to it implied an acknowledgment of sin, and a desire for deliverance from punishment, as did the sending of these offerings by the Philistines.

Vv. 4 and 5 stand as follows in the Sept.: “And they say, What shall be the expiation for the plague which we shall return to it? And they said, According to the number of the satraps of the aliens five golden seats, for one calamity was on you, both on your rulers and on the people: and golden mice in the likeness of your mice that mar the land.” Possibly this is an intentional alteration to get rid of the apparent discrepancy with v. 18. See note there.

6. *as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts*] A second allusion (cp. ch. iv. 8) to the events of the Exodus. See Ex. viii. 15, 32, ix. 34.

*when he had wrought wonderfully among them*] Or, **wrought his will upon them.** The word is used in Ex. x. 2 (E. V. wrought), and 1 Sam. xxxi. 4 (E. V. abuse). The Sept. renders it by *ἐμπαίζειν* = mock. But the E. V. may be right here.

7. *Now therefore make, &c.*] Heb. “And now *take and make* a new cart” = set to work to make. Cp. 2 Sam. xviii. 18. The use of a *new* cart (cp. 2 Sam. vi. 3) and *unyoked* kine (Num. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3, 4) was a natural mark of reverence.



ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him *for* a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may  
 9 go. And see, if it goeth up *by* the way of his own coast *to* Beth-shemesh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us; it *was* a chance *that* happened to us.

10—18. *The plan carried out and the Ark restored to Israel.*

10 And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied  
 11 them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: and they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

8. *jewels of gold*] *Jewel* is here used in a general sense = "any precious or costly object." The Heb. word simply means "articles" or "vessels."

9. *his own coast*] **His own border**, as in v. 12. See ch. v. 6, note. "*His*" refers to the Ark. The neuter possessive pronoun "*its*" is not found in the original edition of the E.V. See *The Bible Word-Book*, p. 272.

*to Beth-shemesh*] = "*House of the Sun*," probably the same as *Ir-shemesh* = "*City of the Sun*" (Josh. xix. 41). It was a priestly city (Josh. xxi. 16) on the border of the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 10), about 12 miles S.E. of Ekron. Its position is identified by the modern village of *Ain Shems* (= "*Fountain of the Sun*") in the *Wady es Sūrār*, and is described by Robinson as "a noble site for a city, a low plateau at the junction of two fine plains," the "valley" in which the Beth-shemeshites were reaping their wheat (v. 13). "Here are vestiges of a former extensive city, consisting of many foundations and remains of ancient walls of hewn stone . . . Enough yet remains to make it one of the largest and most marked sites which we had anywhere seen." *Biblical Researches*, II. 224.

Beth-shemesh was the scene of Amaziah's defeat by Jehoash (2 Kings xiv. 11, 12): and with other towns was taken from Ahaz by the Philistines (2 Chr. xxviii. 18). Its name, and that of *Har-cheres* = "*Mount of the Sun*" (Jud. i. 35), which was evidently in the neighbourhood, point to an ancient sun-worship in the country.

*then he hath done us this great evil*] Observe the completeness of the test. If cows unaccustomed to the yoke drew the cart quietly; if in spite of their natural instincts they deserted their calves; if without human guidance they went straight to the nearest Israelite town; the obvious conclusion must be that they were controlled by a supernatural power, and that that power was the God of Israel. Compare Gideon's 'signs,' consisting of phenomena contrary to expectation (Jud. vi. 37 ff.).

And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-she-<sup>12</sup> mesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh. And *they of* Beth-shemesh *were* reaping<sup>13</sup> *their* wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. And the cart<sup>14</sup> came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the Levites took down the ark of the<sup>15</sup> LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone: and the men of

10—18. THE PLAN CARRIED OUT AND THE ARK RESTORED TO ISRAEL.

12. *took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh*] Better, **went straight forward on the road to Beth-shemesh.**

*lowing as they went*] For their lost calves.

13. *they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest*] A description of harvest in Philistia by a modern traveller helps us to realise the scene in the valley of Beth-shemesh, which was suddenly suspended by the appearance of the Ark. "When the fog dispersed the whole plain appeared to be dotted over with harvesting parties, men reaping, women and children gleaning and gathering the grain into bundles, or taking care of the flocks which followed closely upon the footsteps of the gleaners. All seemed to be in good humour, enjoying the cool air of the morning. There was singing alone and in chorus, incessant talking, home-made jokes, and laughter long and loud." Thomson's *The Land and the Book*, p. 543.

This notice fixes the time of year as the end of May or beginning of June. Robinson saw wheat harvest in progress at Gaza on the 19th of May, and just commencing at Hebron on the 4th of June. *Bibl. Res.* I. 431.

*in the valley*] Heb. "*emek*," denoting "the long broad sweeps sometimes found between parallel ranges of hills." *Sin. and Pal.* p. 481.

14. *Joshua a Beth-shemite*] Joshua **the Beth-shemeshite**. Our translators have copied the Vulgate in abbreviating the form, as in the case of 'Benjamite' for 'Benjaminite.'

*they clave the wood of the cart, &c.*] For a similarly extemporised sacrifice see 2 Sam. xxiv. 22. Cp. also 1 Kings xix. 21.

15. *And the Levites took down*] Rather, in accordance with v. 14, **Now the Levites had taken down**. As Beth-shemesh was a *priestly* city, "Levites" appears to be used here in a general sense to mean "members of the tribe of Levi," not in its technical sense of "Levites" as distinguished from "priests." Cp. Ex. iv. 14; Josh. iii. 3.

Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices  
 16 the same day unto the LORD. And when the five lords of  
 the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned *to* Ekron the same  
 17 day. And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philis-  
 tines returned *for* a trespass offering unto the LORD; for  
 Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one,  
 18 for Ekron one; and the golden mice, *according to* the num-  
 ber of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five  
 lords, *both* of fenced cities, and of country villages, even  
 unto the great *stone of* Abel, whereon they set down the ark  
 of the LORD: *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the  
 field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.

19—CH. VII. 1. *The Penalty of Irreverence. Removal of  
 the Ark to Kirjath-jearim.*

19 And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they

*the men of Beth-shemesh, &c.]* In addition to the offering of the  
 kine mentioned in the previous verse, the inhabitants of the town  
 brought offerings of their own. The *burnt-offerings* symbolized renewed  
 consecration of the worshippers to the service of Jehovah: the *sacri-  
 fices* were thank-offerings to Jehovah for His goodness in restoring the  
 Ark.

17, 18. We have here a specific description of the propitiatory  
 offering actually sent; (a) a golden "boil" for each chief city: (b) a  
 golden mouse for each city and village throughout the whole country.  
 The apparent discrepancy between the latter statement and v. 4  
 vanishes if we regard v. 4 as merely the *proposal* of the priests, and  
 v. 18 as a description of *what was actually done*. The reason for the  
 offering of mice from the whole country probably was that the plague  
 of mice had ravaged the whole country, while the pestilence was  
 chiefly confined to the great cities.

*fenced cities]* Fortified or walled cities, contrasted with the "country  
 villages" or unwalled towns. Cp. Deut. iii. 5.

*even unto the great [stone of] Abel]* If the present Heb. text is cor-  
 rect, *Abel* (= "lamentation") must be regarded as a proper name  
 given to the great stone in Joshua's field from the lamentation for the  
 disaster recorded in v. 19. But there is no mention of such a name  
 having been given to it: it is scarcely natural that this stone should be  
 taken as the boundary of the land of the Philistines: and the sentence  
 as it stands is ungrammatical. It seems best to follow the Targum  
 and Sept. in reading "stone" instead of Abel, and to make a slight  
 further alteration of the text, by which we obtain good sense and  
 grammar: either (a) "And the great stone whereon they set down the  
 ark of the LORD is a witness unto this day in the field of Joshua the  
 Beth-shemeshite." (Cp. Gen. xxxi. 52): or (b) "The great stone . . .  
 remaineth unto this day."



had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people *with* a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-<sup>20</sup>

**19—CH. VII. 1. THE PENALTY OF IRREVERENCE. REMOVAL OF THE ARK TO KIRJATH-JEARIM.**

**19.** *because they had looked into the ark*] Better, **because they had gazed upon the ark.** The rendering of the E.V. follows the explanation given by Rabbinic commentators, but the expression used signifies rather "to gaze upon with profane curiosity." The priests of Bethshemesh must have known that even the Levites were forbidden to look upon the furniture of the Holy of Holies upon pain of death (Num. iv. 19, 20), but instead of hastening to cover it with befitting reverence, they left it exposed to the public gaze, and brought down a judgment which was intended to vindicate the *holiness* of Jehovah. Certainly they were not punished for the unavoidable sight of the Ark as it approached them, at which they justly rejoiced (v. 13).

It seems not improbable, however, that there is some corruption in the Heb. text here. The repetition "and he smote," "even he smote," is somewhat strange, and the Sept. has the following entirely different reading, which may possibly represent an earlier text. "And the sons of Jechonias rejoiced not among the men of Bethsamus because they saw the ark of the Lord: and he smote among them, &c." i.e. either from indifference or irreligion they took no part in the general rejoicing and were punished for their impiety.

*fifty thousand and threescore and ten men*] It is generally agreed that there is some mistake in the text here. (a) The anomalous order of the numerals in the Hebrew (70 men 50,000 men), and the absence of the conjunction *and* mark corruption. (b) The village of Bethshemesh cannot possibly have contained such a number of inhabitants. It seems best with Josephus and some Heb. MSS. to omit 50,000 altogether. Possibly the number was originally expressed by a letter used as a numerical sign, and explained once rightly and once wrongly in marginal notes, both of which eventually crept into the text. "A like instance of the intrusion of a number into the text is found in Neh. vii. 70, where the number 500 is erroneously added to the 30 (or 33) Priests' garments given by Nehemiah, to make up 100 with the 67 given by the congregation. See Ezr. ii. 69, and Neh. vii. 72." *Speaker's Comm.* p. 274.

Many explanations of the passage with the retention of the number 50,000 have been attempted. The only one deserving of notice is that 50,000 is the number of the people, 70 the number of those that were smitten among them. But apart from the improbability that the village contained so many inhabitants, (and v. 21 implies that the news of the return of the Ark had not spread so as to bring in others from a distance), this meaning can only be imposed upon the Hebrew and not fairly extracted from it.



shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD  
 21 God? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they  
 sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying,  
 The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD;  
 7 come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you. And the men of

Such errors as this, to which the text of any ancient book is liable in the process of transmission, do not affect the general historical trustworthiness of the narrative, and the freest acknowledgment of them in no way precludes a full belief in the Inspiration of Scripture.

*had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter]* Lit., "had smitten the people with a great smiting."

20. *Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God?* **Before Jehovah this holy God.** Holiness is an especial attribute of Jehovah, demanding a corresponding holiness on the part of the people among whom He promised to dwell (Ex. xxix. 45, 46; Lev. xi. 44, 45). Chastisement was necessary to teach the men of Beth-shemesh that their sinfulness could not stand before the holiness of God (cp. Mal. iii. 2; Lk. v. 8): but instead of fitting themselves for His Presence, they desired to free themselves from the burden of it. Cp. Matt. viii. 34.

We should compare the judgment upon Uzzah, after which David feared to bring the Ark into Jerusalem. (2 Sam. vi. 7—9.)

*to whom shall he go up from us?* They regard the Presence of Jehovah as inseparable from the Ark.

21. *Kirjath-jearim]* i. e. "*city of forests*," originally belonged to the Gibeonites (Josh. ix. 17), and was one of the frontier cities of Judah (Josh. xv. 9).

The site is probably to be fixed at the modern village of *Kuryet-el-enab*, i. e. "*city of the grape*," which stands among the hills, 8 or 9 miles N.E. of *Ain Shems*. "A ride over ruined rocky paths, some of the worst in the country, brought us to Kureit-el-Enab, the ancient Kirjath-jearim, in a pleasant valley of olive-groves, abounding in jays and hawks. We dismounted to visit the old Gothic church, said to have been built by the English Crusaders, and still quite perfect, though desecrated by the Moslem villagers to the uses of a cow-shed." Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 397.

Kirjath-jearim was also called *Baalath* (Josh. xv. 9), *Baale-Judah* (2 S. vi. 2), and *Kirjath-baal* (Josh. xv. 60), names which point to the former existence of Baal-worship in the place.

The Ark was probably taken to Kirjath-jearim, which was neither a priestly nor Levitical city, as being the nearest place of importance on the road to Shiloh, but why it was not restored to its old resting-place does not appear. Possibly Shiloh, as the central seat of worship and government, was occupied by the Philistines after the battle of Aphek. Certainly it never regained its old importance. See Jer. vii. 12—14, xxvi. 6.

*come ye down]* Kirjath-jearim was among the hills of Judah on higher ground than Beth-shemesh.

Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2—6. *The National Repentance and Reformation under Samuel.*

And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long: for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and pre-

CH. VII. 1. *into the house of Abinadab in the hill*] On the hill, some eminence in or near the town. In 2 Sam. vi. 4, 5, the E.V. wrongly takes the same word as a proper name, "*in Gibeah*."

Abinadab was probably (as Josephus says) a Levite: for the Israelites would scarcely have ventured to violate the law by entrusting the Ark to a layman after the late judgment.

*sanctified Eleazar*] Consecrated him and set him apart for the special duty. "Nothing is said of Eleazar's consecration as *priest* . . . He was constituted not priest, but watchman at the grave of the Ark, by its corpse, until its future joyful resurrection."

The words of Psalm cxxxii. 6, "We found it in the fields *of the wood*," refer to this sojourn of the Ark at Kirjath-jearim. The word translated "wood" is *jaar*, which is the singular of *jearim*.

2—6. THE NATIONAL REPENTANCE AND REFORMATION UNDER SAMUEL.

2. *And it came to pass, &c.*] Better, **And it came to pass, from the day when the ark rested in Kirjath-jearim, that a long time elapsed, even twenty years.** Twenty years was not, as the E.V. seems to imply, the whole duration of the Ark's sojourn at Kirjath-jearim, but the time that elapsed before the reformation now to be recorded.

The period here passed over in silence was a dark page in Israel's history, politically and religiously. They were vassals of the Philistines, reduced apparently to abject submission. The public worship of Jehovah was intermitted; for the Tabernacle seems to have been dismantled, and the Ark was in a private house. The people sank into gross idolatry. But meanwhile Samuel was growing in strength and influence, and when the right moment came and the desire for better things sprang up as the fruit of his prophetic labours, he was ready to take his place as the leader of the nation.

*lamented after the LORD*] As a child follows the father who has been forced to turn away in anger, and with sighs and tears entreats for reconciliation.

3. *the strange gods and Ashtaroth*] **The gods of the stranger and**

pare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.  
 4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the

**the Ashtaroth** = "the Baalim and the Ashtaroth" of v. 4. *Baalim* is the plural of *Baal*, *Ashtaroth* of *Ashtoreth*, and the plural denotes either (a) the numerous images of these deities, or (b) the different forms under which they were worshipped, as Baal-Peor, Baal-Berith, Baal-Zebub.

Baal (=lord) was the supreme male deity of the Phoenician and Canaanite nations, and probably is to be identified with the Babylonian *Bel*.

Ashtoreth (Gr. *Astarte*) was the corresponding female deity, worshipped in Babylonia under the name Ishtar as the goddess of battles and victories, in which character she also appears among the Philistines, war-spoils being dedicated to her (ch. xxxi. 10). Her symbol was the *Asherah* (rendered "grove" in the E.V., Jud. iii. 7 and frequently), probably a wooden column or image resembling the sacred tree of the Assyrians, the worship of which is very commonly coupled with that of Baal.

The Baal-worship which began in the wilderness, when the Israelites "joined themselves to Baal-peor" the god of Moab, seems never to have been thoroughly eradicated during the period of the Judges. See Josh. xxiv. 23; Jud. ii. 11—13, iii. 7, viii. 33, x. 6.

*prepare your hearts unto the LORD*] Set your hearts steadfastly towards Jehovah.

*serve him only*] For He is a jealous God, who cannot endure a rival. His command is "Thou shalt have none other gods beside Me."

5. *to Mizpeh*] **Mizpah**, (in Heb. always with the definite article, as retaining its meaning, "the watch-tower,") was the meeting-place of the national assembly on two other important occasions in this period: (a) when war was declared against Benjamin (Jud. xx.); (b) when Saul was elected king (ch. x. 17); and (c) once in later times, on an occasion not unlike the present, when Judas Maccabaeus mustered Israel to revolt against the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc. iii. 42—46). It belonged to the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 26). Its site has not been identified, but is conjectured to be either (a) *Neby Samw'el*, a conspicuous hill rising to the height of 2935 ft., about 5 miles N.W. of Jerusalem: or (b) *Scopus*, the broad ridge immediately north of Jerusalem. In favour of the latter site are (a) the similarity of the name (*σκόπος* = watchman): (b) the description of the place in 1 Macc. iii. 46, as "over against Jerusalem."

It must be carefully distinguished from Mizpah in Gilead (Jud. x. 17, xi. 11).

*I will pray for you unto the LORD*] Other instances of Samuel's prayers are mentioned in viii. 6, xii. 17—19, 23, xv. 11. He is quoted as the type of successful intercessors in Ps. xcix. 6; Jer. xv. 1.



LORD. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew 6 water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7—12. *Total Rout of the Philistines at Ebenezer.*

And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel 7 were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the chil- 8 dren of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and 9 offered it *for* a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the 10

6. *and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD*] A symbolical act which has no exact parallel in the O.T., but was probably significant of the outpouring of their hearts before Jehovah in penitence and supplication. Cp. ch. i. 15; Ps. lxii. 8; Lam. ii. 19. The paraphrase of the Targum is, "And they poured out their heart in repentance before Jehovah."

*and fasted on that day*] As on the great day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 29), in token of humiliation and contrition for their sin.

*We have sinned against the LORD*] They made a public confession. Cp. Jud. x. 10.

*And Samuel judged, &c.*] As *prophet* he effected the religious reformation, and then taking his place as the chief *magistrate* of the state, he provided for the civil and political reorganization of the people. That the assembly lasted some time is clear from v. 7. The Philistines had time to muster their army before it dispersed.

7—12. TOTAL ROUT OF THE PHILISTINES AT EBENEZER.

7. *when the Philistines heard, &c.*] The lords naturally regarded a national assembly of their vassals as a preliminary step towards revolt, and mustering the army of the confederation, marched up towards Mizpah.

9. *a sucking lamb*] Which might not be less than seven days old, according to Lev. xxii. 27.

*for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD*] The whole animal was burnt upon the altar to denote the entire consecration to Jehovah of those who were pleading for deliverance.

*and the LORD heard him*] Better, **answered him**. Cp. Ps. xcix. 6, and note on v. 5.



Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before  
 11 Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came*  
 12 under Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13—17. *Summary Account of Samuel's Judgeship.*

13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against

10. *thundered with a great thunder*] Lit., **with a great voice**. Thunder is the "voice of God" (Ps. xxix. 3, 4). Cp. ch. ii. 10; 2 Sam. xxii. 14, 15.

*discomfited them*] The Heb. word expresses *the confusion of a sudden panic*, and is especially used of *supernatural* defeats. Cp. Ex. xiv. 24 (E.V. *troubled*); Josh. x. 10; Jud. iv. 15; 2 Sam. xxii. 15.

*and they were smitten before Israel*] The thunder which dismayed the Philistines gave courage to the Israelites. The verb "*they were smitten*" (different from the one similarly translated in the next verse) is specially spoken of God, e.g. ch. iv. 3.

11. *until they came under Beth-car*] Beth-car (= "*house of a lamb*," or "*house of pasture*,") was apparently on high ground overhanging the road back to Philistia.

12. *Eben-ezer*] i.e. "*The Stone of Help*," a memorial set up between Mizpah and Shen, (in Heb. with the definite article) = "*The Tooth*," probably some conspicuous "tooth" or spire of rock. Cp. xiv. 4. The exact place is unknown, but "exactly at the spot where twenty years before they had obtained their great victory, the Philistines were totally routed."

*Hitherto, &c.*] i.e. *Up to this time*. The deliverances of the past are a pledge of continued help for the future.

13—17. SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF SAMUEL'S JUDGESHIP.

13. *So the Philistines were subdued*] Cp. Jud. iii. 30, iv. 23, 24. The word signifies "*were brought low*," but does not imply complete subjugation. The forty years oppression (Jud. xiii. 1) now came to an end.

*they came no more into the coast of Israel*] The same phrase is used in 2 Kings vi. 23, where the very next verse speaks of a fresh invasion. It is obvious therefore that the Hebrew historian could use the expression relatively and not absolutely, to describe a cessation of the Philistine inroads *for the time being*. How long it lasted we are not told, but

the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which <sup>14</sup> the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. And <sup>15</sup> Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went <sup>16</sup>

*the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel]* Yet we find the people groaning under the Philistine oppression (ix. 16): a garrison or a tribute-collector stationed at Gibeah (x. 5, xiii. 3): a general disarmament of the nation by the Philistines (xiii. 19): Hebrew slaves in the Philistine camp (xiv. 21): and three invasions of the land (xiii. 5, xvii. 1, xxiii. 27): all during Samuel's lifetime. We must then understand the statement in the text as either (a) "a general expression allowable in such a brief survey as is here given:" or (b) as referring only to the period of Samuel's active judgeship. In the latter case we may conjecture that the Philistines re-established their ascendancy in his old age, in consequence of the weak and corrupt government of his sons.

<sup>14.</sup> *from Ekron even unto Gath]* The towns which lay on the Danite frontier between these places were restored to Israel, not however including Ekron and Gath themselves. There is no evidence that Gath had ever been occupied by the Israelites, and Ekron was only held for a short time (Jud. i. 18).

*the coasts thereof]* The territory belonging to these frontier towns. The Sept. reads "the border of Israel."

*there was peace between Israel and the Amorites]* The Amorites are mentioned as the most powerful enemies of Israel next to the Philistines. "Amorite" is probably a local not a tribal name, meaning "highlander," contrasted with "Canaanite," which means "lowlander." On the W. of Jordan they lived chiefly in the mountainous country of Judah and Ephraim (Num. xiii. 29; Josh. x. 5): E. of Jordan they occupied the high plateau of rich pasture-land between the Jabbok and the Arnon, from which they had expelled the Moabites (Num. xxi. 13, 26), and were in their turn dispossessed by the Israelites.

In the Egyptian inscriptions the Amorites give their name to the whole country of Canaan, and in several passages of the O.T. the name appears to be used loosely of the original inhabitants in general. Possibly this is the case here.

<sup>15.</sup> *Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life]* This, like the statement of v. 13, must be understood with qualifications: for (a) Samuel in his old age made his sons judges (viii. 1): (b) Saul was made king a considerable time before Samuel's death. But it does not contradict the subsequent history. Clearly his sons supplemented but did not supersede their father's judicial office; and Samuel retained a civil and religious authority even after Saul had become the military leader of the people.

from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

**16. to Beth-el]** About 8 miles N. of Jerusalem the ruins of *Beitîn* mark the site of the ancient city of *Beth-el*, formerly the royal Canaanite city *Luz* (Gen. xxviii. 19), at the head of the pass of Michmash and Ai. (a) Near it Abraham built an altar (Gen. xii. 8). (b) There Jacob saw the Vision of the Ladder set up to heaven (Gen. xxviii. 11 ff.), and received the confirmation of his new name Israel (Gen. xxxv. 10), and from these revelations called the place Beth-el or "The House of God." (c) There in the days of the Judges the Ark rested for a time and an altar was set up (Jud. xx. 18, 26—28, where "the house of God" in the E.V. should be "Beth-el:" cp. 1 Sam. x. 3). (d) There after the Disruption of the Kingdoms Jeroboam set up his idolatrous parody of the worship of Jehovah (1 Kings xii. 32, 33), and Beth-el "the house of God" became in the language of the prophet Beth-aven "the house of naught," i.e. *of idols* (Hos. iv. 15, x. 5).

The name Beth-el appears to have been applied originally to the sanctuary in the neighbourhood of Luz, and not to have been given to the city till after its conquest by the tribe of Ephraim.

For a graphic description of Beth-el see Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 217—223.

**and Gilgal]** Gilgal (= "*the Rolling*," Josh. v. 9) was the first station of the Israelites after the passage of the Jordan, where (a) the men born in the wilderness were circumcised (Josh. v. 2); (b) the First Passover was celebrated (Josh. v. 10); (c) in all probability the Ark rested during the conquest of the land. Now it appears as the chief religious and political centre of the nation, where (1) sacrifices are offered (ch. x. 8); (2) assizes held; (3) the national assembly convened (xi. 14, 15); (4) the army mustered (xiii. 4, 7). It was probably selected for these purposes on account of its historical associations and its remoteness from the Philistines, whose invasions had pushed the centre of gravity of the kingdom back to the banks of the Jordan.

Lieut. Conder has fixed the site of Gilgal by the discovery of the name *Filjûlieh* a mile and a half E. of the village of *Eriha*, between the ancient Jericho and the Jordan. *Tent Work*, II. p. 7.

**and Mizpeh]** See note on v. 5.

**in all those places]** The Sept. has "*in all these sanctuaries*." This reading whether original or not expresses the fact that all these places were, like Ramah, places for sacrifice and worship. Even before the captivity of the Ark, Shiloh was not the sole religious centre; for instance there was a sanctuary at Shechem in Joshua's time (Josh. xxiv. 26); and now that the Ark and Tabernacle had disappeared from view, no effort seems to have been made to preserve the religious unity of the nation.

**17. to Ramah]** See note on ch. i. 1. Samuel chose his native



CH. VIII. 1—5. *Request of the people for a king.*

And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made 8 his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his first-<sup>2</sup> born was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were* judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his <sup>3</sup> ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and per-

place for his usual official residence, and made it a centre of religious worship by building an altar to Jehovah.

Here ends the first division of the book, which records Samuel's life and work as the last of the Judges, in connexion with the old order of things. The next division opens by relating the steps which led to the establishment of a monarchy, and shews us Samuel as the Mediator between the old and the new régime, effecting a political change of the utmost importance in the history of Israel without the shock of revolution.

It has been conjectured (*a*) from the fact that this portion of the book ends with a summary account of Samuel's whole life: (*b*) from the apparent (but not altogether inexplicable) contradiction between ch. vii. 13—15 and the subsequent narrative, that the compiler derived the history of Samuel and the history of Saul from different sources: but in the obscurity of the whole question of the compilation of the book, it must remain a hypothesis incapable of verification.

## CH. VIII. 1—5. REQUEST OF THE PEOPLE FOR A KING.

1. *when Samuel was old*] A considerable time, probably not much less than 20 years, must have elapsed since the victory of Ebenezer, before Samuel required the help of his sons on the ground of old age, and some years more before their misgovernment became so flagrant as to give occasion for the request of the elders. On the chronology see *Introd.* p. 22 ff.

2. *Now the name, &c.*] Joel = "Jehovah is God:" Abiah = "Jah is my father:" names significant of a protest against the prevalent idolatry. The text of 1 Chr. vi. 28, where the names are given as "the firstborn Vashni and Abiah," is corrupt. "Joel" has dropped out after "the firstborn," and "Vashni" is an obvious corruption of the Heb. word meaning "and the second."

*judges in Beer-sheba*] See note on ch. iii. 20. Beer-sheba was the most convenient centre for the southern district, which Samuel assigned to his sons, retaining the northern himself. Josephus says that "resigning his office to his sons he divided the people between them, and placed them *in Bethel and Beer-sheba*," a statement which is probably his own conjecture, and does not agree with ch. vii. 15.

3. *turned aside after lucre*] From the *straight-forward* path of their father's example. *Lucre* (from Lat. *lucrum*) is only used in the E. V. in a bad sense of *ill-gotten gain*.

*took bribes and perverted judgment*] The same phrases are coupled



4 verted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered  
5 themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and  
said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not  
in thy ways : now make us a king to judge us like all the  
nations.

6—9. *Jehovah's answer to the request.*

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give

together in Deut. xvi. 19, though differently translated in the E. V.  
"Thou shalt not *wrest* judgment...nor take a *gift*." Cp. Ex. xxiii.  
6, 8.

4. *the elders of Israel*] Acting as representatives of the people, *vv.*  
7, 10, 19, 22.

In a patriarchal system of government the Elders or heads of families are the natural authorities. Even before the Exodus Israel possessed an organization of Elders, to whom Moses was directed to deliver his message (Ex. iii. 16). The title gradually acquired an *official* signification; in the wilderness Moses appointed a council of seventy to represent the whole body (Num. xi. 16, 24, 25). After the occupation of Canaan we find mention of (a) *Elders of cities*, who acted as civil magistrates (Josh. xx. 4; Jud. viii. 16; Ruth iv. 2; 1 Sam. xvi. 4): (b) *Elders of tribes or districts* (Jud. xi. 5; 1 Sam. xxx. 26; 2 Sam. xix. 11): (c) *The Elders of Israel*, or united body of the Elders of the tribes, forming the *senate* or executive council of the "congregation" or national assembly, (1) in war (ch. iv. 3), (2) in great political matters, as on the present occasion, (3) in matters of general importance to the nation (Jud. xxi. 16).

The institution of Elders lasted through the monarchy (see e.g. 1 Kings xx. 7, 8, xxi. 11), and was revived after the captivity (Ezra x. 14). In N.T. times "the Elders" formed one of the constituent elements of the Sanhedrin.

5. *make us a king*] Lit. *set*, i.e. **appoint**, the same word as in the corresponding passage, Deut. xvii. 14.

*like all the nations*] i.e. as all the surrounding nations have kings.

6—9. JEHOVAH'S ANSWER TO THE REQUEST.

6. *the thing displeased Samuel*] *v.* 7 implies that Samuel's displeasure arose from a feeling of the ingratitude of the Israelites toward himself in desiring that one who had done so much for them should be superseded by a king. God's answer, "Not thee (their judge) have they rejected, but me (their true king) have they rejected from reigning over them" (the Heb. order is emphatic) at once consoles him and points out the real sinfulness of the request. This consisted not in the mere desire for a king, which would not necessarily have been wrong, but in the spirit of distrust of the invisible sovereignty of Jehovah and desire for the splendour of a visible monarch which really prompted the request.

us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto 7 the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works 8 which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest 9 solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

### 10—18. *The rights of a king.*

And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the peo- 10 ple that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the 11 manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and

*Samuel prayed]* He does not let his own personal feelings decide, but endeavours to learn what is the Will of God in the matter.

8. *so do they also unto thee]* Cp. John xv. 20.

9. *Now therefore hearken]* Or, **And now.** There is no inference 'because they reject me and thee, *therefore*, &c.,' but the command of v. 7 is repeated. For the reasons why the request was granted, see Introduction, ch. iv. § 4.

### 10—18. THE RIGHTS OF A KING.

10. *unto the people]* Through their representatives the elders. Cp. note on v. 4.

11. *This will be the manner of the king]* Or, "the **right** of the king;" such prerogatives as an absolute monarch claims.

We have here a vivid picture of the tyranny of an Oriental despot whose subjects are at his disposal for (1) court retainers, (2) military officers, (3) cultivators of the royal estates, (4) artificers in the arsenal, (5) domestics in the royal household. (7) Their property is liable to arbitrary seizure, beside (8) regular exactions of tithe, in order to enrich court favourites, and (9) their slaves and their cattle may at any time be pressed into the royal service. Under such a despotism political and social freedom is at an end. Prosperous as was Solomon's reign, it tended in this direction. See 1 Kings v. 13—18, xii. 4.

*and appoint them]* This may be rendered either as the E.V. or, **and set them for himself upon his chariots and upon his chargers.** Service in the retinue of the king rather than in the army appears to be meant.

to be his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots.  
 12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and  
 13 instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.  
 14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even the best of them*, and give *them* to his servants.  
 15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.  
 16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them*  
 17 to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye  
 18 shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

*some shall run before his chariots]* A body of runners was a regular sign of regal state (2 Sam. xv. 1; 1 Kings i. 5).

12. *captains over thousands and captains over fifties]* The Sept. reads "captains of hundreds and captains of thousands," which are the usual military divisions (ch. xxii. 7; Num. xxxi. 14): but the Heb. text is to be preferred as mentioning the highest and the lowest offices. Cp. 2 Kings i. 9 ff. For the fact cp. ch. xiv. 52.

*to ear his ground]* "To ear" = "to plough," from Lat. *arare* through A.-S. *erian*. The verb occurs again in Deut. xxi. 4 and Is. xxx. 24; the subst. *earring* in Gen. xlv. 6; Ex. xxxiv. 21. Shakespeare uses the word:

"And let them go  
 To ear the land that hath some hope to grow."

*Richard II.* A. iii. Sc. 2.

13. *to be confectionaries]* The original form of "*confectioner*," not however in its modern sense, but = "*one who makes confections*" (Ex. xxx. 35), i.e. compounds of spices and perfumes, a **perfumer**.

14. *he will take your fields, &c.]* Cp. 1 Kings xxi. 7; Ezek. xlvi. 18.

15. *officers]* Or, **chamberlains**.

16. *your goodliest young men]* "Young men" in the Heb. appears to be a copyist's error, and we should probably adopt the Sept. reading "**cattle**." Men-servants and maid-servants, cattle and asses, are then coupled together naturally. Cp. Ex. xx. 17.

17. *and ye shall be his servants]* To sum up all briefly, ye will be *slaves* to the king ye have chosen.

18. *because of your king]* Or, "**from your king**," appealing to God to escape from his tyranny.

*will not hear you]* Rather, **will not answer you**. The Sept. adds "because ye have chosen yourselves a king."



### 19—22. *Reply of the people.*

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of <sup>19</sup> Samuel; and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our <sup>20</sup> king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and <sup>21</sup> he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD <sup>22</sup> said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

### CH. IX. 1, 2. *Saul's genealogy.*

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name *was* <sup>9</sup> Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty *man* of power. And he had a son, whose name *was* Saul, a choice <sup>2</sup>

#### 19—22. REPLY OF THE PEOPLE.

**19.** *Nevertheless*] Simply **And**.

**20.** *that our king may judge us and go out before us*] The king was to unite the duties of (1) government of the nation in time of peace, and (2) leadership of the army in time of war.

**21.** *he rehearsed them*] i.e. repeated them. 'Rehearse' is derived from Fr. *reheriser*, to harrow over again. Samuel once more laid the matter before Jehovah in prayer, and again received the same answer.

This narrative is in close connexion with ch. x. 17—27. The intervening section, possibly derived from a different source, gives an account of Samuel's preliminary interview with Saul, preparatory to his formal election as king.

#### CH. IX. 1, 2. SAUL'S GENEALOGY.

**1.** *Now there was a man*] "The sacred historian now tracks as it were another stream of events which were to concur in working out God's providential purpose of giving a king to Israel." *Speaker's Commentary*.

*Kish, the son of Abiel*] See note on xiv. 50.

*a mighty man of power*] The Heb. may mean either (a) *a valiant man*, as in ch. xvi. 18, or (b) *a wealthy man*, as in Ruth ii. 1. Perhaps the ideas of personal valour and family importance are both included here, as in the Sept. rendering ἀνὴρ δυνατός, 'a powerful man.'

**2.** *whose name was Saul*] Heb. Shâûl="asked." It occurs as the name (a) of an Edomite prince (Gen. xxxvi. 37, 38); (b) of a son of Simeon (Gen. xlv. 10); (c) of a Kohathite in the genealogy of Samuel (1 Chr. vi. 24); (d) of SAUL OF TARSUS, "who is also called



*young man*, and a goodly: and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people.

### 3—10. *Saul's search for his Father's Asses.*

- 3 And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish  
said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with  
4 thee, and arise, go seek the asses. And he passed through  
mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha,  
but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land  
of Shalim, and *there they were* not: and he passed through

PAUL" (Acts vii. 58, &c.); and thus it became "the most distinguished name in the genealogies of the tribe of Benjamin," in the N.T. as well as in the O.T. (Phil. iii. 5).

*a choice young man, and a goodly*] **Choice and goodly.** Cp. x. 24. Physical qualifications of stature, strength and beauty are a natural commendation for the dignity of a king, especially in warlike ages. Euripides speaks of *εἶδος ἀξίων τυραννίδος*, 'form worthy to rule.'

Ajax appears in Homer (*Il.* III. 227) as

"Towering o'er all with head and shoulders broad:"

and Turnus, in Virgil (*Aen.* VII. 784),

"Out-tops the foremost chieftains by a head."

### 3—10. SAUL'S SEARCH FOR HIS FATHER'S ASSES.

3. *the asses*] In the East asses are valuable property, indispensable for farm-work and travelling. The possession of a drove of asses, and several servants, indicates that Kish was a man of some substance.

4, 5. Saul's route cannot be traced with any certainty. He started from his home at Gibeah apparently in a N.W. direction (1) through "Mount Ephraim" (see i. 1, note); (2) through "the land of Shalisha," perhaps the district round Baal-shalisha (2 Kings iv. 42), which lay about 12 miles N. of Lydda; (3) then turning S. he traversed "the land of Shalim" (=foxes), perhaps in the neighbourhood of Shaalabbin (Josh. xix. 42) in Dan; (4) then striking E. he searched the western part of the "land of Benjamin," till he reached (5) "the land of Zuph," in which lay Samuel's city Ramah. The search occupied parts of three days (v. 20). It seems best to suppose that the unnamed city of v. 6 ff. is Ramah, for (a) the servant speaks of it as the prophet's regular residence (v. 6); (b) it is natural to connect "the land of Zuph," in which it was situated, with the name Ramathaim-Zophim (i. 1, note); (c) the difficulty raised by the description of Saul's return in ch. x. 2 (see note) may be solved by supposing that he did not go straight home, but was sent by the prophet out of his way in order to meet the men who were looking for him.

the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not. *And* <sup>5</sup> when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and take thought for us. And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a <sup>6</sup> man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go. Then said <sup>7</sup> Saul to his servant, But behold, *if* we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and *there is* not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we? And the servant answered Saul again, and said, <sup>8</sup> Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: *that* will I give to the man of God, to tell us our

5. *take thought for us*] i.e. "*be anxious*," as in Matt. vi. 25. Cp. x. 2.

6. *in this city*] Pointing to the town on a hill in front of them.

*a man of God*] See note on ii. 27.

*he is an honourable man*] Lit., **the man is highly esteemed.**

*all that he saith, &c.*] Cp. iii. 19.

*peradventure*] Derived from *per*, "by," and *adventura*, late Latin for "that which is about to happen," "chance," = "perchance," "perhaps."

*our way that we should go*] Rather, **our way upon which we have come**: i.e. shew us which way to go to attain the object of our journey. Cp. Gen. xxiv. 42.

It seems strange that Saul apparently knows nothing about Samuel. But the days of Samuel's greatest activity were long past, and he had for some time been living in comparative retirement: while "up to this point Saul had been only the shy and retiring youth of the family, employed in the common work of the farm," and knowing little of the political or religious movements of the time.

7. *a present*] A word occurring here only, to denote the present with which one *approaches* a great man. The cognate verb is found in Is. lvii. 9, "Thou *wentest* to the king with ointment." For presents offered to *prophets* compare 1 Kings xiv. 3; 2 Kings v. 15 ff., viii. 8, 9: and for the present of *bread* which Saul suggests they might have given compare the "handfuls of barley and pieces of bread" received by the false prophetesses in Ezek. xiii. 19. See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. *Gifts*.

8. *the fourth part of a shekel of silver*] Worth rather more than sixpence according to the present price of silver: but we have no clue to its *real value* in the time of Samuel.

*that will I give*] Sept. "And **thou** shalt give it;" certainly a more natural reading, as the present would be made by the master.

- 9 way. (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is now called* a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)  
 10 Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God *was*.

#### 11—14. *Inquiry for the seer.*

- 11 *And* as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the  
 12 seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, *he is* before you: make haste now, for he came to

9. *Beforetime in Israel*] This verse is clearly an *addition* to the original narrative to explain the term "seer" which had become obsolete when the book was compiled in its present form. It is inserted here and not after v. 11 where the term first occurs, to avoid interrupting the narrative.

(i) Two Hebrew words are translated "*seer*" in the E.V.

(1) That used here (*rôêh*) is applied specially to Samuel in this chapter and in 1 Chr. ix. 22, xxvi. 28, xxix. 29: to Hanani, 2 Chr. xvi. 7, 10: generally, Is. xxx. 10. Apparently it fell out of popular use after Samuel's time, but was revived as a classical word by the compiler of Chronicles.

(2) Elsewhere in the E.V. "*seer*" represents the Heb. *chôzeh* = "*gazer*," a term applied first to Gad (2 Sam. xxiv. 11) and used in the historical and prophetic books both of particular individuals and generally.

(ii) The term "*prophet*" (Heb. *nâbî*) maintains its ground throughout the O.T. The root of the word seems to denote "bubbling over" and so "*ecstatic utterance*:" and the passive form of the substantive signifies that the prophet is swayed by a divine afflatus.

The exact difference of meaning of these terms is much debated. Probably *nâbî* designates the prophet as *the inspired interpreter of the will of God*: *rôeh* and *chôzeh* refer to *the method of communication by dream and vision*. Cp. Num. xii. 6.

#### 11—14. INQUIRY FOR THE SEER.

11. *as they went up*] **As they were ascending by the ascent to the city.** The Hebrew has a peculiar construction, the repetition of which is characteristic of this chapter. Cp. vv. 5, 14, 17, 27.

*young maidens going out to draw water*] Cp. Gen. xxiv. 15, xxix. 9 ff.; Ex. ii. 16; John iv. 7. The well was in the lower ground outside the city wall.

12. *he is before you*] **Before thee**, addressing the speaker. It is a direction to go straight forward.



day to the city; for *there is* a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place: as soon as ye be come *into* <sup>13</sup> the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about *this* time ye shall find him. And they went up *into* <sup>14</sup> the city: *and* when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up *to* the high place.

15—24. *Saul entertained by Samuel.*

Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before <sup>15</sup>

*he came to day to the city*] If "the city" was Ramah, Samuel may have been absent from home on one of his official circuits.

*a sacrifice of the people*] Possibly at the New Moon (Num. xxviii. 11—15) or upon some special occasion of thanksgiving.

*in the high place*] Here probably was the altar which Samuel had built (vii. 17). A natural instinct among all nations chooses hill-tops as fitting places of worship. Such "high places" were frequently consecrated to the worship of Jehovah in spite of the prohibition implied in the command that there should be only one sanctuary (Deut. xii. 11—14). That this was the case in the unsettled period of the Judges is not surprising, but even after the building of the temple the high-place worship continued, though it is condemned in the books of Kings as a blot on the character of otherwise good monarchs.

13. *he doth bless the sacrifice*] Pronounces a blessing or thanksgiving over the sacrificial feast. Cp. Luke ix. 16 with John vi. 11; Matt. xxvi. 26.

*for about this time*] Lit. "For as for **him**—**now** shall ye find him." The pronoun is repeated for emphasis.

14. *and when they were come into the city*] Rather, **as they were coming into the midst of the city, behold Samuel was coming out to meet them**. In the E. V. this verse apparently disagrees with v. 18. The correct translation makes all clear. Saul and his servant ascend the hill. As they enter the city they meet Samuel "in the gate" (v. 18).

The Sept. reads "gate" here, and "city" in v. 18, but the change is unnecessary.

The high place was either on the top of the hill on the slope of which the city stood, or on the adjacent hill from which the city had its name Ramathaim ("the two heights"). See note on i. 1.

'*Against*' here = '*opposite to*,' as in Gen. xv. 10. So Tyndale in Gen. xxxii. 1 has "Jacob saw the angels of God come *against* him."

15—24. SAUL ENTERTAINED BY SAMUEL.

15. *Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear*] Lit. "had uncovered



- 16 Saul came, saying, To morrow about *this* time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that *he* may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto
- 17 me. And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of: this *same* shall
- 18 reign over my people. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's
- 19 house *is*. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer: go up before me *unto* the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will
- 20 tell thee all that *is* in thine heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel?

Samuel's ear," a figure of speech said to be derived from the practice of removing the hair or a corner of the turban from another's ear in order to whisper a secret into it.

16. *out of the hand of the Philistines*] See note on vii. 13.

*I have looked upon my people*] Sept. "I have looked upon the affliction of my people." The word might easily have fallen out of the Hebrew text. Cp. Ex. iii. 7, 9.

17. *the LORD said unto him*] Lit. **Jehovah answered him**; answered his mental question, Is this the man? v. 17 is in close connexion with v. 14, vv. 15 and 16 forming a parenthesis.

*shall reign over my people*] Lit. "shall *restrain* my people." A peculiar word, contrasting the restraints of a settled government with the license of the time in which "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. xxi. 25).

18. *in the gate*] Heb. "In the midst of the gate," i. e. the gateway, where they would naturally halt to inquire for the Seer's house.

19. *go up before me*] Addressed to Saul only. The verb is in the singular. Saul is to precede Samuel as a mark of honour.

*all that is in thine heart*] Thine inmost thoughts and aspirations; not merely about the asses, which Samuel tells him at once. May we not suppose that Saul at his plough like Joan of Arc with her flock had been brooding over the oppression of his country, and cherishing a vague desire to liberate it?

20. *three days ago*] Heb. "to-day three days" = "the day before yesterday," according to the *inclusive* Hebrew reckoning.

*set not thy mind on them*] "Set not **thy heart** on them." Be not anxious for them.

*on whom is all the desire of Israel*] Rather, **For whom are all the desirable things of Israel? are they not for thee and for all thy father's house?** i. e. 'Care not for these asses for they are found: and

*Is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's house? And Saul <sup>21</sup> answered and said, *Am* not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me? And Samuel took Saul and his servant, <sup>22</sup> and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, <sup>23</sup> Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the shoulder, <sup>24</sup> and *that* which *was* upon it, and set *it* before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left; set *it* before thee,

even if they were lost, what matter? is not the best that Israel has to give at thy service?

**21.** *the smallest of the tribes of Israel*] The warlike tribe of Benjamin, the smallest except Manasseh at the time of the numbering in the wilderness (Num. i. 37), was reduced to insignificance by the terrible slaughter recorded in Jud. xx. 46.

*of the tribe of Benjamin*] Heb. **the tribes**. If this reading is right, *tribe* here = *clan* or subdivision of a tribe, as in Num. iv. 18; Jud. xx. 12 (Heb. *tribes* of B.). But the Sept. and all ancient versions read "tribe" in the singular.

**22.** *the parlour*] Or, **the chamber**, a room at the high place specially used for sacrificial feasts. In later times the word was applied to the "chambers" in the precincts of the temple used for the residence of priests and Levites, and for sacred purposes in general.

*made them sit in the chiefest place*] Lit. "gave them a place at the head of those who were invited." "Chiefest" is an instance of the double superlatives common in the E. V. Cp. "most highest." See the *Bible Word Book*.

*about thirty persons*] Only the more distinguished citizens would be specially invited to the chamber. The rest would feast in the open air outside.

**23.** *the portion*] Cp. i. 4.

**24.** *And the cook took up the shoulder*] Rather, **And the cook heaved the leg**. The right leg was the priest's portion (Lev. vii. 32), which Samuel had received. Its dedication to God was indicated by a solemn "heaving" or elevation "before the LORD," to which allusion is here made. Cp. Num. xviii. 26 ff. The reservation of the leg for Saul was a mark of honour. Josephus calls it "a royal portion."

*And [Samuel] said*] The E. V. follows the Sept. and Vulg. in supplying *Samuel* which is not in the Heb. But the words may possibly be the cook's. See below.

*Behold that which is left, &c.*] Or, *Behold that which was reserved is set before thee, eat.*

and eat: for unto *this* time *hath* it been kept for thee since *I* said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

25—X. 8. *Saul anointed by Samuel and promised three signs in confirmation of his call.*

25 And when they were come down from the high place *into*  
the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the  
26 house. And they arose early: and it came to pass about  
the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of  
the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And  
Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel,  
27 abroad. *And* as they were going down to the end of the

*for unto this time, &c.]* The Heb. text cannot be thus translated and is most likely corrupt, but the sense intended appears to be "For against the set time hath it been kept for thee of which I said, I have invited the people:" or, if the words are the cook's, "of which Samuel said." In either case the point is that Saul's arrival was expected and provision made for it beforehand.

The Sept. renders "Because for a testimony (this is a common mistranslation of the word meaning "set time") hath it been reserved for thee apart from the rest; cut it up." The Vulg. "Because it was kept on purpose for thee when I invited the people."

25—X. 8. SAUL ANOINTED BY SAMUEL AND PROMISED THREE SIGNS IN CONFIRMATION OF HIS CALL.

25, 26. *Samuel communed with Saul]* Preparing him for the announcement which he was going to make next morning. On the housetop they would be open to the public view so that all could see the honour Samuel shewed his guest, while they would have opportunity for undisturbed conversation. The Sept. however reads, "And he came down from the high place into the city: and they prepared a bed for Saul on the housetop and he slept. And it came to pass, &c." This may perhaps represent the original text, for it seems strange to say first "they arose early," and then proceed to describe Samuel's calling Saul. The flat roof of an oriental house is still "resorted to for business, relaxation, or for sleeping...During a large part of the year it is the most agreeable place about the establishment, especially in the morning and evening." See Thomson's *Land and the Book*, p. 39 ff.

26. *about the spring of the day]* "spring," i.e. "rising" of the day = dawn. Cp. "dayspring," Luke i. 78.

*called Saul]* Rather, "called to Saul." Samuel had slept in the house, Saul on the roof.

*abroad]* In the language of the E. V. 'abroad' means simply 'out of the house.'



city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God. Then Samuel took a vial of 10 oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it* not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain

**27.** *a while*] **Now.** The E. V. follows the Vulg. *paulisper*.

**X. 1.** *a vial of oil*] Rather, "**the** vial of oil." The word rendered *vial* (i.e. phial or flask) occurs again only in the account of the coronation of Jehu, in 2 Kings ix. 1, 3 (E. V. *box*). The definite article in the original may perhaps indicate the holy anointing oil used for the consecration of priests (Ex. xxx. 23—33).

*and kissed him*] In token of reverence and homage to his royal dignity. Cp. Ps. ii. 12.

*Is it not because the LORD*] Lit., "Is it not the case that Jehovah" = **Surely Jehovah**, &c.

*hath anointed thee*] The rite of *anointing* (*a*) signified the consecration of the king to the service of God; (*b*) was the outward sign of the gift of the Spirit to qualify him for his office (*vv.* 9, 10, xvi. 13, cp. Acts x. 38); (*c*) marked his person as sacred and inviolable (ch. xxvi. 9; 2 Sam. i. 14).

The title "the LORD's anointed" (Sept. Χριστὸς Κυρίου, cp. Luke ii. 26), designating the theocratic King as the Vicegerent of Jehovah, is characteristic of the books of Samuel and the Psalms. It never occurs in Kings, when the true idea of the kingdom had been lost.

*Priests* (Ex. xl. 15; Lev. viii. 12), *prophets* in some cases (1 Kings xix. 16), and *kings*, were consecrated by anointing, and formed partial types and foreshadowings of THE MESSIAH (derived from the Hebrew word Mâshîach = anointed, through the Greek form Μεσσίας), i.e. THE ANOINTED ONE, THE CHRIST, who united in Himself all three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King.

According to Jewish tradition, anointing was only necessary when a new dynasty came to the throne or the succession was disputed. Hence we only find mention of it in the case of Saul; David (ch. xvi. 3; 2 Sam. ii. 4, v. 3); Absalom (2 Sam. xix. 10); Solomon (1 Kings i. 39); Joash (2 Kings xi. 12); Jehoahaz, who was not the eldest son of Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 30); Jehu (2 Kings ix. 3).

The ceremonies of this first recorded coronation are still observed in England. The anointing is performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the kiss of homage is given by the Archbishop, bishops, and premier peer of each rank for the rest of his order.

The Sept. reads "Hath not the Lord anointed thee to be ruler over his people Israel? And thou shalt rule the people of the Lord, and thou shalt save them out of the hand of their enemies. And this shall be the sign unto thee that the Lord hath anointed thee to be ruler over his inheritance. When, &c." The Vulgate also contains the greater part of this addition, which seems to be required to connect *vv.* 1 and 2. Its omission in the Hebrew may be accounted for by what is called



- 2 over his inheritance? When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth  
3 for you, saying, What shall I do for my son? Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going

*Homoeoteleuton.* When two sentences end with the same words, the scribe's eye is liable to catch the second instead of the first, so that he omits the intervening words.

*his inheritance]* Cp. Deut. xxxii. 9; Ps. lxxviii. 71, &c.

2. *Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah]* In Gen. xxxv. 16—20, xlvi. 7, Rachel's grave is described as on the road from Bethel to Ephrath which is Bethlehem, a little way from Ephrath. This agrees with the site now marked by a tomb called *Kubbet Rahil* (dome of Rachel) a mile N. of Bethlehem. But if this is the true site of Rachel's sepulchre, it is not easy to reconcile it with the notice here. (a) It is at least 4 miles S. of the southern border of Benjamin. (b) Supposing "the city" to be Ramah (see note on ix. 4, 5), it is hard to see why Saul should be sent so far out of his way home. Various attempts have been made to explain the difficulty. (1) Thenius thinks that the *Ephrath* mentioned in Genesis was not Bethlehem, but a town in the neighbourhood of Ramah and Gibeah, so that Rachel's sepulchre would be on the *northern* frontier of Benjamin. This involves rejecting (a) the statement in Genesis that Ephrath was Bethlehem, as a mistaken gloss, (b) the modern site of the tomb. (2) Keil supposes that the city from which Saul started was not Ramah, but some unknown city in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. But the general impression given by the whole chapter is that the city was the seer's usual residence. (3) The most plausible explanation seems to be that Samuel purposely sent Saul out of his way in order that he might meet the two men; and that the expressions "**near** Rachel's sepulchre" and "in the border of Benjamin" must be understood as applied to Zelzah, which lay between the two, with considerable latitude.

In our uncertainty as to the exact sites, the true solution must remain uncertain.

*at Zelzah]* This place is mentioned nowhere else and cannot be identified. The Sept. does not regard it as a proper name, but translates it "two men *leaping vigorously*." The Vulg. renders "*in the south*."

*and sorroweth]* **And is anxious**, the same word as in ix. 5.

3. *the plain of Tabor]* Rather, **the oak of Tabor**. It has been ingeniously conjectured that this is to be identified with the oak under which Rebekah's nurse Deborah was buried "under Bethel" (Gen. xxxv. 8), and the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel under which Deborah judged Israel (Jud. iv. 5), *Tabor* being either a corruption

up to God *to* Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: and they will salute thee, and give thee two <sup>4</sup> *loaves* of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the <sup>5</sup> garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither *to* the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: and the spirit of the LORD <sup>6</sup>

or dialectic variation for *Deborah*; but nothing certain is known about the place.

*going up to God to Bethel*] On the sanctuary at Bethel see note on vii. 16. As yet the presence of God was only connected with holy places, or the Ark, and the Omnipresence of God scarcely realised. See Gen. xxviii. 16 and 1 Sam. xiv. 36.

*a bottle of wine*] i.e. a skin bottle: Sept. *δοκός*. Cp. i. 24.

<sup>4</sup>. *two loaves of bread*] An unconscious act of homage to the newly-anointed king. As the representative of God he receives a share of the offerings intended for the sanctuary.

<sup>5</sup>. *the hill of God*] Or, **Gibeah of God**. *Gibeah* is the term used to denote 'the bald rounded hills of central Palestine.' This eminence was distinguished as *Gibeah of God*, or *God's hill*, from the place of worship on its summit. It is probably to be identified with (a) *Gibeah of Benjamin*, which was a place of considerable importance (Jud. xix. xx., compare 1 Sam. xiii. 2, &c.); and (b) *Gibeah of Saul*, Saul's residence (x. 26, xi. 4). Its site is supposed by Dr Robinson to be the conspicuous hill called *Tell el Fûl* (*hill of the bean*), about 3 miles N. of Jerusalem; but Lieut. Conder inclines to the view that Saul's city was *Geba*, and that the district round was first called *Gibeah of Benjamin*, afterwards *Gibeah of Saul*. *Tent Work*, II. 111. *Geba* is no doubt to be identified with *Jeba*, about 3 miles N. E. of *Tell el Fûl*.

*the garrison of the Philistines*] A military post established by the Philistines to maintain their hold upon the Israelites. See note on vii. 14. Cp. xiii. 3, 4 and 2 Sam. viii. 6, 14. The word has been otherwise explained to mean (a) a *pillar*, set up to mark the Philistine conquest, or (b) an *officer* for the collection of taxes; but 1 Chr. xi. 16 seems to require the sense "*garrison*."

*a company of prophets*] A band of the organized society of prophets established by Samuel. See *Intro.* p. 33, and cp. xix. 20.

*and they shall prophesy*] Better, **prophesying**. The word has nothing to do with *prediction* here, but denotes the expression of religious feeling under the influence of inspiration in hymns and otherwise. See the notes on ix. 9 and xviii. 10. In 1 Chr. xxv. 1—3 the word is used of *chanting* psalms and set services. Such a procession of prophets was naturally accompanied by musical instruments. Cp. Ex. xv. 20; 1 Chr.

will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them,  
 7 and shalt be turned into another man. And let it be, when  
 these signs are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occasion  
 8 serve thee; for God *is* with thee. And thou shalt go down  
 before me *to* Gilgal; and behold, I will come down unto  
 thee, to offer burnt offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of  
 peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to  
 thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

9—16. *The fulfilment of the signs.*

9 And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go  
 from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those  
 10 signs came to pass that day. And when they came thither  
 to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and  
 the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among

xiii. 8; 2 Kings iii. 15. The psaltery (Heb. *nebel*) and harp (Heb. *kinnôr*) were stringed instruments, the exact form of which is unknown: the tabret or timbrel (Heb. *tôph*) was a tambourine or hand drum: the pipe (Heb. *châlîl*) a kind of flute.

6. *the spirit of the LORD will come upon thee*] See Num. xi. 25—29; Jud. xiv. 6, 19, xv. 14; 1 Sam. xi. 6, xvi. 13.

7. *do as occasion serve thee*] Lit. "do what thine hand shall find;" undertake boldly whatever presents itself. Cp. Jud. ix. 33; Eccl. ix. 10.

8. *thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal*] Better, **and when thou goest down before me to Gilgal**. This is not to be understood as a direction to meet Samuel at Gilgal at once. The injunction applies to some future occasion whenever it might be, of which they had been talking. Doubtless Samuel and Saul had been discussing the best means of shaking off the Philistine yoke, and had agreed upon a muster of the people at Gilgal, as the national centre furthest from the Philistine power. Samuel's parting injunction to Saul is to take no step independently. The king must wait for the prophet's sanction to strike the blow. The fitting opportunity for the muster did not come for several years, and when it came Saul disobeyed Samuel's command. See xiii. 8 ff.

9—16. THE FULFILMENT OF THE SIGNS.

9. *God gave him another heart*] Lit. "**turned** him another heart." Cp. v. 6. The divine inspiration transformed the simple countryman into the King and Deliverer of Israel. The *heart* in Scripture denotes "the centre of the whole mental and spiritual life of will, desire, thought, perception, and feeling."

10. *to the hill*] Rather, **to Gibeah**. See note on v. 5. The narrator cursorily mentions the fulfilment of the first and second signs, but relates the fulfilment of the third in detail, because it has an important bearing on Saul's preparation for his new office.



them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him before-<sup>11</sup> time saw that behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What *is* this *that* is come unto the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets? And one of the same place answered and said,<sup>12</sup> But who *is* their father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is* Saul also among the prophets? And when he had made an<sup>13</sup> end of prophesying, he came *to* the high place. And Saul's<sup>14</sup> uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that *they* *were* no where, we came to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said,<sup>15</sup> Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you. And<sup>16</sup> Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

**11.** *all that knew him beforetime*] An indication that Gibeah was Saul's home. Cp. vv. 14, 26.

**11, 12.** Saul's neighbours were astonished that the son of Kish, the plain citizen, undistinguished save by his stalwart form and handsome countenance, should suddenly appear as a prophet in the midst of the trained recipients of divine inspiration. But one of their fellow-townsmen reproved them by asking, But who is *their* father? Was the parentage of these prophets such as to lead us to expect them to be thus specially gifted? The prophetic inspiration comes from God, and may therefore be bestowed even upon the son of Kish. See Amos vii. 14, 15. Compare the astonishment of the people of Capernaum at the words and works of Christ (Matt. xiii. 54—57).

**12.** *it became a proverb*] Applied probably to the unexpected appearance of any person in a novel character alien to his former occupation and habits. The proverb received a fresh exemplification in the occurrence related in ch. xix. 24.

**13.** *he came to the high place*] When Saul parted from the company of prophets which he met descending from the high-place, he went up there himself to worship.

**14.** *Saul's uncle*] Possibly Ner. See note on xiv. 50. He may have been at the high-place for some public solemnity, at which the prophets also had been present; or the conversation may have occurred on a subsequent occasion.

**16.** *But of the matter &c.*] Modesty, humility, caution, have been variously assigned as his motive for silence. But Samuel's manner had clearly implied that his election was to be a secret for the present, even if he had given no direct injunction to that effect.

#### 17—27. THE PUBLIC ELECTION OF SAUL AS KING.

The thread of the narrative in ch. viii., which has been temporarily



17—27. *The Public election of Saul as King.*

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to  
 18 Mizpeh; and said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith  
 the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt,  
 and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and  
 out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppres-  
 19 sed you: and ye have *this* day rejected your God, who him-  
 self saved you out of all your adversities and your tribula-  
 tions; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over

dropped in order to give an account of the circumstances by which Samuel was privately made acquainted with the man whom Jehovah had chosen to rule his people, is now resumed, and Saul's public election by lot to the regal office described. Since the revelation to Samuel and the choice by lot were equally declarations of Jehovah's will, there could be no contradiction between them: the latter publicly confirmed the former for the satisfaction of the people.

17. *Samuel called the people together*] He convoked the national assembly or "congregation of Israel," which had made the request for a king through its representative elders (viii. 4). This body was composed of all Israelites of twenty years old and upwards (Num. i. 3) who had not forfeited their privileges, together with foreigners admitted upon certain conditions. Its political functions were necessarily limited by the nature of the theocracy, and consisted rather in accepting the declared will of Jehovah than in originating measures of its own. Thus:

- (1) The Law was solemnly accepted by it (Ex. xix. 3—9, xxiv. 3).
- (2) Leaders and kings chosen by divine command were presented to it for approval, as on the present occasion, and in the case of Joshua (Num. xxvii. 18—23); David (2 Sam. v. 1); Solomon (1 Chron. xxix. 22).
- (3) In later times some of the kings appear to have been actually elected by it: e. g. Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 20); Joash (2 Kings xi. 19); Josiah (2 Kings xxi. 24); Jehoahaz (2 Kings xxiii. 30).
- (4) It possessed a national judicial authority (Jud. xx. 1).
- (5) It claimed some voice in questions of alliance and peace and war (Josh. ix. 15, 18).

*unto the LORD to Mizpeh*] See note on v. 3; and for Mizpah see note on vii. 5.

18. *I brought up Israel*] **It was I who brought up Israel.** The pronoun is emphatic, in contrast to **and ye** with which v. 19 begins.

*out of the hand of all kingdoms, [and of them] that oppressed you*] Rather, **out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you.** The reference is to the deliverances recorded in the Book of Judges.

19. *And ye have this day rejected your God*] Once more the prophet is directed to rebuke the people for their ingratitude and unbelief. See above on viii. 6.

*ye have said unto him*] The request made to Samuel was virtually addressed to God.

us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands. And when Samuel had <sup>20</sup> caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he had caused the tribe of <sup>21</sup> Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they <sup>22</sup> inquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come

*by your tribes, and by your thousands*] The natural subdivision of the nation into *tribes*: of the tribes into *families*, or *clans*: of the families into *houses*: of the houses into *men* (Josh. vii. 14): was supplemented by Moses with an artificial organization of *thousands*, *hundreds*, *fifties*, and *tens* (Ex. xviii. 25). The *thousand* corresponded to the *family*, and the terms appear to be used here as synonymous. Cp. ch. xxiii. 23; Jud. vi. 15; Josh. xxii. 14.

20. We are not told expressly by what process the selection was made, but it was probably by casting lots. Compare Joshua vii. 14 ff. The lot was in common use among all nations of antiquity. It is regarded in Scripture not as a chance decision, but as a legitimate method of ascertaining the divine will (Prov. xvi. 33). We read of its being used—

- (1) To select an attacking force (Jud. xx. 9, 10).
- (2) For the allotment of conquered territory or spoil (Josh. xviii. 10; cp. Joel iii. 3).
- (3) To detect criminals (Josh. vii. 14; 1 Sam. xiv. 42).
- (4) For the choice of officers, &c. (1 Chron. xxiv. 5; Luke i. 9; Acts i. 26).
- (5) For the selection of the scape-goat (Lev. xvi. 8, 10).
- (6) For the settlement of disputes generally (Prov. xviii. 18).

21. *the family of Matri*] The family of **the Matrites** is nowhere else mentioned. It has therefore been conjectured that we should read *Bikrites*, or descendants of Becher the son of Benjamin (1 Chr. vii. 6).

*Saul the son of Kish was taken*] The description of the process of casting lots is abridged. The family taken would be brought by *houses*, and the house taken then brought by *persons*. The Sept. inserts "and they bring the family of Mattari man by man," which must be understood, as in Josh. vii. 17, to mean the heads of houses only, not all the individuals of the family, which would be far too long a process. In this way Kish would be taken, and finally, when he brought his household forward man by man, Saul was taken.

*he could not be found*] Natural feelings of modesty and humility prompted Saul to hide himself. He knew already that he was the object of God's choice, but he would not appear to court advancement, or in any way put himself forward for the royal dignity.

22. *they inquired of the LORD further*] The technical phrase for ascertaining God's will by means of the Urim and Thummim in the

thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid  
 23 himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him  
 thence: and when he stood among the people, he was  
 higher than any of the people from his shoulders and up-  
 24 ward. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom  
 the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among  
 all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God  
 25 save the king. Then Samuel told the people the manner of  
 the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before  
 the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every  
 26 man to his house. And Saul also went home to Gibeah;

breastplate upon the High-priest's Ephod (Ex. xxviii. 30; Num. xxvii. 21). See on xxviii. 6, and cp. ch. xiv. 3, xxii. 10, xxiii. 9, xxx. 7.

*the stuff*] **The baggage** of the people who had come to Mizpah from a distance. Compare

"Therefore away to get our *stuff* aboard."

SHAKESPEARE, *Com. of Errors*, IV. 4.

24. *that there is none like him among all the people*] Stress is again laid on Saul's imposing stature as a natural qualification for his office. He was "a princely person and of a majestic aspect." See note on ix. 2.

*God save the king*] Lit. "Let the king live." Vulg. "Vivat Rex:" and so the Fr. "Vive le Roi," and so Wyclif: "Lyve the kyng." Cp. 1 Kings i. 25, 34, 39; 2 Kings xi. 12; 2 Chr. xxiii. 11. The familiar phrase of the E. V. appears to occur first in the Genevan Bible (1560). Coverdale (1535) has "God save the new kynge." It was probably adopted from the liturgical response, "O Lord save the king" (Domine saluum fac regem), which is taken from the Vulgate version of Ps. xx. 9.

25. *the manner of the kingdom*] A charter establishing and defining the position of the king in relation to Jehovah, and to the people. It must be distinguished from the "manner of the king" in viii. 11 ff., which describes the arbitrary exactions of an oriental despot; but it can scarcely be said to be "the first example of a limited constitutional monarchy." In substance at any rate, it probably resembled the law of the king in Deut. xvii. 14—20.

*wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD*] Lit. **in the book**. Possibly this important charter was added to "the book of the law" kept by the side of the ark "before the LORD" (Deut. xxxi. 26). This book contained not only the record of the Mosaic legislation (Ex. xxiv. 7; Deut. xxviii. 61), but historical narratives (Ex. xvii. 14), and other records of importance, such as the solemn renewal of the covenant at Shechem under Joshua (Josh. xxiv. 26). See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. Canon, Vol. I. p. 251.



and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, How shall <sup>27</sup> this *man* save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

CH. XI. 1—11. *Saul's victory over the Ammonites.*

Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped <sup>11</sup>

**26.** *there went with him a band of men]* Or, **the valiant men.** Saul was escorted home by those who accepted him as the choice of Jehovah, but

**27.** *the children of Belial said]* **Certain worthless fellows** (see note on i. 16) spoke disparagingly of him, and despised him.

*and brought him no presents]* Cp. 1 Kings x. 25; 2 Chr. xvii. 5. The refusal of the customary offerings of homage was tantamount to a deliberate and contemptuous rejection of his authority.

*But he held his peace]* Or, **And he was as one deaf**, refusing to take notice of this studied insult. See however the note on xi. 1.

CH. XI. 1—11. SAUL'S VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES.

**1.** *Then]* Simply **And.** There is nothing in the Hebrew text to mark whether the interval was long or short. The Sept. however omits the words "But he held his peace" at the close of ch. x., and begins this chapter "And it came to pass after about a month that Nahash, &c." This rendering represents a very slight variation in the consonants of the Hebrew text, and possibly preserves the original reading. At any rate we may gather from ch. xii. 12 that an Ammonite attack was threatened before Saul's election, and probably the actual invasion took place not long after.

*Nahash]* The king of the Ammonites (ch. xii. 12). This Nahash can hardly have been the Nahash who "shewed kindness to David" during his wanderings (2 Sam. x. 2), but probably his father or grandfather. According to Josephus he was slain in the battle.

*the Ammonite]* South and East of the Israelite settlements on the Eastern side of the Jordan dwelt the powerful tribes of the Ammonites and Moabites. The limits of their respective territories cannot be exactly defined, but the Ammonites appear to have lived north and the Moabites south of the Arnon. The Ammonites were a fierce marauding tribe: the Moabites a settled and civilised nation. United by the tie of common descent from Lot, they were generally in alliance against Israel. Twice during the period of the Judges they "oppressed Israel" (Jud. iii. 12—14, x. xi), and even crossed the Jordan and occupied Jericho (iii. 13, x. 9). After their defeat by Jephthah, the Ammonites are not mentioned until the present occasion. During the early part of David's reign they were on friendly terms with him, but the studied insult offered by Hanun to his ambassadors (2 Sam. x. 1 ff.) led to a war which resulted in the capture of their metropolis Rabbah



against Jabesh-gilead : and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.  
 2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a *covenant* with you, that *I* may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel.  
 3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel : and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will  
 4 come out to thee. Then came the messengers *to* Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people : and  
 5 all the people lift up their voices, and wept. And behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field ; and Saul said,

(2 Sam. xii. 26). In the reign of Jehoshaphat they once more invaded Judah in conjunction with the Moabites (2 Chr. xx), but were signally defeated, and became tributary to Uzziah and Jotham (2 Chr. xxvi. 8, xxvii. 5). Even after the Return their old hostility survived (Neh. iv. 7, 8). Judas Maccabaeus found them "a mighty power," and "fought many battles with them until at length they were discomfited before him" (1 Macc. v. 6, 7).

*Jabesh-Gilead*] i.e. Jabesh in Gilead, the extensive district lying immediately E. of the Jordan between Bashan on the N. and Moab and Ammon on the S. and S.E. To the southern portion of this district the Ammonites laid claim (Jud. xi. 13). A terrible vengeance had been executed on Jabesh for its neglect to join the levy of Israel in the war against Benjamin (Jud. xxi. 8 ff.), but from this blow it had recovered, and Nahash now attacked it as the capital of Gilead, and the key to the possession of the country. The name of Jabesh still survives in the *Wady Yâbis*, which runs down into the Jordan valley a few miles below Beth-shan. It is a lovely valley, full of straggling old olives, patches of barley, and rich pasture. Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 556.

2. *that I may thrust out all your right eyes*] Such barbarities are not unknown in the East even now. Vambéry describes the blinding of prisoners as a regular practice at Khiva. *Travels in Central Asia*, p. 138. The savage character of the Ammonites is attested by Amos i. 13. The loss of the right eye was intended to disable them for war, the left eye being covered by the shield, as the amputation of his thumbs and great toes (Jud. i. 7, 8) was designed to incapacitate a man for the use of the bow and destroy his swiftness of foot.

3. *the elders of Jabesh*] See note on ch. viii. 4, and cp. Jud. xi. 5 ff.

4. *lift up their voices and wept*] Oriental nations naturally display their feelings in tears accompanied by loud wailings. Cp. ch. xxx. 4; Gen. xxvii. 38; Jud. ii. 4, xxi. 2, &c. Achilles, Patroclus and other Homeric heroes shed tears in a way which western nations account utterly unmanly.

5. *after the herd*] **After the oxen**, as in v. 7. The king elect had

What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh. And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty.

returned to his farm work till occasion should call him to higher duties. So Cincinnatus was following the plough, when the messengers of the senate came to offer him the dictatorship (Livy III. 26).

6. *the spirit of God came upon Saul*] The Heb. for "came upon" describes a sudden and pervading impulse. (Sept. ἐφύλατο: Vulg. insilivit.) A supernatural accession of physical and mental vigour roused his dormant energies into action, and enabled him to meet the crisis promptly.

7. *he took a yoke of oxen*] Those doubtless with which he had just been ploughing (v. 5).

*and sent them*] 'Them,' i.e. the pieces, is rightly supplied. Symbolical acts are often more eloquent than any words. Cp. Jud. xix. 29; 1 Kings xi. 30, xxii. 11; 2 Kings xiii. 18. We may compare the Fiery Cross which used to be sent round as the signal for the gathering of the Highland clans in Scotland. It was "scathed with flame," and "quenched in blood" as an emblem of the fire and sword awaiting all who should neglect its summons. See *The Lady of the Lake*, Canto III., Stanzas 8—11.

*by the hands of messengers*] By the hand of the messengers, viz. those who had come from Jabesh.

*after Saul and after Samuel*] Saul strengthens himself in his new office by an appeal to the time-honoured name and prophetic authority of Samuel.

*the fear of the LORD, &c.*] Awe inspired by Jehovah supported the authority of His King and His Prophet; the people left their homes and came out to the rendezvous as one man.

8. *in Bezek*] Probably to be identified with *Ibzîk*, about half way between Shechem and Beth-shan, and 7 miles W. of the Jordan. It was within a day's march of Jabesh.

*three hundred thousand, &c.*] The numbers seem large, but not too large for a general levy of the nation. Cp. Jud. xx. 2. The separate numbering of Israel and Judah has been taken to mark the date of the book as posterior to the Division of the Kingdom. It may however be only an indication of a tendency on the part of Judah to isolation which

9 thousand. And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To morrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed *it* to the men of Jabesh; 10 and they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with 11 us all that seemeth good unto you. And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people *in* three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

12—15. *Confirmation of Saul as King.*

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put 13 them to death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be

was confirmed by the separation in the early part of David's reign, and prepared the way for the Disruption.

9. *ye shall have help*] Or, **deliverance**. The same word is translated "salvation" in v. 13, and the cognate verb "save" in v. 3.

10. *the men of Jabesh said*] To Nahash, in order to lull him into careless security, by leading him to suppose that their efforts to get help had failed.

11. *in three companies*] In order to make a simultaneous attack upon the Ammonite camp on three sides at once. Compare Gideon's stratagem, Jud. vii. 16 ff.

*in the morning watch*] The Jews anciently divided the night into three watches, each watch representing the time for which sentinels remained on duty. The first watch or "beginning of the watches" (Lam. ii. 19) lasted from sunset until 10 p.m.: the "middle watch" (Jud. vii. 19) from 10 p.m. till 2 a.m.: the "morning watch" from 2 a.m. till sunrise. The division of the night into *four* watches referred to in the N. T. (Matt. xiv. 25; Mk. xiii. 35; Acts xii. 4) was of Roman origin.

*they which remained were scattered*] Jabesh was rescued from destruction, and its inhabitants long remembered the debt of gratitude which they owed to Saul. It was the men of Jabesh who at peril of their lives recovered the bodies of Saul and Jonathan from Philistine insults, and gave them honourable burial (ch. xxxi. 11—14): it was Gilead which was the chief centre and stay of the waning fortunes of Saul's house during the early part of the reign of David (2 Sam. ii. 8, 9 ff.).

12—15. CONFIRMATION OF SAUL AS KING.

13. *There shall not a man be put to death this day*] The execution



put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel. Then said Samuel to the people, <sup>14</sup> Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they <sup>15</sup> made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

even of malcontents would have clouded the general rejoicing: and Saul's best hope of uniting the kingdom under his rule lay in a policy of conciliation. Cp. x. 27; 2 Sam. xix. 22.

*salvation*] **Deliverance.** See note on v. 9.

**14.** *Then said Samuel*] From this verse to xii. 22 is the *Haphtarah* or lesson from the Prophets appointed to be read in the Synagogue in conjunction with the history of Korah (Num. xvi).

*to Gilgal*] See note on vii. 16.

*renew the kingdom*] Which had been founded in the national assembly at Mizpah (x. 25).

**15.** *there they made Saul king*] The choice of Saul as king, privately made by God through Samuel, and publicly confirmed by the election at Mizpah, had received an unmistakable ratification in his victory over Nahash. His detractors were silenced, and the unanimous consent of the people accepted him. The assembly now held after the general levy for the war was probably larger and more representative of the whole nation than the previous one at Mizpah.

The Sept. has, "and Samuel anointed Saul there to be king," which may possibly be the original reading. A public anointing would be natural, for that recorded in ch. x. 1 was strictly private, and the use of the title "the LORD's anointed" in ch. xii. 3 gains point if the ceremony had just been performed. That it might be repeated we know from the case of David, who was thrice anointed.

*sacrifices of peace-offerings*] Thank-offerings to Jehovah for the deliverance he had wrought, and for the establishment of the kingdom.

## CH. XII. 1—25. SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

The assembly at Gilgal marks an important epoch in Jewish history. It ratified the work of the assembly at Mizpah, finally closed the period of the Judges, and formally inaugurated the New Monarchy. Samuel, though he was still to retain his influence and authority as *Prophet*, now resigned his office as *Judge*, and in doing so delivered a solemn address to the assembled people.

(a) He challenges them to impeach his official purity (1—3), and is answered by the unanimous confirmation of his integrity (4, 5). (b) Recalling Jehovah's past mercies, he upbraids them with unbelief and ingratitude in demanding a king (6—12). (c) And now their future depends upon their bearing towards Jehovah, in confirmation of which he appeals to a miraculous sign (13—18). (d) Finally Samuel consoles



CH. XII. 1—25. *Samuel's farewell address to the people.*

- 12 And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened  
 unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made  
 2 a king over you. And now behold, the king walketh before  
 you: and I am old and grayheaded; and behold, my sons  
*are* with you: and I have walked before you from my child-  
 3 hood unto this day. Behold, here I *am*: witness against  
 me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox  
 have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have  
 I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand  
 have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?

the terrified people (19), by assuring them of Jehovah's faithfulness (20—22), and his own continued intercession (23), and concludes with a reiterated warning (24, 25).

1. *I have hearkened unto your voice*] Cp. viii. 7, 9, 22.

2. *the king walketh before you*] Goes in and out in your presence in the exercise of his regal authority.

*and I am old and gray-headed; and, behold my sons are with you*] Samuel refers to the two reasons alleged by the elders in ch. viii. 5 for asking a king, (a) his own age, (b) the misgovernment of his sons. He mentions the first expressly, but with the natural reluctance of a father to dwell upon his sons' misconduct, only hints at the second. The Hebrew conjunction "and" here as often introduces the reason, and may be translated by "for" or "seeing that."

*from my childhood*] "From my **youth**," as the word is rendered everywhere else in the E. V. Samuel's public life may be said to have commenced when God first spoke to him in Shiloh (iii. 11), so that they had had full opportunity of knowing him from the first.

3. *Behold, here I am*] Samuel puts himself on his trial. The people are to be the accusers: Jehovah, and His representative Saul are the judges.

*before his anointed*] The title "the anointed of Jehovah" (see x. 1, note) is here for the first time actually applied to the King, though it had been employed before in prophecy (ch. ii. 10, 35). Its use certainly gains point if we may follow the Sept. in xi. 15 (see note), and suppose that the ceremony of anointing had just been performed in the presence of all the people.

*whose ox...whose ass*] The most valuable property of a pastoral and agricultural people, hence named expressly in the Tenth Commandment (Ex. xx. 17). Cp. Num. xvi. 15.

*any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith*] Cp. Ex. xxiii. 8; Deut. xvi.

19.

The Sept. reads here, "from whose hand have I received as a bribe even a pair of shoes? Answer against me, and I will restore it to you." A pair of shoes seems to have been a proverbial expression for *a mere*

and I will restore *it* you. And they said, 'Thou hast not <sup>4</sup> defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The <sup>5</sup> LORD *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness. And Samuel said unto the <sup>6</sup> people, *It is* the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before <sup>7</sup> the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers. When Jacob was come <sup>8</sup> *into* Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. And when they forgot the LORD their God, he sold them <sup>9</sup>

*trifle*, a paltry bribe. See Amos ii. 6, viii. 6. This rendering represents a small change in the consonants of the Heb. text, and may possibly preserve the original reading. At any rate it is as old as the Greek translation of the book of Ecclesiasticus (170—150 B.C.), the author of which must have found it in the Sept. (even if the author of the Hebrew original did not find it in his Hebrew text), for in ch. xlv. 19 we read, "And before his long sleep [Samuel] made protestations in the sight of the Lord and his anointed, I have not taken any man's goods, so much as a shoe: and no man did accuse him."

6. *It is the LORD*] Or, **Yea Jehovah [is witness]**. This verse forms the transition to what follows. Samuel proceeds to identify Jehovah, to whom they were now appealing as witness, with the God who brought their fathers out of the bondage of Egypt.

*advanced*] **Appointed**. Lit. *made*, cp. Hebrews iii. 2.

7. *stand still, that I may reason with you*] **Present yourselves that I may plead with you**. The figure of a trial (v. 3 note) is still kept up; but the relation of the parties is changed. Samuel is now the accuser, Israel the defendant. Cp. Ezek. xx. 35, 36; Mic. vi. 1—5.

*the righteous acts of the LORD*] Punishments for sin and deliverances from distress alike proved the righteousness of Jehovah in His covenant with Israel. Cp. Jud. v. 11.

8. *When Jacob, &c.*] The additions of the Sept. seem necessary to complete the sense. It reads, "When Jacob and his sons were come into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them, your fathers cried," &c. Cp. Ex. ii. 23—25.

9. *he sold them*] God's abandonment of His people to their enemies is described under the figure of *sale*, just as the deliverance of them is called *redemption* or buying back. Cp. Jud. ii. 14, iii. 8; Ps. xlv. 12.

The three chief oppressors of Israel during the period of the Judges are mentioned. (1) The Canaanites, who were led by Sisera, general

into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the  
 10 king of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our  
 11 enemies, and we will serve thee. And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every  
 12 side, and ye dwelled safe. And when ye saw that Nahash

of the army of King Jabin. Their chief city was Hazor (= *stronghold*) situated on the high ground west of the Lake of Merom, where *Jebel Hadîreh* perhaps still preserves the name. This oppression lasted for 20 years. See Jud. iv. v. (2) The Philistines. See Jud. iii. 31, x. 7, xiii. 1, and Note IV. p. 238. (3) The Moabites under Eglon. See Jud. iii. 12—30.

10. *And they cried unto the LORD*] The resemblance of the language to Jud. x. 10 is so close as to lead us to suppose that the compiler of Samuel had the book of Judges before him, or at any rate that the words are derived from a common source. Cp. also Jud. ii. 18, iii. 15, iv. 3, vi. 7.

*Baalim and Ashtaroth*] See note on vii. 3.

11. *And the LORD sent, &c.*] Four typical deliverers of the nation are mentioned. (1) Jerubbaal, who brought the Midianite oppression to an end (Jud. vi.—viii.). His original name *Gideon* was changed to *Jerubbaal* (= *let Baal plead*) for his bold act of piety in destroying the altar of Baal (Jud. vi. 31, 32). (2) Bedan. This name is not found in the book of Judges, but as that book is not a complete history, Bedan may possibly have been the name of a judge not mentioned there. But more probably Bedan is a copyist's error for *Barak*, which is the reading of the Sept. and Syriac. The letters of the two words are much alike. In this case the reference will be to the deliverance from the Canaanite oppression already mentioned (Jud. iv. 6 ff.). Bedan has also been explained as a name of Samson, either = *Ben-Dan*, i.e. *the son of Dan* or Danite (Jud. xiii. 2): or as a bye-name = *corpulent*. (3) Jephthah the Gileadite, who routed the Ammonites (Jud. xi.). (4) Samuel. That Samuel should thus mention himself need not surprise us if we remember (a) that the apparent abruptness of the mention is due to the condensation of the narrative, which gives only a summary of the original speech: (b) that he has resigned his office, and standing as it were outside the era of the Judges, he reviews it as a whole: (c) that in order to point his rebuke of the Israelites for ingratitude to Jehovah in asking a king, it was necessary to prove that He had not forsaken them, but had continued His deliverances down to the present.

12. *And when ye saw*] As the demand for a king preceded the invasion of Nahash recorded in ch. xi, the reference must be to earlier



the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God *was* your king. Now therefore behold <sup>13</sup> the king whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye have desired: and behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. If ye will <sup>14</sup> fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: but if ye will not obey the <sup>15</sup> voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers. Now therefore stand and <sup>16</sup> see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. *Is it* not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the <sup>17</sup> LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent <sup>18</sup> thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared

inroads, or to a threatened attack. This reason for desiring a king is hinted at in viii. 20.

*Nay*] Refusing to listen to my expostulations (viii. 6, 19).

*when the LORD your God was your king*] Cp. Jud. viii. 23.

13. *whom ye have desired*] **Asked**, as in vv. 17, 19. The word however is omitted by the Sept., and may possibly be an addition to the original text.

14. *If ye will fear, &c.*] Better, "**If ye will fear Jehovah, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of Jehovah, and both ye and also the king who reigneth over you continue following after Jehovah your God, [it shall be well with you]: but if, &c.**" The apodosis must be supplied from the context, as in Ex. xxxii. 32.

15. *as it was against your fathers*] As set forth in v. 9. The Sept. however reads, "and against your king," which offers a more complete parallel to v. 15. Cp. v. 25.

17. *he shall send thunder and rain*] "In ordinary seasons from the cessation of the showers in spring [about the end of April] until their commencement in October or November, rain never falls, and the sky is usually serene." Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* I. 430. Wheat harvest was in May and June. See note on vi. 13. "Rain in harvest" served as a figure for what was unseemly and anomalous (Prov. xxvi. 1).

18. *feared the LORD and Samuel*] The unexpected rain was a "sign," attesting the prophet's words. Cp. Ex. xiv. 31.



19 the LORD and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil,  
 20 to ask us a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your  
 21 heart; and turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain *things*, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are*  
 22 vain. For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to  
 23 make you his people. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you:  
 24 but I will teach you the good and the right way: only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for  
 25 consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

CH. XIII. 1—7. *Revolt of the Israelites under Saul from the Philistines.*

13 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two

19. *Pray for thy servants]* See note on vii. 5.

*this evil]* **Wickedness:** the same word as in vv. 17 and 20.

21. *for then should ye go after vain things]* The word "for" necessitates the insertion of a verb to complete the sentence. But it is expressed in none of the ancient versions, and the sense gains by its omission. Translate: "**And ye shall not turn aside after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver.**" "Vain things" are false gods and idols, Heb. *tôhû*, literally *emptiness*. The same word is applied to them in Is. xli. 29 (E. V. confusion), and to idol-makers in Is. xlv. 9. Cp. 1 Cor. viii. 4.

22. *for his great name's sake]* Lest He should seem in the eyes of the heathen not to be such as He declares Himself to be, Almighty, True, Faithful. Compare the use of this plea by Moses (Ex. xxxii. 12; Num. xiv. 13 ff.), and Joshua (Josh. vii. 9). See also Rom. xi. 1, 2.

*it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people]* God's free choice of Israel to be his people is dwelt upon at length in Deut. vii. 6—11.

24. *how great things he hath done for you]* Lit. **with you**. The reference can scarcely be limited to the recent storm as a display of God's greatness, but includes all his gracious dealings with His people. Samuel concludes his speech as he began it (vv. 6, 7), with an appeal to these as the motive for loyal obedience.

years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel; *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan

CH. XIII. 1—7. REVOLT OF THE ISRAELITES UNDER SAUL FROM THE PHILISTINES.

1. *Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel*] The Hebrew cannot be thus translated. It is the common formula for denoting the age of a king at his accession, and the length of his reign. See 2 Sam. ii. 10, v. 4; 1 Kings xiv. 21, &c. We must render, "**Saul was [ ] years old when he began to reign, and reigned [ ] and two years over Israel.**" Either the numbers were wanting in the original document, or they have been accidentally lost. 30 is supplied in the first place by some MSS. of the Sept., and is a plausible conjecture. The length of Saul's reign may have been 22 or 32 years. He was in the prime of life when elected king, and his reign must have been of some considerable duration. But if he was only 30 years old at his accession, the events here recorded cannot have happened till at least 10 or 15 years after that event, for Jonathan, who has not been mentioned before, now appears as a stout warrior. In this case we have no account of the early years of Saul's reign. This view appears to be preferable to the supposition that Saul was older at his accession, and that the history is continuous. See *Introd.* Ch. III.

The whole verse is omitted by the older copies of the Sept. (A and B), and possibly was not in the original text.

2. *Saul chose him three thousand men*] **And Saul chose, &c.** The formation of a *standing army* marks an important epoch in the history of a nation. It was a natural result of the election of a king, who was to be a military leader. Cp. xiv. 52. This body was only large enough to form a nucleus for the general levy of fighting men (v. 4), like the *hus-carls* of the Saxon kings for the *Land-Fyrd*. See *Green's Hist. of the Engl. People*, p. 75.

*in Michmash*] The villages of *Mikhmas* and *Geba* preserve the names and mark the sites of Michmash and Geba. They stand on the N. and S. respectively of the *Wady es Suweinit*, a deep ravine with precipitous sides running from the highlands of Benjamin to Jericho. "About two miles S. E. of Ai it becomes a narrow gorge with vertical precipices some 800 feet high." Jonathan was in Gibeah, a few miles to the S. W. of Geba. See note on x. 5. We may conjecture that when Saul occupied Michmash the Philistines transferred their post, which had previously been at Gibeah (x. 5), to Geba, in order to watch him more closely. Jonathan thereupon seized Gibeah, from which he made the successful sally described in v. 3.

*mount Beth-el*] The high ground between Bethel and Michmash.

*Jonathan*] The first mention of Saul's eldest son, whose memory is famous not so much for his military achievements, as for his fast friendship with David. The name *Jonathan* means "the gift of Jehovah," and may be compared with the Greek *Theodore*.

in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent  
 3 every man to his tent. And Jonathan smote the garrison  
 of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines  
 heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the  
 4 land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard  
 say *that* Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and  
*that* Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines.  
 And the people were called together after Saul *to Gilgal*.  
 5 And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight  
 with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand  
 horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the sea

3. *the garrison of the Philistines*] See note on x. 5.

*Saul blew the trumpet*] Heralds blowing trumpets to attract attention carried the news of Jonathan's daring exploit throughout the country to prepare the people for a speedy summons to fight for their liberty. Cp. Jud. iii. 27, vi. 34; 2 Sam. xx. 1.

*Let the Hebrews hear*] The name "Hebrews" is generally employed only by foreigners, or in speaking to foreigners. See note on iv. 6. If the text is correct, it is here used (cp. v. 7) to place the nationality of Israel in contrast with the Philistines, or to describe them from the Philistine point of view as the subject race. But the Sept. reads "The slaves have revolted," and it may be conjectured that we should transpose the words, and read "The Philistines heard saying, The slaves (or, the Hebrews) have revolted." The consonants of the Hebrew words for "slaves" and "Hebrews" are almost identical, and are constantly liable to be confused.

4. *heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison*] **Heard saying, Saul hath smitten the garrison of the Philistines.** The first blow in the war of independence was doubtless struck by Jonathan under Saul's direction.

*was had in abomination*] The same word meaning literally, "to make one's self stink" occurs in Gen. xxxiv. 30; Ex. v. 21; 1 Sam. xxvii. 12; 2 Sam. x. 6.

*the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal*] Gilgal (see note on vii. 15) was probably chosen for the rendezvous as being the usual meeting-place, and the least liable to an attack from the Philistines.

5. *thirty thousand chariots*] This reading, though as old as the Sept., is certainly wrong. The number of chariots was always less than that of horsemen, and such an enormous force of chariots is not only quite unparalleled, but would be useless in the mountainous country. Possibly the numeral 30, expressed in Hebrew by the letter *l*, was due to the accidental repetition of the last letter of the word *Israel*, and we should read "a thousand chariots." Jabin had "nine hundred chariots" (Jud. iv. 3).

*people as the sand which is on the sea shore*] "People" = infantry:



shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven. When the men of 6 Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And *some of the Hebrews* went over Jordan *to* the 7 land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

#### 8—14. *Saul's disobedience and its penalty.*

And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that 8 Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not *to* Gilgal;

“The sand on the sea shore” is a common figure for an indefinite number. Cp. Gen. xxii. 17, xli. 49; Josh. xi. 4; Ps. lxxviii. 27, &c.

*in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven*] Saul evacuated Michmash and withdrew to Gilgal. Jonathan however still held Gibeah (v. 16). Beth-aven (= “house of naught” i. e. *idols*) was near Ai, between Michmash and Bethel (Josh. vii. 2). The position was an important one, commanding the chief approach from Gilgal to the heart of the country.

6. *in a strait*] In distress and danger: as it were, hemmed in and unable to turn in any direction.

*the people did hide themselves*] Cp. Jud. vi. 2.

*in high places*] The word thus translated occurs elsewhere only in Jud. ix. 46, 49 (E.V. hold), and is supposed to mean “a fortified tower,” like the “peels” of the border counties, possibly the work of the old Canaanite inhabitants. But the context rather points to some *natural* hiding-place.

7. *some of the Hebrews*] The soundness of the text is rendered doubtful by the peculiarity of the construction, and the use of the term “Hebrews” without apparent reason. The Sept., changing the vowels of the word *Hebrews*, renders, “And they who went over went over Jordan, &c.,” but this can hardly be right either.

*all the people followed him trembling*] The nation obeyed his summons, but in the greatest alarm at the proximity of the Philistine host.

#### 8—14. SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE AND ITS PENALTY.

8. *the set time that Samuel had appointed*] It seems clear that the historian intends to refer to Samuel's injunction in x. 8, although in all probability the interview there recorded had taken place many years before. But the command may have been repeated now, and in any case the spirit of it survived. Chosen by Jehovah expressly to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, Saul was not at liberty to begin the war of independence upon his own authority, but was to wait until duly commissioned to do so by Samuel.



9 and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings.  
 10 And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet  
 11 him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered  
 12 themselves together *at* Michmash; therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me *to* Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself  
 13 therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy king-  
 14 dom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not

9. *Bring hither a burnt offering, &c.*] “Bring hither to me **the** burnt-offering and **the** peace-offerings,” which were ready, awaiting Samuel’s arrival.

*he offered the burnt offering*] The same phrase is used of David (2 Sam. xxiv. 25), and Solomon (1 Kings iii. 4), and probably does not mean that they actually performed the sacrifice themselves. If they did do so, it must be inferred that it was lawful for the king to act as priest. At any rate there is no hint here that Saul’s sin consisted in the usurpation of priestly functions.

10. *Samuel came*] Perhaps before Saul had had time to offer the peace-offerings.

11. *Because I saw, &c.*] The situation was critical in the extreme. Saul’s army was hourly melting away. Scarcely ten miles distant was the Philistine host, ready to pour down and crush him. How could he take the field without entreating God’s favour? Was not this sufficient excuse for his conduct?

13. *Thou hast done foolishly*] Saul’s sin seems excusable and scarcely deserving of so heavy a punishment. But it involved the whole principle of the subordination of the theocratic king to the Will of Jehovah as expressed by His prophets. On the one hand it shewed a distrust of God, as though God after choosing him for this work could forsake him in the hour of need: on the other hand it shewed a spirit of self-assertion, as though he could make war by himself without the assistance and counsel of God communicated through His prophet. Such a character was unfit for the office of king.

*for ever*] i.e. permanently, not of course absolutely without end. Cp. the use of the word in i. 22.

continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

### 15—18. *The Philistine invasion.*

And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto <sup>15</sup> Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men. And Saul, <sup>16</sup> and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. And the spoilers came <sup>17</sup> out of the camp of the Philistines *in* three companies: one

**14.** *a man after his own heart*] Quoted by St Paul in his discourse at Antioch (Acts xiii. 22). Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 20.

### 15—18. THE PHILISTINE INVASION.

**15.** *And Samuel arose*] The Sept. has a fuller text, which gives the connexion more clearly thus: "And Samuel arose and departed from Gilgal. And the remnant of the people went up after Saul to join the men of war [or, to the battle after the men of war]: and when they were come from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin, Saul numbered, &c." After Samuel's departure Saul marched up and effected a junction with Jonathan at Gibeah or Geba.

*about six hundred men*] Cp. xiv. 2. Saul's precipitate action failed to produce the desired result of holding the army together.

**16.** *in Gibeah of Benjamin*] Heb. **in Geba of Benjamin**. The positions of vv. 2, 3 are now reversed, the Philistines occupying Michmash on the northern side of the valley, Saul and Jonathan holding Geba on the southern side.

**17.** *the spoilers came out*] Lit. **the destroyer**, the part of the army sent out to harry the country, (a) One band of marauders turned northwards to *Ophrah*, a city of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 23), conjecturally placed by Robinson at *et Taiyibeh*, 4 miles N. E. of Bethel, in the land of *Shual* (=jackal) possibly the same as *Shalim* (ix. 4). (b) Another band took a westerly direction to *Beth-horon* (=house of caverns) on the main pass from the hill country of Judaea into the plain of Philistia. (c) A third band went eastwards to "the way of the border," probably that between Judah and Benjamin, by "*the valley of Zeboim*" (Neh. xi. 34) = "the ravine of hyenas," "towards the wilderness" or uncultivated district between the central district of Benjamin and the Jordan valley. Mr Grove went from Jericho to Michmash up a wild gorge bearing the name *Shuk-ed-Dubba*, or "ravine of the hyena," the exact Arabic equivalent of "the valley of Zeboim," and possibly the same. *Dict. of Bible*, iii. 1819.

company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto  
 18 the land of Shual: and another company turned the way  
 to Beth-horon: and another company turned *to* the way  
 of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward  
 the wilderness.

19—23. *The disarmament of the Israelites.*

19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land  
 of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews  
 20 make *them* swords or spears: but all the Israelites went  
 down *to* the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share,  
 21 and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. Yet  
 they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and

Southwards, Saul's camp in Geba protected the country. The tense of the verbs "turned" expresses repeated action, indicating that these ravages were continued for some time. The Philistines hoped to draw Saul out from his strong position, and force him to an engagement.

19—23. THE DISARMAMENT OF THE ISRAELITES.

19. *Now there was no smith found, &c.*] A signal proof of the severity of the Philistine oppression, and the difficulties against which Saul had to contend. This general disarmament clearly points to the lasting subjugation of a large district in the later years of Samuel's judgeship and the beginning of Saul's reign, and was not merely the temporary result of the present invasion. A similar tyranny was practised by the Canaanites before Deborah's victory (Jud. v. 8, cp. iii. 31); and Porsena is reported by Pliny to have prohibited the Romans from using iron except for agricultural purposes (*Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 14).

20. *to sharpen*] The word signifies "to sharpen *by forging*."

*his share, &c.*] The agricultural implements mentioned cannot be identified with any certainty. The words rendered "share" and "mattock" are derived from the same root meaning *to cut*, and are almost identical in form. That rendered "coulter" is elsewhere translated "plow-share" (Is. ii. 4, &c.).

21. *Yet they had a file*] So the Targum and some Rabbinic commentators. If the rendering is correct, the meaning will be that for the ordinary sharpening of tools they had files, but for any forging work they had to go to the Philistines. But the best rendering appears to be either, "**When the edges, &c. were blunt:**" or that of the Vulgate, "**So the edges of the mattocks...used to be blunt.**" The result of the necessity of going so far to get their tools repaired was that they got into a very unserviceable condition. The words, "and to **set** (i. e. sharpen or point) the goad" must be taken as depending on "the Israelites went down to the Philistines," the intervening words being regarded as a parenthesis.



for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was <sup>22</sup> neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found. And the <sup>23</sup> garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

#### CH. XIV. 1—15. *Jonathan's deed of daring.*

Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son <sup>14</sup> of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that *is* on the other side. But he told not his father. And <sup>2</sup> Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron: and the people that *were* with him *were* about six hundred men; and Ahiah, the son <sup>3</sup>

**23. the passage of Michmash]** By "the passage of Michmash," mentioned also in the description of Sennacherib's march upon Jerusalem in Is. x. 29, is meant the deep ravine now known as the *Wady es-Suweinit* (v. 2, note). The Philistines threw out an advanced post from their main camp to one of the bluffs on the very edge of the valley, with the view of watching the Israelites in Geba opposite, and preventing a surprise attack on their camp. It was this post which Jonathan attacked.

#### CH. XIV. 1—15. JONATHAN'S DEED OF DARING.

**1. that bare his armour]** A confidential attendant like the *squire* of the middle ages.

**But he told not his father]** For fear lest he should forbid so hazardous an attempt. From this point to the end of v. 5 we have a series of clauses introduced parenthetically to describe the circumstances under which the attack was made. v. 6 resumes the thread of the narrative by a repetition of Jonathan's words. The vivid detail marks the account of one familiar with the spot.

**2. the uttermost part of Gibeah]** Here at any rate *Gibeah* seems to denote a *district*. See note on x. 5. Saul was stationed probably at the northern extremity of it, under "the pomegranate tree which is in Migron." So we find him afterwards "under the tamarisk in Gibeah" (xxii. 6). *Migron* cannot be the place mentioned in Is. x. 28, which was north of Michmash. The name means *precipice*, and probably occurred frequently in this rocky region.

**3. And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub]** And [there was with him] **Ahiah**, or **Ahijah**, as the name is usually transliterated. Ahijah is perhaps the same as Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, the priest at Nob, who was the victim of Saul's sacrilegious vengeance (xxii. 9). The name



of Ahitub, I-chabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod.  
 4 And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. And between the passages, *by* which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other

*Ahijah* = "brother of Jah" and *Ahimelech* = "brother of the king" may have been applied to the same person, *Melech* king being substituted for the divine name Jah in ordinary intercourse. But it is also possible that Ahimelech was the brother of Ahijah and his successor in the high priesthood.

*I-chabod's brother*] See iv. 21. I-chabod's elder brother Ahitub was probably about the same age as Samuel, and his son may have been high-priest already for some time. Fifty years or more must have elapsed since the death of Eli. See Introduction, Ch. III.

*the LORD's priest in Shiloh*] These words must be referred to Eli as the most famous priest during the period while the Tabernacle was at Shiloh, not to Ahijah. It is all but certain that Shiloh ceased to be the religious centre of the nation after the capture of the Ark.

*wearing an ephod*] i. e. officiating as high-priest. See note on ii. 18. His presence with the army is noticed to prepare the way for the fact mentioned in v. 18.

4. *And between the passages, &c.*] The scene of Jonathan's adventure is accurately described. The "passages" appear to be ravines running down into the main valley, by which it was possible to get down and cross over. "In the valley, [the *Wady es-Surweinit*] just at the left of where we crossed, are two hills of a conical or rather a spherical form, having steep rocky sides, with small wadys running up behind each so as almost to isolate them. One is on the side toward Jeba and the other towards Mukhmas. These would seem to be the two rocks mentioned in connexion with Jonathan's adventure." Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* I. 441.

*a sharp rock*] Lit. "a tooth of the rock." Cp. note on vii. 12.

*the name of the one was Bozez*] "The northern cliff was named Bozez or "shining," and the true explanation of this name only presents itself on the spot. The great valley runs nearly due east, and thus the southern cliff is almost entirely in shade during the day. The contrast is surprising and picturesque between the dark cool colour of the south side and the ruddy or tawny tints of the northern cliff, crowned with the gleaming white of the upper chalky strata. The picture is unchanged since the days when Jonathan looked over to the white camping-ground of the Philistines, and Bozez must then have shone as brightly as it does now, in the full light of an eastern sun." Conder's *Tent Work*, II. 113.

*the name of the other Seneh*] "The southern cliff was called Seneh or 'the Acacia,' and the same name still applies to the modern valley,

Senah. The forefront of the one *was* situate northward<sup>5</sup> over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah. And Jonathan said to the young man<sup>6</sup> that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for *there is* no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. And his armourbearer said unto<sup>7</sup> him, Do all that *is* in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I *am* with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan,<sup>8</sup> Behold, we will pass over unto *these* men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, Tarry<sup>9</sup> until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus,<sup>10</sup> Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this *shall be* a sign unto us. And both of them discovered themselves unto the<sup>11</sup> garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had

due to the acacia trees which dot its course." *Wady es-Surweinit* = "Valley of the little thorn tree" or "acacia." *Id.*

5. *the forefront of the one, &c*] Lit. **The one crag** (lit. *tooth*) **was a pillar on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.** The Sept. omits "a pillar."

6. *these uncircumcised*] A frequent epithet of abhorrence for the Philistines. Here it has a special significance, for it indicates that Jonathan's hope of success was based on the reflection that the Philistines stood in no covenant-relation to Jehovah, as Israel did.

*there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few*] See ch. xvii. 46, 47; Jud. vii. 4, 7; 2 Chron. xiv. 11, and the noble words of Judas Maccabaeus before the battle of Beth-horon (1 Macc. iii. 16—21): "With the God of heaven it is all one to deliver with a great multitude or with a small company; for the victory of battle standeth not in the multitude of an host; but strength cometh from heaven." These were among the heroes who "through FAITH waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. xi. 34).

7. *turn thee*] The reading of the Heb. text is doubtful, and that of the Sept. perhaps to be preferred. "Do all unto which thine heart inclineth: behold I am with thee: my heart is as thy heart."

10. *this shall be a sign unto us*] "**The sign**" is clearly regarded by Jonathan as an intimation of the Divine will. Cp. Gen. xxiv. 14; Jud. vi. 36 ff., and ch. ii. 34, note.

11. *the holes where they had hid themselves*] See xiii. 6. Travellers speak of numerous caverns in the limestone rocks of the district.

12 hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath  
 13 delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan;  
 14 and his armourbearer slew after him. And *that* first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were a half acre of land,  
 15 *which a yoke of oxen might plow*. And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.

12. *we will shew you a thing*] Either, "give you some information;" or, "teach you a lesson." Cp. Jud. viii. 16. Perhaps a colloquial phrase, used of course contemptuously.

13. *Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet*] "Immediately to the east of the village of Michmash exists a natural fortress, still called 'the fort' by the peasantry. It is a ridge rising in three rounded knolls above a perpendicular crag, ending in a narrow tongue to the east with cliffs below." Conder's *Tent Work*, II. 112. This may have been the post occupied by the advanced guard of the Philistines.

14. *within as it were a half acre of land which a yoke of oxen might plow*] Lit. **in about half a furrow of a yoke of land**. "A yoke of land" may denote such a piece of land as a yoke of oxen would plough in one day, a natural measure for an agricultural people to use. "The furrow of a yoke" will then denote the length of one side of such a square measure. The point appears to be that the garrison was cut to pieces in a comparatively short distance.

The Sept. however (unless its rendering is mere conjecture) represents a different reading: "And the first slaughter...was with darts and slings and stones of the field." But Jonathan at any rate was better armed (xiii. 22), and it is hard to see the point of mentioning the weapons with which the *first* slaughter was accomplished.

15. *in the host, in the field*] **In the camp in the field**, the main army as distinguished from the outpost which Jonathan had attacked.

*the earth quaked*] Perhaps this only describes the tumult and confusion of the Philistine host (cp. iv. 5), but possibly an earthquake augmented the general panic, as at the Exodus (Ps. lxxvii. 18). Cp. the storm at Ebenezer (ch. vii. 10).

*so it was a very great trembling*] Lit. "And it became a trembling of God," i. e. a supernatural panic inspired by God. Cp. 2 Kings vii. 6.



16—23. *The rout of the Philistines.*

And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; <sup>16</sup> and behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down *one another*. Then said Saul unto the people <sup>17</sup> that *were* with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold Jonathan and his armourbearer *were* not *there*. And Saul said unto <sup>18</sup> Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. And it came <sup>19</sup> to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that *was* in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand. And Saul and all the people that *were* with him <sup>20</sup> assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, *and there was* a very great discomfiture. Moreover the Hebrews <sup>21</sup> *that were* with the Philistines before that time, which went

## 16—23. THE ROUT OF THE PHILISTINES.

**16.** *in Gibeah of Benjamin*] If *Tuleil-el-Fûl* is the true site of the town of Gibeah, we must either suppose that Gibeah is here used of the surrounding district, or read *Geba* for Gibeah, since according to Lieut. Conder, Michmash is not visible from *Tuleil-el-Fûl*. See note on x. 5.

*they went on beating down one another*] It is doubtful if this or any other meaning can be extracted from the present Heb. text. The Sept. gives a good sense: "And behold, the camp was in confusion on every side."

**17.** *Number now*] The word denotes a *muster* or *parade* of the troops for inspection.

**18.** *Bring hither the ark of God*] Saul wished to "inquire of God" before going to battle. See Num. xxvii. 21. But apart from the fact that we have no mention of the transportation of the Ark from Kirjath-jearim, it was not the Ark, but the Ephod with Urim and Thummim which was the proper instrument for ascertaining the will of God. Moreover "bring hither" is a term applied to the Ephod (xxiii. 9, xxx. 7) but not to the Ark. It seems best therefore to follow the reading of the Sept.; "And Saul said to Ahia, bring hither the Ephod: for he bore the Ephod at that time before the children of Israel."

**19.** *Withdraw thine hand*] Desist from the inquiry. With characteristic impatience Saul would not wait for God's answer.

**20.** *every man's sword was against his fellow*] Cp. Jud. vii. 22; 2 Chr. xx. 23.

**21.** *the Hebrews that were with the Philistines*] Either renegade Israelites who had taken service in the Philistine army, or forced levies



up with them into the camp *from the country* round about, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that *were*  
 22 with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard  
 23 after them in the battle. So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over *unto* Beth-aven.

24—30. *Jonathan's breach of Saul's rash oath.*

24 And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food.  
 25 And all *they of* the land came to a wood; and there was  
 26 honey upon the ground. And when the people were come

from the districts occupied by the Philistines. The name "Hebrews" by which they were known to the Philistines is used to distinguish them from the "Israelites" who had not submitted to their oppressors. The Sept. reads "slaves." See notes on iv. 6 and xiii. 3.

23. *So the LORD saved Israel*] Cp. Ex. xiv. 30; 2 Chr. xxxii. 22.

*unto Beth-aven*] Saul crossed the valley from Geba to Michmash, and drove the Philistines back in a north-westerly direction to Beth-aven, half way between Michmash and Bethel. Thence the pursuit was across the watershed, and headlong down the pass of Beth-horon to Aijalon, where the valley begins to open out towards the plain of Philistia:—that same pass where Joshua gained his great victory over the five Amorite kings (Josh. x. 10), and where the valiant Judas Maccabaeus was once more in later times to drive back the enemies of Israel to the plains (1 Macc. iii. 24). The whole distance was between 15 and 20 miles.

24—30. JONATHAN'S BREACH OF SAUL'S RASH OATH.

24. *were distressed that day: for Saul, &c.*] Render, **And the men of Israel were distressed that day. And Saul caused the people to swear, &c.** Seeing the fatigued condition of the army, and fearing lest they should relinquish the pursuit to get food, Saul rashly exacted from them an oath, which led to three evil results. (1) It hindered instead of facilitating the pursuit of the enemy. (2) It involved Jonathan in an involuntary trespass. (3) It indirectly occasioned the sin of the people (v. 32). The Sept. however appears to have had a different text as follows: "And all the people that were with Saul were about ten thousand men. And the battle was scattered throughout the whole wood [*city* is a mistranslation of the Heb. word for *wood* in v. 25] in mount Ephraim. And Saul did very foolishly on that day, and adjured the people, saying, &c."

into the wood, behold the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people <sup>27</sup> with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipt it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father <sup>28</sup> straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food *this* day. And the people were faint. Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled <sup>29</sup> the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How <sup>30</sup> much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?

### 31—35. *The sin of the people.*

And they smote the Philistines that day from Mich- <sup>31</sup> mash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint. And <sup>32</sup> the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground: and the people did eat *them* with the blood. Then they told Saul, <sup>33</sup>

26. *behold, the honey dropped*] Lit. **behold a stream of honey**. Palestine is literally “a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. iii. 8). Wild bees settle in vast numbers in the clefts of the limestone rocks and in the trees. Compare the statement of a traveller in India, where “the forests literally flow with honey. Large combs may be seen hanging in the trees as you pass along, full of honey.” Cp. Matt. iii. 4. See Tristram’s *Land of Israel*, p. 83. Kitto’s *Bible Illustrations*, p. 190.

27. *his eyes were enlightened*] Cp. Ps. xiii. 3. His bodily powers were refreshed. The opposite idea is conveyed by the Heb. words for *fainting*, which are derived from roots meaning ‘to be shrouded in darkness.’

28. *straitly*] i.e. strictly. Cp. Ex. xiii. 19; Josh. vi. 1.

*And the people were faint*] Better, **and the people are faint, or weary**: words of the speaker, not a comment by the historian.

29. *hath troubled*] The word applied to Achan in Josh. vii. 25.

### 31—35. THE SIN OF THE PEOPLE.

31. *from Michmash to Aijalon*] See note on v. 23.

32. *the people did eat them with the blood*] As soon as it was evening, the fasting people flew upon the spoil to satisfy their hun-

saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have trans-  
 34 gressed: roll a great stone unto me *this* day. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay *them* here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him *that* night, and slew  
 35 *them* there. And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

36—46. *The consequence of Jonathan's transgression.*

35 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us  
 37 draw near hither unto God. And Saul asked *counsel* of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered  
 38 him not that day. And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this  
 39 sin hath been *this* day. For, *as* the LORD liveth, which

ger, and in doing so transgressed the primeval prohibition (Gen. ix. 4), which was re-enacted in the Mosaic law (Lev. xvii. 10—14), and observed in the early days of the Christian Church (Acts xv. 20).

33. *this day*] Rather, **forthwith**. But the Sept. reads "here," perhaps rightly.

35. *the same was the first altar*] Lit. "it he began to build as an altar to Jehovah." The E. V. probably gives the right sense. The altar was erected as a thank-offering for the victory. "The great stone" most likely formed part of it.

36—46. THE CONSEQUENCE OF JONATHAN'S TRANSGRESSION.

36. *Let us draw near hither unto God*] Ahijah checks Saul's impulse, reminding him that it was necessary first to ascertain the will of God. Perhaps he felt that Saul's neglect to wait for God's answer in the morning (v. 19) had already borne evil fruit.

37. *asked counsel of God*] **Inquired of God**, the same verb as in x. 22. See note there.

38. *the chief of the people*] Lit. "the corner-stones of the people," as in Jud. xx. 2, probably the elders or heads of houses.

*wherein this sin hath been*] Saul assumes that some undiscovered sin must have caused God to refuse an answer, as Achan's trespass led Him



saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was not a man* among all the people *that* answered him. Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on <sup>40</sup> one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee. Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God <sup>41</sup> of Israel, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken : but the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast *lots* <sup>42</sup> between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou <sup>43</sup> hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and* lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so <sup>44</sup> and more also : for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. And <sup>45</sup>

to withdraw His Presence and abandon Israel to defeat (Josh. vii. 11, 12). At a later time Saul's own sin made God desert Him in the same way (ch. xxviii. 6, 15). Jonathan's transgression of the oath, although unintentional, was an offence against the Majesty of the Divine Name which could not be left unnoticed.

**41.** *Give a perfect lot*] This and not the marginal rendering "Shew the innocent" is the best explanation of an obscure phrase which occurs nowhere else.

The Sept. however has a very different reading, which with some emendation may be rendered, "And Saul said, O Lord God of Israel, why hast thou not answered thy servant to day? If the iniquity be in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord God of Israel, give Urim : and if it be in thy people Israel, give Thummim." If this reading is correct, it points to the conclusion that the "judgment of Urim and Thummim" was obtained by a special method of casting lots, which was employed on the present occasion. See further on xxviii. 6. The Heb. text implies that the ordinary lot only was used.

**42.** *And Saul said, &c.*] Again the Sept. text is fuller. "And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son : whomsoever the Lord taketh by lot, let him die. And the people said unto Saul, This thing shall not be. And Saul prevailed over the people, and they cast lots between him and Jonathan his son, and Jonathan was taken." The omission in the Heb. text may be accounted for by *homoeoteleuton* (x. 1. note), the words for *my son* and *his son* being almost identical.

**43.** *Tell me*] In like manner Joshua moved Achan to confess, when the lot had fixed upon him as the "troubler of Israel" (Josh. vii. 19).

*I did but taste, &c.*] **I did certainly taste...here I am : I will die.** Jonathan's words are not a lamentation over his hard fate, as the E. V. implies, but a confession that the guilt, though involuntary, was his, and an heroic expression of readiness to sacrifice his life for his country even in the hour of victory.



the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: *as* the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So  
 46 the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

47—52. *Summary account of Saul's wars and family.*

47 So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against

45. *there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground*] See 2 Sam. xiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 30; Luke xxi. 18; Acts xxvii.

34.

*he hath wrought with God*] Compare Jonathan's own words in v. 6.  
*the people rescued Jonathan*] "There was now a freer and more understanding spirit in the nation at large. What was tolerated in the time of Jephthah, when every man did what was right in his own eyes, and when the obligation of such vows overrode all other considerations, was no longer tolerated now. The people interposed in Jonathan's behalf. They recognised the religious aspect of his great exploit. They rallied round him with a zeal that overbore even the royal vow, and rescued Jonathan that he died not. It was the dawn of a better day. It was the national spirit now in advance of their chief, animated by the same Prophetic teaching, which through the voice of Samuel had now made itself felt; the conviction that there was a higher duty even than outward sacrifice or exact fulfilment of literal vows." Stanley's *Lectures*, II. 14.

X A somewhat analogous story is told in Livy VIII. 35. Q. Fabius the Master of the Horse violated the commands of the Dictator Papirius Cursor by attacking the Samnites in his absence. He was ordered for instant execution by the dictator, but escaped through the intercession of the people.

47—52. SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF SAUL'S WARS AND FAMILY.

47. *So Saul took the kingdom*] The various wars undertaken by Saul whom the people elected king "to go out before them and fight their battles" are here summarily noticed. (1) Against Moab. See note on xi. 1. (2) Against the children of Ammon, as recorded in ch. xi., and perhaps upon other occasions. (3) Against the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, surnamed Edom (Gen. xxv. 30), who occupied Edom or Idumaea, previously called Mount Seir (= *rugged*), the mountainous district stretching from the Dead Sea to the head of the Gulf of Elath. The Edomites were conquered by David (2 Sam. viii. 14), and remained subject to Judah till the reign of Jehoram (2 Kings viii. 20). They are fiercely denounced by the later prophets, especially Obadiah, for their hostility to Judah. (4) Against the Syrian kingdom of Zobah

all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed *them*. And he gathered <sup>48</sup> a host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them. Now the sons of <sup>49</sup> Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters *were these*; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: and <sup>50</sup> the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host *was* Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And Kish *was* the <sup>51</sup>

on the north-east. This kingdom was probably situated between Damascus and the Euphrates, but its exact position and limits are undetermined. The "kings" were apparently independent chiefs; in David's time it was ruled by a single king Hadadezer, and the account of David's wars with it testify to its power and importance (2 Sam. viii. 3—10). (5) Against the Philistines throughout his reign (v. 52). No special account of the wars against Moab, Edom and Zobah is given, for the object of the book is not to give a complete history of Saul's reign, but to describe its salient features, and the sins which led to his rejection.

*he vexed them*] The word means literally "to condemn," and so (if the reading is correct) "to conquer," the war being regarded as a suit against the enemies of God, in which defeat was tantamount to a verdict of condemnation. The Sept. however reads simply, "he was victorious."

<sup>48.</sup> *gathered a host*] Better, **did valiantly**, as in Num. xxiv. 18; Ps. lx. 12.

*smote the Amalekites*] As recorded at length in ch. xv.

<sup>49.</sup> *Ishui*] Since in ch. xxxi. 2 and 1 Chron. x. 2, the names of the sons who fell with Saul at Gilboa are given as Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchishua, and in the genealogies of 1 Chr. viii. 33 and ix. 39 these three are again mentioned with the addition of Esh-Baal or Ish-bosheth, it seems probable that *Ishui* is identical with *Abinadab*. Either *Ishui* was a second name, or it is a corruption of the Heb. word for "and the second." Cp. note on viii. 2.

<sup>50.</sup> *Abner the son of Ner Saul's uncle*] Grammatically, "Saul's uncle" might refer either to Abner or to Ner, but it is almost certain that it must refer to the latter, so that Saul and Abner were first cousins. v. 51 should be read, according to Josephus, "**And Kish the father of Saul and Ner the father of Abner were sons of Abiel.**" It is true that the genealogies in 1 Chr. viii. 33, ix. 39 make Ner the grandfather of Saul and consequently Abner Saul's uncle: but (a) Ner is not mentioned among Saul's ancestors in ch. ix. 1, and (b) it is difficult to suppose that Abner who was in full vigour for seven years after Saul's death (2 Sam.

father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of  
 52 Abiel. And there was sore war against the Philistines all  
 the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or  
 any valiant man, he took him unto him.

CH. XV. 1—9. *Saul's commission to destroy Amalek.*

15 Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint  
 thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore  
 hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.  
 2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which  
 Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way,

ii. iii.) could have belonged to the generation above him. There is  
 probably some confusion of the names in Chronicles.

51. *Abiel*] It has been conjectured that *Abiel* is the same as *Jehiel*  
 "the father" or founder of Gibeon, 1 Chr. ix. 35, and that *Gibeon* is  
 identical with *Gibeah*; but this is doubtful.

52. *he took him*] to serve in his permanent corps of picked soldiers  
 (xiii. 2).

CH. XV. 1—9. SAUL'S COMMISSION TO DESTROY AMALEK.

1. *Samuel also said*] **And Samuel said.** How long after the repulse  
 of the Philistines this happened, we are not told. Some years at least  
 must be allowed for the evident development of that wilfulness which  
 was Saul's ruin.

*The LORD sent me*] **Me did Jehovah send.** The pronoun stands  
 emphatically at the head of the sentence. The prophet appeals to his  
 former commission to anoint Saul as accrediting him to be God's messenger  
 on the present occasion. "The note of special warning" with which  
 he prefaces the command indicates that he felt that "the discipline of  
 Saul's life was gathering itself up into a special trial," and that this  
 would be "a crisis in that life-history, with which by God's own hand  
 his own had been so strangely intertwined." Wilberforce's *Heroes of*  
*Hebrew History*, p. 219.

2. *I remember*] Rather, **I have reviewed, or, considered.** Vulg.  
*recensui.*

*that which Amalek did to Israel*] The origin of the powerful tribe of  
 the Amalekites is uncertain. According to one view they had migrated  
 from the East: according to another they were the descendants of  
 Esau's grandson Amalek (Gen. xxxvi. 12). They were a nomad people,  
 roaming over the wilderness which lies to the south and south-west of  
 Palestine and stretches down into the peninsula of Sinai. They disputed  
 the passage of the Israelites, but were signally defeated at Rephidim (Ex.  
 xvii. 8). Upon a later occasion they joined with the Canaanites, and  
 were victorious in a battle near Hormah (Num. xiv. 45). In league  
 with the Moabites (Jud. iii. 13) and Midianites (Jud. vi. 3) they con-  
 tinued to harass the Israelites after their entrance into Canaan. As the



when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, <sup>3</sup> and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. And Saul gathered the people <sup>4</sup> together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And <sup>5</sup> Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down <sup>6</sup> from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from

first of the heathen nations who opposed the progress of God's people after the Exodus they were doomed to utter destruction (Ex. xvii. 16; Num. xxiv. 20; Deut. xxv. 17—19), and the time had now come for the execution of this sentence.

3. *utterly destroy all that they have*] The word translated "utterly destroy" means "to ban," or "to devote," and hence since that which was *cherem* or "devoted" might not be taken as spoil, it comes to signify "utterly destroy." See Lev. xxvii. 28, 29; Josh. vi. 17 ff. The word is used in Samuel only in this chapter.

On the "moral difficulty" involved in this command see Note V. p. 240.

4. *in Telaim*] Nowhere else mentioned, unless it is the same as *Telem* (Josh. xv. 24), the position of which in the southern border of Judah suits the circumstances. The name means "lambs," and was probably derived from the pastures in the neighbourhood.

*ten thousand men of Judah*] This implies that the 200,000 foot-soldiers were from the other tribes. See note on xi. 8.

5. *a city of Amalek*] Perhaps the capital or chief settlement was simply called *Ir-Amalek* = "the city of Amalek," as Rabbah was called *Ar* or *Ir-Moab* = "the city of Moab" (Num. xxi. 28, xxii. 36).

*in the valley*] Heb. *nachal*, which signifies a ravine or torrent-bed. See *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 505.

6. *the Kenites*] This tribe, as may be inferred from the fact that Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, the priest of Midian (Ex. iii. 1), is called a Kenite in Jud. i. 16, was an offshoot from the Midianites. The services done to Israel by Jethro and his son Hobab (Ex. xviii; Num. x. 29—32) led to a firm alliance. The Kenites accompanied the Israelites on their march as far as Jericho (Jud. i. 16), and then went and dwelt among the Amalekites in the desert to the south of Judah. They are mentioned again in xxvii. 10, xxx. 29, as the friends of Israel. Famous among the Kenites was Jael, whose husband Heber had migrated into northern Palestine (Jud. iv. 11); and the Rechabites who belonged to this tribe (1 Chr. ii. 55) long preserved the nomad habits of their ancestors (Jer. xxxv. 7—10).



7 among the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah *until* thou comest *to* Shur, that *is* over against  
 8 Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of  
 9 the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

10—23. *Saul's disobedience and its penalty.*

10 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,  
 11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he

7. *from Havilah until thou comest to Shur*] The region occupied by the Ishmaelites is described in the same terms in Gen. xxv. 18. *Havilah* is supposed to be a district of Arabia, but its position cannot be fixed with any certainty. *Shur* is repeatedly mentioned in connexion with the route from Palestine to Egypt, and appears to be the part of the Arabian desert bordering on Egypt. See Gen. xvi. 7, xx. 1; Ex. xv. 22; 1 Sam. xxvii. 8. *Shur* means *wall*, and the name may have been derived from the wall which anciently defended the north-eastern frontier of Egypt.

*over against Egypt*] **In front of Egypt**, looking towards it from Palestine; or, **eastward of Egypt**.

8. *Agag*] *Agag* perhaps means "fiery." As the name is found in Num. xxiv. 7, it was probably an hereditary title, like Pharaoh among the Egyptians.

*utterly destroyed all the people*] All who fell into their hands. Some survived, and continued a guerilla warfare against the Israelites (xxvii. 8, xxx. 1; 2 Sam. viii. 12). The last remnant of them was destroyed by a band of Simeonites in the reign of Hezekiah (1 Chr. iv. 43).

9. *spared Agag*] Perhaps to grace his triumph and to be an evidence of his victory (Jud. i. 7): perhaps from a feeling of sympathy with a fellow king (1 Kings xx. 32).

*and the best of the sheep, &c.*] In direct violation of the Divine command. It was to be a sacred war from which the people were to take no gain of spoil, in token that it was undertaken in the execution of a Divine vengeance and not for their own profit.

10—23. SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE AND ITS PENALTY.

11. *It repenteth me*] "God's repentance is the change of His dispensation." In the language of the O. T. God is said to repent when a change in the character and conduct of those with whom He is dealing leads to a corresponding change in His plans and purposes towards them. Thus (a) upon man's penitence God repents and withdraws a

is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed

threatened punishment (Ex. xxxii. 14; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16): (b) upon man's faithlessness and disobedience He cancels a promise or revokes a blessing which He had given. The opposite is also true, "God is not a man that he should repent" (v. 29). His repentance is not to be understood as though He who foreknows all things *regretted* His action, nor is it a sign of mutability. A change in the attitude of man to God necessarily involves a corresponding change in the attitude of God to man.

*it grieved Samuel*] This rendering is probably right, though the word more commonly means "to be angry." Samuel was grieved at the failure of one from whom he had hoped for so much advantage to the nation.

*he cried unto the LORD all night*] Interceding for Saul if perchance he might be forgiven. For Samuel's intercessions see ch. vii. 5, and compare Moses' pleading for Israel (Ex. xxxii. 11—13). Our Lord "continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke vi. 12).

12. *to Carmel*] Carmel (= "park" or "garden") was a city in the mountainous country of Judah, about seven miles S.S.E. of Hebron. Saul would naturally pass through it in returning from the war. The site is marked by the ruins of a large town bearing the name *Kurmul* (Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* i. 495 ff). Here dwelt Nabal (ch. xxv), and in its neighbourhood much of David's outlaw life was spent.

*he set him up a place*] **He erected for himself a monument**, or trophy of his victory. The Vulg. has "fornicem triumphalem;" and according to Jerome it was an arch of myrtles, palms, and olives. The Heb. word, literally meaning "hand," is applied to Absalom's pillar, which was called "Absalom's place" or "monument" (2 Sam. xviii. 18).

The Sept. has some doubtful additions, which partly appear in the ordinary text of the Vulgate. "And Samuel rose early and went to meet Israel in the morning. And it was told [Samuel] saying, [Saul] came to Carmel, and hath set him up a monument, and he turned his chariot and went down to Gilgal. [And Samuel came to Saul], and behold he was offering a burnt-offering to the Lord, the first-fruits of the spoil, which he brought from Amalek." The names Saul and Samuel have been confused in the text of B, and the clause "And Samuel came to Saul" must be transposed to make sense.

*to Gilgal*] In the same place where Saul's kingdom had been confirmed it was to be taken from him: and where the warning of the consequences of disobedience had been uttered (xiii. 13, 14), the sentence on disobedience was to be pronounced.

be thou of the LORD : I have performed the commandment  
 14 of the LORD. And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this  
 bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the  
 15 oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought  
 them from the Amalekites : for the people spared the best  
 of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD  
 16 thy God ; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then  
 Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the  
 LORD hath said to me *this* night. And he said unto him,  
 17 Say on. And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine  
 own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of  
 18 Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? And  
 the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly  
 destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them  
 19 until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not  
 obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil,  
 20 and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul said

13. *Blessed be thou of the LORD*] Cp. Gen. xiv. 19, xxiv. 31 ; Ruth iii. 10 ; 2 Sam. ii. 5. Saul attempts to conciliate Samuel with a friendly greeting. His conscience can scarcely have been so hardened that he was insensible of his sin.

15. *And Saul said, &c.*] Saul tries (a) like Aaron at Sinai (Ex. xxxii. 22), to shift the blame from himself on to others ; (b) to palliate the offence by alleging a good motive. But "the king who heeded the voice of his army in such a matter shewed that he was not their leader, but their tool and their slave. The king who pretended to keep the booty for the purpose of offering sacrifice to the Lord his God, was evidently beginning to play the hypocrite ;—to make the service of God an excuse for acts of selfishness, and so to introduce all that is vilest in king-craft as well as in priest-craft." Maurice, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 26.

16. *Stay*] Forbear ! cease these flimsy excuses !

17. *When thou wast little*] **Is it not the case that though thou wast little in thine own eyes, thou hast been made head of the tribes of Israel?** There is a reference to Saul's own words of astonishment that he should be chosen as king (ix. 21). The prophet desires to remind him that as his elevation came solely from God, obedience was due to God. There is a curious tradition preserved in the Targum, that Saul's elevation was a reward for the courage of the tribe of Benjamin at the passage of the Red Sea, when they sought to pass over first.

18. *the sinners the Amalekites*] Sin was the ground of their doom. The special sin which singled them out for punishment was their opposition to the will of God as regards the destiny of his people Israel.



unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, <sup>21</sup> sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said,

Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice,

*And* to hearken than the fat of rams.

For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft,

And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.

Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD,

He hath also rejected thee from *being* king.



**20.** *Yea, I have obeyed*] Saul still persists in justifying his conduct. (a) He had fulfilled his mission and destroyed the Amalekites, and brought Agag with him in proof thereof. (b) The people had brought home the spoil for sacrifice, not for themselves.

**21.** *the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed*] **The chief of the devoted things** (*cherem*). It might seem a praiseworthy act to reserve the spoil for sacrifice: but since it was "devoted," it did not belong to the Israelites, and no offering could be made of it.

**22.** With a burst of prophetic inspiration Samuel rends asunder Saul's tissue of excuses, and lays bare his sin. His words are the key-note of the long remonstrance of the prophets in subsequent ages against the too common error of supposing that external ceremonial can be of any value in the sight of God when separated from the true devotion of the worshipper's heart which it symbolizes. See Ps. xl. 6—8, l. 8 ff., li. 16, 17; Is. i. 11—15; Jer. vi. 20; Hos. vi. 6; Amos v. 21—24; Micah vi. 6—8; Mt. ix. 13, xii. 7. The rhythmical form of the original adds force and solemnity.

**23.** *rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, &c.*] Opposition to the will of God is as bad as divination by the help of evil spirits, which is tantamount to apostasy from God: obstinate resistance to Him is no better than worshipping idols (*vanity* or *emptiness*) and images (*teraphim*: see note on xix. 13). Disobedience is in fact idolatry, because it elevates self-will into a god.

There seems to be an allusion to Saul's zeal in abolishing the practice of witchcraft (xxviii. 3). Samuel charges him with being not less guilty than those whom he had been so eager to condemn.



24—31. *The rejection of Saul.*

24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned : for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words :  
 25 because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with  
 26 me, that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee : for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee  
 27 from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and  
 28 it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee *this* day, and hath given  
 29 it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent : for he  
 30 *is* not a man, that *he* should repent. Then he said, I have sinned : *yet* honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders

## 24—31. THE REJECTION OF SAUL.

24. *I have sinned*] Though a formal confession of his sin is extorted from Saul, he does not humble himself before God in genuine penitence. He still tries to shift the blame on to the people, and his chief anxiety is lest the breach between Samuel and himself should become a public scandal and weaken his authority (v. 30). Contrast David's heart-felt repentance (2 Sam. xii. 13; Ps. li. 4).

27. *the skirt of his mantle*] Some kind of a **lappet** or flap hanging down behind, which could be easily torn or cut off, seems to be meant. Cp. xxiv. 4. As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized it to detain him, and it was torn off. The accident served Samuel as an emblem of the complete severance of the sovereignty from Saul. Compare Ahijah's symbolical action (1 Kings xi. 30, 31).

29. *the Strength of Israel*] This word, which occurs here only as a title of God, combines the ideas of *stability*, *permanence*, *constancy*: the Strength or Confidence of Israel does not change as men do.

*will not lie nor repent*] The words closely resemble Num. xxiii. 19. There is a verbal contradiction between this utterance and v. 11, which is usually explained by saying that in v. 11 the historian uses language *according to the manner of men* (ἀνθρωποπαθῶς), while here the prophet speaks *as befits the nature of God* (θεοπρεπῶς). This is only a partial solution. It is precisely because God is unchangeable, that in His dealing with men He must seem to change His action as they change their conduct. This is one aspect of the great problem which runs through all religion, how human free-will can coexist with the Divine Sovereignty. Scripture is content to state both sides of the question, and leave conscience rather than reason to reconcile them.

of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. So Samuel turned <sup>31</sup> again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

32—35. *The execution of Agag. Samuel's departure.*

Then said Samuel, Bring you hither to me Agag the king <sup>32</sup> of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And <sup>33</sup> Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. Then <sup>34</sup> Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel came no more to see Saul <sup>35</sup> until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

CH. XVI, 1—13. *The choice of Saul's successor.*

And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou <sup>16</sup> mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn *with* oil, and go, I will send

30. *honour me now, &c.*] John v. 44 and xii. 43 point to the radical defect in Saul's character.

31. *So Samuel turned again*] Changing his purpose in order to maintain the honour of the reigning king, for although Saul had forfeited his position as Jehovah's chosen representative, he must still rule the nation.

32—35. THE EXECUTION OF AGAG. SAMUEL'S DEPARTURE.

32. *delicately*] Rather, **cheerfully**: not fearing any harm from the aged prophet, as the king had spared his life. But the meaning of the word is very doubtful. The Sept. has "trembling;" the Vulg. a curious double rendering, "sleek and trembling" (*pinguissimus et tremens*).

*Surely the bitterness of death is past*] This was what Agag said to himself, expecting to be spared. But the Sept. (from a different reading) gives: "Is death so bitter?" Vulg. "Does bitter death thus sever [me from life]?" (*Siccine separat amara mors?*) representing Agag as afraid.

33. *As thy sword, &c.*] By the law of retaliation Agag's life was forfeit. Cp. Jud. i. 7.

*hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD*] A solemn execution of the Divine sentence which Saul had neglected. The word rendered "hewed in pieces" is a different one from that used in xi. 7, and occurs nowhere else. It may perhaps mean no more than "executed" (Sept. *ἐσφαξε*). The E. V. follows the Vulg.: "in frusta concidit."

thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me  
 2 a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go?  
 if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take  
 a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the  
 3 LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew  
 thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me  
 4 *him* whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did *that* which  
 the LORD spake, and came *to* Beth-lehem. And the elders  
 of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou  
 5 peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacri-  
 fice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me

#### CH. XVI. 1—13. THE CHOICE OF SAUL'S SUCCESSOR.

1. *Jesse the Beth-lehemite*] Grandson of Ruth the Moabite, and belonging to the tribe of Judah through the line of his male ancestors (Ruth iv. 18—22).

2. *Take an heifer with thee, &c.*] For David's safety no less than his own it was necessary that the purpose of Samuel's errand should not be known. "Concealment of a good purpose for a good purpose is clearly justifiable." It was perfectly legitimate for Samuel to conceal the primary intention and mention only the secondary object of his visit.

It may be inferred from the command, that Samuel was in the habit of holding religious gatherings in different provincial towns from time to time.

4. *Beth-lehem*] Beth-lehem (= "house of bread") was the later name of the ancient town of *Ephrath* (Gen. xlviii. 7). It was situated about five miles south of Jerusalem, a short distance east of the road from Jerusalem to Hebron. As the scene of the fresh picture of domestic life contained in the book of Ruth it would possess no common interest, but as the "city of David" (Lk. ii. 4), and the birthplace of Him of Whom David was a type, it is, next to Jerusalem itself, the most sacred spot on earth. Here too, it should be remembered, "beside what he believed to be literally the cradle of the Christian faith...Jerome composed the famous translation of the Scriptures which is still the 'Biblia Vulgata' of the Latin Church." Stanley's *Sin. and Pal.*, p. 442.

4. *the elders of the town, &c.*] **The elders of the city** (see note on viii. 4) **came to meet him trembling**. Perhaps Samuel's visits were often made with the view of rebuking sin and correcting abuses, and hence their alarm: or the breach between him and Saul may have made the elders afraid of incurring the royal displeasure by welcoming him.

5. *sanctify yourselves*] By the usual ceremonial purifications, such as washing the body and clothes, the outward symbols of spiritual preparation. See Gen. xxxv. 2; Ex. xix. 10 ff. The Sept. adds, "and rejoice with me this day."



to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when 6 they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before him. But the LORD said 7 unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before 8 Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, 9 Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Again, Jesse made 10 seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. And Sa- 11 muel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

*And he sanctified, &c.]* In the case of Jesse's family Samuel superintended the necessary purification himself. This gave him the opportunity of a private interview with them in Jesse's house, at which David's anointing took place. The sacrifice appears to have followed afterwards.

6. *and said]* Said to himself: thought. "Eliab by his height and his countenance seemed the natural counterpart of Saul, whose successor the Prophet came to select. But the day was gone when kings were chosen because they were head and shoulders taller than the rest." Stanley's *Lect.* II. 40.

Eliab is probably the same as "Elihu one of the brethren of David" whom David appointed "ruler of the tribe of Judah" (1 Chr. xxvii. 18).

7. *for [the LORD seeth] not as man seeth]* The words in brackets are rightly supplied in the Sept. For the thought see 1 Chr. xxviii. 9; Lk. xvi. 15; Acts i. 24, &c. God first gave the people a king of stately stature and majestic appearance, such as they would have chosen for themselves (x. 24): now He will choose "a man after His own heart" on the true ground of his inner moral worth.

9. *Shammah]* Also called *Shimeah* (2 Sam. xiii. 3), or *Shimea* (1 Chr. xx. 7); *Shimma* in 1 Chr. ii. 13 should be written *Shimea*. Two of his sons are mentioned: Jonadab, celebrated for sagacity (2 Sam. xiii. 3): Jonathan, for courage (2 Sam. xxi. 21).

10. *Again, Jesse made, &c.]* "So Jesse made seven of his sons," &c., including of course the three already mentioned by name.

11. *we will not sit down]* We will not *sit round* the table for the sacrificial feast.



- <sup>12</sup> And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.
- <sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14—23. *David's introduction to the Court of Saul.*

- <sup>14</sup> But the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an
- <sup>15</sup> evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul's ser-

**12. ruddy]** The word denotes the red hair and fair skin which are regarded as a mark of beauty in southern countries, where the hair and complexion are generally dark.

*of a beautiful countenance, &c.]* Lit. "beautiful-eyed and goodly in appearance." Compare the description of Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 6), and Moses (Ex. ii. 2; Acts vii. 20, where compare the Gk. ἀστῆος τῷ Θεῷ with the Sept. here, ἀγαθὸς ὁπάσει Κυρίῳ).

**13. in the midst of his brethren]** This can only mean "in the presence of his brethren." As in the subsequent history they do not seem to have any idea of their brother's high destiny, the true significance of the act appears to have been concealed from them. Whether it was made clear even to Jesse and David himself may be doubted. They may have supposed that Samuel had selected David for a pupil in his prophetic school. See xix. 18 ff.

*the spirit of the LORD came upon David]* As upon Saul at the first (x. 6). For "came upon" see note on xi. 6. The special supernatural preparation for his office began from that hour.

*David]* The name means "beloved" or "darling," and was probably given to him as the youngest of the family.

14—23. DAVID'S INTRODUCTION TO THE COURT OF SAUL.

**14. But the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul]** Note the contrast to v. 13. As David rose, Saul sank.

*an evil spirit from the LORD]* The cause of Saul's mental disorder is described as "an evil spirit from Jehovah," or "of Jehovah" (xix. 9); "an evil spirit of God" (vv. 15, 16, xviii. 10); "the spirit of evil" (v. 23); even "the spirit of God" (v. 23); because it was God's messenger of judgment. Cp. 1 Kings xxii. 19—22. It is never called "the spirit of Jehovah," which always designates the spirit of holiness. Saul's apostasy was punished not merely by the withdrawal of the grace which had been given as the endowment of his office, but by positive assaults from the powers of evil, akin to the demoniacal possession of the N. T. The result was a form of melancholy madness. The cause of the disease was (as we commonly speak) "supernatural," the cure employed "natural." The inference is that it is impossible to draw a sharp line of

vants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants <sup>16</sup> *which are* before thee, to seek out a man, *who is* a cunning player on a harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his <sup>17</sup> servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me. Then answered one of the servants, and <sup>18</sup> said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant *man*, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD *is* with him. Wherefore Saul sent messen- <sup>19</sup> gers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which *is* with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass *laden* with bread, <sup>20</sup>

distinction between the two spheres. They are in closer connexion than is commonly recognised.

16. *a cunning player*] "Cunning," from A.-S. *cunnan*, to know, *ken*, is generally used in the E.V. in its original sense of *knowing*, *skilful*, without any idea of underhand dealing.

*thou shalt be well*] The power of music to restore the harmony of a troubled mind is well known. Kitto (*Bible Illustr.*, p. 212) quotes among other instances the case of Philip V. of Spain in the last century. He was seized with a total dejection of spirits, which rendered him incapable of attending to business. After all other methods had been tried unsuccessfully, the celebrated musician Farinelli was invited to perform at a concert in a room adjoining the King's apartment. The music attracted his attention; by degrees the disease gave way, and the King was restored to his usual health.

18. *one of the servants*] The word here used for "servants" literally means "young men" (Vulg. *pueri*), as it is rendered in xiv. 1, and probably refers to military attendants: that used in vv. 15, 16, 17 literally means "slaves" (Vulg. *servi*), and includes the servants in general.

*a mighty valiant man, &c.*] David had proved his courage while still tending his sheep. See xvii. 32—36. "A man of war" describes his capacity and promise rather than actual warlike experience.

*prudent in matters*] Rather, "skilled in word," *eloquent*. Possibly he had already composed psalms, but of those which have come down to us only Ps. viii. can be referred to this period, and even that is probably somewhat later. Psalms xix., xxiii., and xxix., describing the phenomena of nature, doubtless contain recollections of his shepherd life.

*the LORD is with him*] See note on iii. 19.

20. *And Jesse took, &c.*] Cp. x. 4, 27. The character of the presents offered to the King shews the simplicity of the manners of the

and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent *them* by David  
 21 his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood  
 before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his  
 22 armourbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David,  
 I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in  
 23 my sight. And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from  
 God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played  
 with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and  
 the evil spirit departed from him.

CH. XVII. 1—3. *The Philistine invasion.*

17 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to  
 battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *be-*  
*longeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah,  
 2 in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were

age. They were "the natural produce of the well known vines, and corn-fields, and pastures of Bethlehem."

22. *Let David...stand before me*] Thus David entered upon the first stage of special education for his office. In Saul's court he was placed in a position which gave opportunity for the development of his powers, and for gaining the esteem and love of the people.

23. *And it came to pass, &c.*] The verbs in this verse are frequentative, expressing what happened *repeatedly*.

On the apparent inconsistency between this account of David's introduction to Saul, and the narrative of the next chapter see Note VI. p. 241.

CH. XVII. 1—3. THE PHILISTINE INVASION.

1. *at Shochoh*] The scene of David's memorable combat is fixed with great exactness. The Philistine army marched up the wide valley of Elah to their rendezvous at **Sochoh**, and pitched their camp in Ephes-dammim (cp. 1 Chr. xi. 13). The valley of Elah is almost certainly the present *Wady-es-Sunt*, which runs in a N. W. direction from the hills of Judah near Hebron past the probable site of Gath (see note on ch. v. 8) to the sea near Ashdod. "It took its name Elah of old from the Terebinth, of which the largest specimen we saw in Palestine still stands in the vicinity; just as it now takes its name es-Sunt from the acacias which are scattered in it." Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* II. 21. Sochoh is the modern *Shuweikeh*, about 16 miles S. W. of Jerusalem on the road to Gaza. Azekah is mentioned in Josh. x. 10 in connexion with the rout of the Philistines in the battle of Beth-horon, but the site is uncertain. "Of the name Ephes-dammim we have perhaps a trace in the modern *Beit Fased*, or 'House of Bleeding,' near Sochoh." Conder's *Tent Work*, II. 160. The name, which signifies "boundary of blood," was probably due to its being the scene of frequent skirmishes with the Philistines.



gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the <sup>3</sup> Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a valley between them.

#### 4—11. *Goliath's Challenge.*

And there went out a champion out of the camp of <sup>4</sup> the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. And *he had* a helmet of <sup>5</sup>

2. *by the valley of Elah*] Rather, “**in** the valley of Elah.”

3. *on a mountain, &c.*] Rather, **upon the mountain...upon the mountain...and the ravine was between them.** The E. V. obliterates the features of the scene. The *ravine* (Heb. *gāl*) was the stream-bed at the bottom of the *valley* (Heb. *emek*). The Israelites encamped on the eastern, the Philistines on the western slopes of the valley. “In the middle of the broad open valley we found a deep trench with vertical sides, impassable except at certain places—a valley in a valley, and a natural barrier between the two hosts....Here then we may picture to ourselves the two hosts, covering the low rocky hills opposite to each other, and half hidden among the lentisk bushes; between them was the rich expanse of ripening barley and the red banks of the torrent with its white shingly bed; behind all were the distant blue hill-walls of Judah, whence Saul had just come down.” Conder, *Tent Work*, II. 161.

#### 4—11. GOLIATH'S CHALLENGE.

4. *a champion*] Lit. “**The** (well-known) man of the interspaces,” or “interval between two camps” (Gr. *μεταλχιον*: see Eur. *Phoen.* 1361, in the account of the combat between Eteocles and Polynices), in which single combats took place: so E. V. rightly “champion.”

*Goliath of Gath*] A survivor probably of the ancient race of *Anakim*, a remnant of which found refuge in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, when they were exterminated by Joshua from the mountains of Judah (Josh. xi. 21, 22).

*six cubits and a span*] The cubit, or distance from the elbow to the extremity of the middle finger, is variously estimated at from eighteen to twenty-one inches: the span, or distance between the extremities of the thumb and little finger in the outstretched hand, is reckoned as half a cubit: so that Goliath's height was between nine feet nine inches and eleven feet four inches. The most probable estimate is about ten feet three inches. Among parallel instances of gigantic stature may be quoted Pusio and Secundilla, who lived in the reign of Augustus, and are said by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* VII. 16) to have been over ten feet high. Josephus says that a certain Eleazar the giant who was sent to the emperor Tiberius, was seven cubits high.



brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand  
 6 shekels of brass. And *he had* greaves of brass upon his  
 7 legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. And the  
 staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's  
 head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing  
 8 a shield went before him. And he stood and cried unto

5. *a coat of mail*] “A corselet of scales,” made of overlapping plates of metal, and protecting the body almost down to the knees. Armour of this kind is represented in the Assyrian sculptures. See Layard's *Nineveh* II. 335. Cp. Virg. *Aen.* XI. 487, “Turnus...*thoraca indutus aenis Horrebat squamis.*”

*five thousand shekels*] Estimated at about 157 pounds avoirdupois.

6. *greaves*] Armour for the legs and feet: from Fr. *grève*, ‘the shin.’ “Greaves” from the Assyrian monuments are figured in Layard's *Nineveh* II. 337. The following passage from Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny's *Nat. Hist.* VII. 20, quoted in the *Bible Word-Book*, illustrates both the matter and the language:

“My selfe haue seenē one named Athanātus do wonderfull strange matters in the open shew and face of the world, namely to walke his stations vpon the stage with a cuirace of lead weighing 500 pound [= 360 lbs. avoirdupois], booted besides with a pair of buskins or *greiues* (cothurni) about his legges that came to as much in weight.”

*brass*] The word translated *brass* means **copper** in such passages as Deut. viii. 9, where a natural metal is spoken of. In some instances the compound metal **bronze** (copper and tin) may be meant, but *brass* (copper and zinc) was unknown to the ancients.

*a target*] Rather, **a javelin**, which was slung across his shoulders, as the Greeks sometimes carried their swords (Hom. *Il.* II. 45). Roman soldiers were often similarly armed with both *pilum* (javelin) and *hasta* (spear). The E. V. follows the Sept. and Vulg. in rendering “target,” i. e. a kind of small shield. The marginal rendering “gorget,” = “a piece of armour for the throat,” from Fr. *gorge*, has nothing in its favour.

7. *the staff of his spear, &c.*] The **shaft** of Goliath's spear, short, but extraordinarily stout and heavy, is compared to the “beam” to which the web is fastened in a loom (cp. 2 Sam. xxi. 19). The iron spear head weighed nearly nineteen pounds avoirdupois.

*one bearing a shield*] A large shield to protect the whole body. Comp. Layard's *Nineveh* II. 346, “The archers, whether on foot or in chariots, were accompanied by shield-bearers, whose office it was to protect them from the shafts of the enemy. The king was always attended in his wars by this officer; and even in peace, one of his eunuchs usually carried a circular shield for his use. This shield-bearer was probably a person of high rank as in Egypt.” Ajax protects Teucer with his shield while he is shooting (Hom. *Il.* VIII. 266—272).

the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, <sup>9</sup> and *to* kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of <sup>10</sup> Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philis- <sup>11</sup> tine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

12—31. *David's errand to the camp.*

Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Beth- <sup>12</sup> lehem-judah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the

8. *am not I a Philistine*] Rather, **the Philistine**; the representative of the nation. The Targum puts a long speech into Goliath's mouth. "I am Goliath the Philistine of Gath, who slew the two sons of Eli the priest, Hophni and Phinehas, and carried away captive the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Dagon my error [i.e. *idol*], and it was there in the cities of the Philistines seven months. Moreover in all the wars of the Philistines I go forth at the head of the army, and we have been victorious in war, and have cast down the slain as the dust of the earth, and hitherto the Philistines have not honoured me, to make me captain of a thousand over them. But as for you children of Israel, what valiant deed has Saul the son of Kish of Gibeah wrought for you, that ye have made him king over you? If he be a valiant man, let him come down and do battle with me; but if he be a coward, choose you, &c."

9. *then will we be your servants*] Compare the agreement between the Romans and Albans about the combat of the Horatii and Curiatii, "that the nation whose citizens conquered in the combat should rule the other in peace" (Livy I. 24). Paris challenged Menelaus to decide the Trojan war by single combat (Hom. *Il.* III. 86 ff.).

12—31. DAVID'S ERRAND TO THE CAMP.

12—31. This section is not found in the Vatican MS. of the Sept. On the difficulties it presents, and the question of its genuineness see Note VI. p. 241.

12. *that Ephrathite*] "That" signifies "who has been mentioned before," and is inserted to connect the narrative with ch. xvi. "Ephrathite" = "*of Ephrath*," the old name of Bethlehem, which is here called in full *Beth-lehem-judah*, i.e. Bethlehem in Judah.

*the man went among men, &c.*] By the introduction of a slight emendation the sentence may be rendered: **Now in the days of Saul the**

13 days of Saul. And the three eldest sons of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and 14 next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. And David *was* the youngest: and the three eldest followed 15 Saul. But David went and returned from Saul to feed his 16 father's sheep *at* Beth-lehem. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty 17 days. And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched *corn*, and these ten 18 loaves, and run *to* the camp to thy brethren; and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and 19 look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley 20 of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and

**man was old and well stricken in years.** Jesse's age is mentioned to account for his absence from the army.

15. *David went and returned from Saul*] From xvi. 21—23 it might have been supposed that David was already permanently resident at Saul's court. This verse however states that he returned home when his services were not required at court, and at the time of the Philistine war was with his father at Bethlehem. We must assume either that xvi. 21 describes by anticipation what happened eventually after the Philistine war: or that the appointment as armour-bearer was a nominal commission, and that, as he was young and inexperienced, his attendance in camp was not yet required. Joab had ten armour-bearers (2 Sam. xviii. 15), and Saul probably many more.

16. *And the Philistine, &c.*] This remark resumes the narrative of vv. 4—11, with the additional information that Goliath's defiance was repeated for a considerable time, and so prepares the way for what follows.

17. *parched corn*] Still a common article of food in Palestine. "In the season of harvest the grains of wheat, not yet dry and hard, are roasted in a pan or an iron plate, and constitute a very palatable article of food; this is eaten along with bread or instead of it." Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* II. 50. Cp. Ruth ii. 14; 1 Sam. xxv. 18; 2 Sam. xvii. 28.

*run*] Rather, **carry them quickly.**

18. *look how thy brethren fare*] Visit thy brethren and enquire after their welfare. Cp. Gen. xxxvii. 14.

*take their pledge*] Bring home some token from them that they are well: the equivalent of a letter.

19. *Now Saul, &c.*] Probably, "Now Saul and they...**are**," &c., i.e. it is Jesse's direction to David where to find his brothers, not a remark of the historian.



took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle. For Israel and the Philistines <sup>21</sup> had put *the battle* in array, army against army. And David <sup>22</sup> left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran *into* the army, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the <sup>23</sup> champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard *them*. And all the men of <sup>24</sup> Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen <sup>25</sup> this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him *with* great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. And <sup>26</sup> David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? And the people answered him after this <sup>27</sup> manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him. And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake <sup>28</sup> unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against

**20.** *the trench*] The word may mean either, (a) the circular rampart round the camp; or (b) a barrier formed by the baggage waggons round the camp; or (c) the place where the baggage waggons of the army were kept. It occurs again in xxvi. 5, 7.

*shouted for the battle*] Raised the 'slogan' or war-cry, like Gideon's "For the LORD and for Gideon" (Jud. vii. 18). Cp. Josh. vi. 5 ff.

**21.** *For Israel.....had put*] **And Israel.....put**, &c.

**22.** *his carriage.....the keeper of the carriage*] "Carriage" in the E. V. always signifies "that which is carried," "baggage." See Jud. xviii. 21; Is. x. 28; Acts xxi. 15. The Heb. word is the same as that translated "stuff" in x. 22.

**25.** *will give him his daughter*] Compare Caleb's offer, Josh. xv. 16. Saul procrastinated about fulfilling the promise, and imposed further conditions (xviii. 17 ff.).

*make his father's house free*] Probably exemption from taxes and personal services to the king is meant. Cp. viii. 11 ff.

**26.** *the living God*] Jehovah as the one "living and true God" is contrasted with the idols of the heathen "which have no breath in their mouths." Cp. Deut. v. 26, and esp. 2 Kings xix. 4.



David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that *thou* mightest see the battle.  
 29 And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a  
 30 cause? And he turned from him towards another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered  
 31 him again after the former manner. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul: and he sent for him.

32—40. *David volunteers to fight Goliath.*

32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.  
 33 And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth,  
 34 and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a  
 35 lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went

28. *the wilderness*] The Heb. word for "wilderness" does not necessarily mean a *barren* district; but a wide open tract used for pasture, as distinguished from arable land. Cp. Ps. lxxv. 12; Joel i. 19, 20, ii. 22.

*naughtiness*] i.e. wickedness. David's advancement seems to have roused Eliab's jealousy. He imputes the worst motives to him and taunts him with (1) neglect of duty; (2) arrogance and discontent with his humble occupation; (3) unseemly eagerness for the sight of bloodshed. Eliab was unable to enter into the nature of David's lofty indignation. Compare the hatred of Joseph's brethren (Gen. xxxvii. 4).

29. *Is there not a cause*] A sufficient cause for his coming, namely, his father's command. But probably the words mean, "Is it not a [mere] word?" i.e. "May I not ask a harmless question?"

32—40. DAVID VOLUNTEERS TO FIGHT GOLIATH.

32. *And David said unto Saul*] According to the Sept. text this stands in close and appropriate connexion with v. 11: in the Heb. text David's offer certainly follows very abruptly on his introduction to Saul.

33. *thou art but a youth*] Compared with the giant David was but a youth, though he had already shown sufficient promise to be called "a man of war" by Saul's servant (xvi. 18).

34. *and there came a lion, &c.*] **And when a lion came or even a bear (or, and that too with a bear).....I went out after him, &c.** "In those early days, when the forests of Southern Palestine had not been cleared, it was the habit of the wild animals which usually frequented the heights of Lebanon or the thickets of the Jordan, to make

out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew <sup>36</sup> both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD <sup>37</sup> that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee. And Saul armed David with his armour, and <sup>38</sup> he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his <sup>39</sup> armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I

incursions into the pastures of Judaea. From the Lebanon at times descended the bears. From the Jordan ascended the lion, at that time infesting the whole of Western Asia." Stanley, *Lect.* II. 43. The Syrian bear is said to be especially ferocious, and appears to have been more dreaded than the lion. See Amos v. 19. Lions are not now found in Palestine, but the traveller Thevenot says that the Arabs are not afraid of them, and will attack and kill them, with no better arms than a stick. Cp. Am. iii. 12.

35. *by his beard*] Cp. the Homeric epithet of the lion, "well-bearded;" (*λὶς ἡγυῖενος*: *Il.* xv. 275); and the Latin proverb "to pluck the beard of a dead lion" (*barbam vellere mortuo leoni*).

36. *seeing he hath defied, &c.*] "The trusting heart of God's servant could see no ground for fearing one who came forth to defy Jehovah." Wilberforce's *Heroes*, p. 242.

The Sept. reads: "Shall I not go and smite him, and take away the reproach from Israel this day? for who is this uncircumcised, who hath reproached the army of the living God?"

37. *the paw*] Lit. "the hand," i.e. the power: the very same word as he uses in reference to the Philistine.

*the LORD be with thee*] **Jehovah shall be with thee**: an assurance, not a prayer.

38. *armed David with his armour*] **Clothed David with his dress**: probably a special military dress adapted to be worn with armour. The sword was fastened to it (*v.* 39). Cp. xviii. 4 (*E. V. garments*).

*a coat of mail*] **A corselet**. The fact that he could wear Saul's armour at all shews that he must have been full grown, perhaps about twenty years old.

39. *assayed*] i.e. endeavoured. The word is derived from Old Fr. *asaier*, "to try, put to the proof," and this from Lat. *exigere*, "to weigh."

40 have not proved *them*. And David put them off him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41—54. *The victory of faith. The flight of the Philistines.*

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David;  
42 and the man that bare the shield *went* before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.  
43 And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed  
44 David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David,

*for he had not proved it*] He made the effort in ignorance, because he had never tried a suit of armour, and did not know what an encumbrance it would be to one unaccustomed to the use of it.

*David put them off him*] “Expeditissimus ille ad praelium procedere cupiebat; fortis non in se sed in Domino; armatus non tam ferro quam fide.” “He desired to go forth to the battle in the lightest possible armour: strong in the Lord not in himself: armed not with steel but with faith.” Augustine, *Serm.* xxxii. God would show, as in the case of Gideon (Jud. vii. 2), that the victory was His alone. Compare Maurice, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 46.

40. *five smooth stones out of the brook*] “The sides and bed of this trench [see above on v. 3] are strewn with rounded and water-worn pebbles, which would have been well fitted for David's sling.” Conder, II. 161.

*scrip*] A small bag, especially a traveller's wallet. Cp. Mt. x. 10; and Milton, *Comus*, l. 626,

“And in requital ope his leathern *scrip*.”

*his sling*] “The sling has been in all ages the favourite weapon of the shepherds of Syria. The Benjamites were especially expert in their use of it: even the left-handed could sling stones at an hair and not miss (Jud. xx. 16).”

41—54. THE VICTORY OF FAITH. THE FLIGHT OF THE PHILISTINES.

41. This verse is not found in the Sept. (B).

42. *he disdained him*] See Prov. xvi. 18.

43. *Am I a dog*] The Sept. (B) reads: “Am I a dog that thou comest to me with a staff and stones? And David said, Nay but worse than a dog.”



Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the <sup>45</sup> Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into <sup>46</sup> mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that <sup>47</sup> the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands. And it <sup>48</sup> came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran *toward* the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in <sup>49</sup> *his* bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his

**44.** *I will give thy flesh, &c.*] Compare Hector's defiance of Ajax in Hom. *Il.* XIII. 831:

"Thy flesh

Shall glut the dogs and carrion birds of Troy."

**45.** *a shield*] A **javelin**, as in v. 6. Clearly an *offensive* weapon is meant.

*in the name of the LORD of hosts*] Resting absolutely upon Him Who has revealed Himself as the Covenant-God of Israel, and the Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth, Whom thou defiest when thou defiest the armies of His people. See Note I. p. 235.

**46.** *deliver thee into mine hand*] Lit. "shut thee up." Cp. Ps. xxxi. 8. "David did not rashly and vainly boast beforehand of the victory, as Goliath had done; but being full of faith praised the divine omnipotence and prophesied of an assured victory." Patrick.

*that there is a God in Israel*] **That Israel hath a God** who is worthy of the name. For the thought cp. xii. 22; 1 Kings xviii. 36; 2 Kings xix. 19.

**47.** *the LORD saveth not with sword and spear, &c.*] A lesson which is needed at all times, when men are tempted to fall down and worship brute force. It is a leading thought in Hannah's song (ii. 1—10); cp. also xiv. 6; Ps. xlv. 6, 7; Hos. i. 7; Zech. iv. 6; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

**48.** *ran toward the army*] **The battle array** of the Philistines. He showed his courage by not waiting for Goliath to approach. The Sept. however has simply: "And the Philistine arose and went to meet David."



50 forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was no* sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

50. This verse is not found in the Sept. (B).

51. *their champion*] **Their mighty man**: a different word from that in vv. 4 and 23.

52. *until thou come to the valley*] Heb. *gai*, "the ravine," as in v. 3. But the ravine which separated the armies could not be the terminus of the Philistine flight, and it seems most probable that *gai* is a copyist's error for *Gath*, which is the reading of the Sept. (B). *Shaaraim* is mentioned in Josh. xv. 35, 36 in connexion with Sochoh and Azekah among the towns of Judah. It is perhaps to be placed at *Tell-Zakariya*, a conspicuous hill on the southern side of the main valley, between *Shuweikeh* (Sochoh) and *Tell-es-Sâfi* (Gath), exactly in the line which the Philistine flight would naturally take. It must originally have been an important outpost for Judah against Gath, but was now no doubt in the hands of the Philistines.

54. *to Jerusalem*] There are no indications that Jerusalem had yet attained any importance either as a political or religious centre. The citadel still remained in the hands of the Jebusites, though the lower city had been captured (Josh. xv. 63). It seems best therefore to suppose that David deposited the head as a votive offering in the Tabernacle at *Nob* which was close to Jerusalem. We know that he afterwards placed Goliath's sword there, and possibly the rest of his armour along with it. This is preferable to the conjecture that the historian here relates by anticipation what David did eventually when he occupied Jerusalem.

*in his tent*] So long as the army remained in the field he kept it as a trophy of his victory.

We might naturally expect that David would celebrate his victory by a Psalm of thanksgiving. No extant Psalm however can with certainty be referred to this occasion. The Sept. adds "against Goliath" to the

55—58. *Saul's inquiry concerning David's parentage.*

And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, <sup>55</sup> he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, *As* thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose <sup>56</sup> son the stripling *is*. And as David returned from the <sup>57</sup> slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son *art* thou, *thou* young <sup>58</sup> man? And David answered, *I am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.

CH. XVIII. 1—5. *Jonathan's friendship for David.*

And it came to pass, when he made an end of speaking <sup>18</sup> unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And <sup>2</sup>

title of Ps. cxliv (Sept. cxliii), but without any sufficient probability; and the Psalm appended to the Psalter in the Sept., which professes to belong to this period, is certainly not authentic. A translation of it may be found in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, I. 403.

## 55—58. SAUL'S INQUIRY CONCERNING DAVID'S PARENTAGE.

55. *he said unto Abner*] This section is not found in the Septuagint (B). On the difficulty of reconciling it with ch. xvi. see Note VI. p. 241.

56. *the stripling*] This word is the diminutive of *strip*, and like *slip*, *scion*, &c. means *a youth*, as it were a strip from the parent stem. The Heb. word, which is found again only in xx. 22, signifies "a full grown youth."

## CH. XVIII. 1—5. JONATHAN'S FRIENDSHIP FOR DAVID.

1—5. This section also is not found in the Septuagint (B).

1. *the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David*] The same expressive phrase is used of Jacob's love for Benjamin in Gen. xlv. 30, which might be rendered "seeing his soul is knit up with the lad's soul."

*loved him as his own soul*] Cp. xx. 17; Deut. xiii. 6; 2 Sam. i. 26. Thus commenced that attachment "which is the first Biblical instance of a romantic friendship, such as was common afterwards in Greece, and has been since in Christendom; and is remarkable, both as giving its sanction to these, and as filled with a pathos of its own, which has been imitated but never surpassed, in modern works of fiction. Each found in each the affection that he found not in his own family." Dean Stanley in *Dict. of Bible*, I. 1122. Theseus and Peirithous; Achilles and Patroclus; Orestes and Pylades; Damon and Pythias; Epaminondas and Pelopidas; are the most familiar instances in classical literature.

Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more  
 3 home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David  
 made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.  
 4 And Jonathan stript himself of the robe that *was* upon him,  
 and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword,  
 5 and to his bow, and to his girdle. And David went out  
 whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely:  
 and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted  
 in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's  
 servants.

6—9. *The celebration of David's victory.*

6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was  
 returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the  
 women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing,

4. *Jonathan stript himself, &c.*] Jonathan gave David (1) his *mēil*  
 or long outer robe for ordinary wear (see on ii. 19): (2) his military  
 dress (xvii. 38) and girdle: (3) even his sword, and the famous bow  
 which was his special weapon (2 Sam. i. 22). The act was at once a  
 ratification of their compact and a public mark of honour. See Gen.  
 xli. 42; Esther vi. 8. We may compare the exchange of armour be-  
 tween Glaucus and Diomedes when they met before Troy, as a pledge of  
 old family friendship (Hom. *Il.* vi. 230).

5. *David went out, &c.*] David was appointed to some post of  
 command, and "went out" upon military expeditions. In these "he be-  
 behaved himself wisely"—the word combines the ideas of *prudence* and  
 consequent *success*: and in spite of this sudden promotion, which might  
 naturally have excited the jealousy of the courtiers, won their good-will.  
 This verse anticipates, and describes summarily facts which are men-  
 tioned again in vv. 13—16 in their proper place.

6—9. THE CELEBRATION OF DAVID'S VICTORY.

6. *And it came to pass, &c.*] The narrative has made a digression  
 to relate the circumstances of David's permanent reception into Saul's  
 service, the commencement of the friendship between him and Jonathan,  
 and his ultimate promotion and success. It now goes back to relate the  
 welcome which David received when the army returned in triumph from  
 the successful completion of the Philistine war. Ch. xviii. 6 is to be  
 read (as it actually stands in the Sept.) in connexion with xvii. 54,  
 though some time may have elapsed, during which the army was  
 occupied in following up its first success. The Sept. reads v. 6 thus;  
 "And the dancing women came out of all the cities of Israel to meet  
 David, with tabrets and rejoicing and cymbals."

*the women came out, &c.*] To escort the victors home with singing and  
 dancing. Dancing was the usual expression of rejoicing upon occasions  
 of national triumph like the present; cp. Ex. xv. 20, 21; Jud. xi. 34;



to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick. And the women answered *one another* as 7 they played, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,

And David his ten thousands.

And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; 8 and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David 9 from that day and forward.

10, 11. *Saul's attempt to murder David.*

And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit 10

and at religious festivals (Ps. lxxviii. 25, clix. 3). These dances were as a rule confined to women—David's dancing in 2 Sam. vi. 14 was exceptional—and probably resembled the modern Oriental dance, in which the evolutions are extemporaneous, and not confined to any fixed rule, but varied at the pleasure of the leading dancer, who is imitated by the rest of the company.

*with tabrets, &c.*] The dance was accompanied (1) by the "tabret" or "timbrel" (Ex. xv. 20; Jud. xi. 34): i.e. the *hand-drum*, an instrument still used by the Arabs, and described as "a hoop (sometimes with pieces of brass fixed in it to make a jingling) over which a piece of parchment is distended. It is beaten with the fingers:"—(2) "with joy:" i.e. jubilant shouts and songs: (3) "with instruments of music;" either "triangles," or "three-stringed instruments."

7. *answered one another*] The women who "played"—i.e. danced and gesticulated—sang in antiphonal chorus (Ex. xv. 21) the refrain of a popular song, which evidently became widely current, as it was well known even among the Philistines (xxi. 11, xxix. 5).

*David his ten thousands*] For the Philistine champion was a host in himself. Comp. the people's words to David: "thou art worth ten thousand of us" (2 Sam. xviii. 3).

9. *Saul eyed David*] With a suspicious jealousy which soon ripened into a deadly hatred. There is no need to suppose that David's anointing by Samuel had been reported to him. "The prophet had distinctly told him in the day of his sin, that the Lord had rent the kingdom from him, and had given it to a neighbour that was better than he. And in David he could read the marks of such a man." Wilberforce's *Heroes of Heb. Hist.* p. 245.

10, 11. SAUL'S ATTEMPT TO MURDER DAVID.

10, 11. The last sentence of v. 8 and vv. 9—11 are not found in the Sept. (B). The narrative certainly gains by their omission, and describes the gradual growth of Saul's enmity more naturally. At the same time



from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other  
 11 times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

12—16. *David's advancement.*

12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with  
 13 him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed

there is no impossibility in supposing that the fit of passion to which Saul gave way on the day of the triumph brought on a return of his madness, in the frenzy of which he threatened David's life: and yet that he afterwards retained him in his service and promoted him, yielding partly to the better impulses of his sane moments, partly to the force of popular opinion.

10. *he prophesied*] The word "prophesy" describes *an ecstatic condition due to supernatural influence good or evil*: the result in the one case being prophetic inspiration or religious enthusiasm: in the other raving madness. See on x. 5.

*and there was a javelin in Saul's hand*] Render, **And the spear was in Saul's hand.** The spear served as a sceptre, and was the symbol of royalty. The King held it in his hand when he sat in council (xxii. 6) or in his house (xix. 9); it was kept by his side when he sat at table (xx. 33); stuck in the ground by his pillow as he slept in camp (xxvi. 7). Compare the modern Arab practice. "We recognised the Sheikh's tent, among a group of twenty others of which the encampment consisted, by the tall spear planted against it." Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 259.

11. *Saul cast the javelin; for he said*] Probably; **Saul lifted (or brandished) the spear, and said.** It does not seem to be meant that he actually cast it, as he did upon the later occasion (xix. 10). The threatening gesture was twice repeated, and David prudently withdrew on both occasions.

*avoided*] "Withdrew," "escaped." The word is connected with the adj. *void*, and Norm. Fr. *voider*, to empty, from Lat. *viduare*. It is generally transitive: comp. "six of us only stayed and the rest *avoided* the room" (Bacon): but the intransitive usage is supported, e.g., by Shakespeare, *Tempest*, IV. 1.

"Well done, *avoid*, no more."

12—16. DAVID'S ADVANCEMENT.

12. In the Sept. (B) this verse follows immediately after the clause of v. 8, "to me they have ascribed but thousands," and reads simply, "and Saul was afraid of David."

him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And <sup>14</sup> David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD *was* with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he <sup>15</sup> behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. But all <sup>16</sup> Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

17—19. *Saul's treacherous offer of his daughter Merab to David.*

And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, <sup>17</sup> her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him. And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and <sup>18</sup> what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should

13. *made him his captain over a thousand*] What was summarily mentioned by anticipation in v. 5 is here related with more detail in the order of time.

15. *was afraid of him*] **Stood in awe of him**, a stronger expression than that in v. 12, denoting primarily *the avoidance of the person feared*. (Cp. Sept. εὐλαβέτο ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ.)

16. *because he went out and came in before them*] Acted as their leader in war. Saul made David captain over a thousand partly to get rid of him from his presence, partly perhaps in the hope that he might lose his life in battle (vv. 17, 25): but the result was that he became firmly established in the affections of the people. Cp. v. 5.

17—19. SAUL'S TREACHEROUS OFFER OF HIS DAUGHTER MERAB TO DAVID.

17—19. This section and the clause of v. 21 which refers to it are omitted in the Sept. (B). See Note VI. p. 241.

17. *Merab*] = *Increase*. Saul offered her to David in fulfilment of his promise (xvii. 25). In return for this honour Saul expects him to fight his battles, treacherously hoping that he may fall by the hand of the Philistines.

*the LORD's battles*] Israel's wars were "the wars of Jehovah," because they were undertaken for the defence and establishment of His Kingdom, and His aid might be claimed in waging them. Cp. ch. xxv. 28; Num. xxi. 14. David expresses the same idea in xvii. 36, 47.

*Saul said*] i.e. thought, as above in v. 11, xvi. 6, &c. To such cowardly and treacherous hypocrisy has jealousy reduced the once brave and generous soldier!

18. *what is my life*] Probably, **who are my folk, even my father's**

<sup>19</sup> be son in law to the king? But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

20—30. *David's marriage with Michal.*

<sup>20</sup> And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they  
<sup>21</sup> told Saul, and the thing pleased him. And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt *this* day be my son in law  
<sup>22</sup> in *the one of* the twain. And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee:  
<sup>23</sup> now therefore be the king's son in law. And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light *thing* to be a king's son in law, seeing that I *am* a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

**family?** David acknowledges himself unworthy of the proposed honour on the score of social position.

**19. the Meholathite]** Of *Abel-Meholah*, a town in the Jordan valley near Beth-shan. It was the birth-place of Elisha (1 Kings xix. 16). Why Saul changed his purpose does not appear. It has been inferred from v. 25 that Adriel had given a rich dowry.

20—30. DAVID'S MARRIAGE WITH MICHAL.

**20. Michal Saul's daughter loved David]** According to the text of the Sept. this follows immediately upon v. 16. By his bravery David won the affections of the people, and even of the king's daughter.

**21. a snare]** Michal was to be the *bait* to lure David into some venturesome raid upon the Philistines in which he might lose his life.

*Wherefore Saul, &c.]* Probably, **And Saul said to David a second time, Now shalt thou be my son-in-law.** The Sept. (B) omits the clause, but adds, "Now the hand of the Philistines was against Saul."

**22. Commune]** i.e. "converse." The word is derived from Lat. *communicare*, through the old Fr. *communier*. It would seem that David mistrusted Saul and returned no answer, so Saul set his courtiers to work to persuade him.

**23. a poor man]** And therefore unable to offer the "dowry," or price such as it was usual for the suitor to pay to the father of the bride, either in money (Gen. xxxiv. 12) or in service (Gen. xxix. 20). The same custom prevailed among the ancient Greeks (Hom. *Il.* xvi. 178; *Od.* viii. 318), Babylonians, and Assyrians, and still survives in the



And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner <sup>24</sup>  
 spake David. And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, <sup>25</sup>  
 The king desireth not *any* dowry, but an hundred foreskins  
 of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies.  
 But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the  
 Philistines. And when his servants told David these words, <sup>26</sup>  
 it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the  
 days were not expired. Wherefore David arose and went, <sup>27</sup>  
 he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred  
 men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave  
 them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's  
 son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to  
 wife. And Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with <sup>28</sup>  
 David, and *that* Michal Saul's daughter loved him. And <sup>29</sup>  
 Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became  
 David's enemy continually. Then the princes of the Philis- <sup>30</sup>  
 tines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth,  
*that* David behaved himself more wisely than all the ser-  
 vants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

East. Tacitus notices it as a peculiarity of the Germans, that "it is not the wife who offers a dowry to her husband, but the husband to his wife" (*Germ.* c. 18).

26. *the days were not expired*] Apparently referring to some time which had been fixed for David to accept or decline the king's offer. The Sept. (B) omits the words.

27. *two hundred men*] He slew double the stipulated number of Philistines. The Sept. however reads "one hundred." Cp. 2 Sam. iii. 14.

*in full tale*] "Tale" = a number told or counted off, a reckoning. Compare

"Every shepherd tells his *tale*  
 Under the hawthorn in the dale."

MILTON, *L'Allegro*, l. 67.

28. *that Michal Saul's daughter loved him*] The reading of the Sept. certainly suits the context better: "that all Israel loved him."

30. *Then the princes, &c.*] "**And** the princes, &c., and it came to pass **as often as** they went forth, &c." This notice of David's continual success and growing popularity gives the ground of Saul's increasing enmity, and prepares the way for the narrative of the next chapter.

*set by*] i.e. esteemed. Cp. Ps. xv. 4 in the P. B. V. "He that *setteth* not *by* himself."



CH. XIX. 1—7. *Jonathan's intercession with his father on David's behalf.*

19 And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee. And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good: for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? And Saul hearkened unto

CH. XIX. 1—7. JONATHAN'S INTERCESSION WITH HIS FATHER ON DAVID'S BEHALF.

1. *Saul spake, &c.*] Perhaps in some outburst of passion like Henry the Second's against Thomas à Becket. No definite command seems to have been given.

2. *until the morning*] Rather, **in the morning**.

3. *in the field where thou art*] Jonathan may have wished David to hear and judge for himself of Saul's intention; or to be close at hand so that he might at once inform him of the result of his appeal.

4. *spake good of David*] Had Jonathan simply advised David to flee, without endeavouring to bring Saul to a better mind, he would have acted to the prejudice of his father's interests, by depriving him of the best support of his kingdom.

*to thee-ward*] "Ward" is used as a termination denoting (a) *direction* (Ex. xxxvii. 9), (b) as here, *relation*.

5. *put his life in his hand*] i.e. voluntarily exposed himself to peril of death. The figure seems to be that of taking a treasure out of a safe place, and carrying it about with the risk of losing it. Cp. ch. xxviii. 21; Jud. xii. 3; Ps. cxix. 109.

*wrought a great salvation*] See xi. 9 (note), 13.

*sin against innocent blood*] Incur bloodguiltiness by the murder of an innocent man. Cp. Deut. xix. 10—13; Ps. xciv. 21.

the voice of Jonathan : and Saul sware, *As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.* And Jonathan called David, and <sup>7</sup> Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

### 8—11. *Saul's attempt on David's life.*

And there was war again : and David went out, and <sup>8</sup> fought with the Philistines, and slew them *with* a great slaughter ; and they fled from him. And the evil spirit from <sup>9</sup> the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand : and David played with *his* hand. And <sup>10</sup> Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin ; but he slipt away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall : and David fled, and escaped that night. Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to <sup>11</sup> watch him, and to slay him in the morning : and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou *shalt be slain.*

6. *Saul sware*] Sincerely no doubt for the time, but with no real repentance for his murderous design.

### 8—11. SAUL'S ATTEMPT ON DAVID'S LIFE.

8. *David went out, &c.*] This preliminary mention of David's fresh successes implies that Saul's attack of madness was due to jealousy excited by them.

9. *the evil spirit*] See on xvi. 14.

*as he sat, &c.*] **Now he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing with his hand.** These words are a parenthesis picturing the circumstances under which Saul attempted to murder David. On Saul's spear see at xviii. 10.

10. *escaped that night*] It is perhaps better to follow the Sept. in joining "that night" to the next sentence and reading, "and it came to pass that night that Saul, &c."

11. *in the morning*] As he left his house. Cp. Jud. xvi. 2. "We may guess that only the fear of alarming the town, and of rousing the people to rescue their favourite hero, prevented him from directing them to break into the house, and to slay David there." Kitto's *Bibl. Illustr.*

Psalm lix. is referred by its title to the present occasion. If this is correct, the Psalm supplements the history, shewing that David was in danger not from Saul only, but from ruffians among Saul's followers who prowled about the streets of Gibeah threatening his life.

12—17. *David's escape by the aid of Michal.*

12 So Michal let David down through a window: and he  
 13 went, and fled, and escaped. And Michal took an image,  
 and laid *it* in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' *hair for*  
 14 his bolster, and covered *it* with a cloth. And when Saul  
 15 sent messengers to take David, she said, *He is sick.* And  
 Saul sent the messengers *again* to see David, saying, Bring  
 16 him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. And when  
 the messengers were come in, behold *there was* an image in  
 17 the bed, with a pillow of goats' *hair for* his bolster. And

## 12—17. DAVID'S ESCAPE BY THE AID OF MICHAL.

12. *through a window*] Compare the escape of the spies from Jericho (Josh. ii. 15), and St Paul from Damascus (2 Cor. xi. 33). If David's house, like Rahab's, was upon the town wall, it would be easy for him to escape thus though the door was watched by Saul's men.

*fled, and escaped*] Thus began that fugitive life of hardship and peril, which was to form a new element in the education of the future king. See Intro. p. 40.

13. *an image*] **The teraphim.** These were the *penates* or household images of the Israelites, brought originally from their Chaldean home (Gen. xxxi. 19). In spite of the strict prohibition of idols, they were used by those who professed to worship Jehovah in the time of the Judges (Jud. xvii. 5, xviii. 14 ff.), and even down to the later days of the Kings (2 Kings xxiii. 24). They seem to have been a kind of fetish or household charm for good luck, rather than an object of worship, and were used in divination (Zech. x. 2; Ezek. xxi. 19—22). It is surprising to find teraphim in David's house. It has been conjectured that Michal, like Rachel, kept them secretly on account of her barrenness. The plural *teraphim* here denotes a single image, in human form, apparently of life-size.

*put a pillow, &c.*] **Put the quilt of goat's hair at its head, and covered it with the coverlet.** Michal wrapped the head of the image in a rough rug, either to hide it, or to imitate a man's hair, and covered up the whole with the *begeg*, a square piece of woollen cloth, which was used for an upper garment, or for a bed-covering. Cp. Deut. xxiv. 12, 13.

14. *she said, He is sick*] Apparently she took the messengers into the outer chamber and pointed to the figure in bed in an inner closet, not letting them go near enough to detect the imposture. The plan gained David time to escape. The Sept. has, "and *they* [the messengers] brought word that he was sick."

15. *Bring him up*] This indicates that Saul's residence was on the hill of Gibeah, David's in the lower town.

16. *There was an image, &c.*] **The teraphim was in the bed, and the quilt of goat's hair at its head.**



Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

18—24. *David takes refuge with Samuel at Ramah.*

So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to 18 Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was told 19 Saul, saying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah. And 20 Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* appointed over them, the spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and 2

17. *He said unto me, &c.*] Michal adds another lie to screen herself from Saul's anger. In this she was but following her father's example (*v.* 6), and with more excuse. Compare the deceit practised by Rahab (Josh. ii. 4 ff.); by the woman at Bahurim (2 Sam. xvii. 20); and in modern times, by Grotius' wife, who to save her husband represented the box in which he was concealed as a box of theological books. Scripture affirms the universal duty of Truth without any exception (Lev. xix. 11), nor can it be understood to sanction breaches of this general law by recording them without disapproval. It is left to the casuist to discuss whether any necessity is sufficient to justify a falsehood or an act of deception. See Whewell's *Elements of Morality*, Chaps. xv. xvi.

18—24. DAVID TAKES REFUGE WITH SAMUEL AT RAMAH.

18. *to Samuel*] Turning naturally for direction at this crisis to the prophet who had anointed him, and hoping that Saul would at least reverence the age and authority of Samuel. No doubt David had had much intercourse with Samuel since their first meeting at Bethlehem.

*in Naioth*] *Naioth*, which was at or near Ramah, is a quasi-proper name signifying *dwelling*s, and in all probability denotes the *College*, or common residence of the society of prophets collected together at Ramah by Samuel. See Introd. ch. vi. p. 33. Cp. 2 Kings vi. 1, 2. The Targum renders the word "house of instruction." Hither Samuel took David, partly as being a safer place of refuge than his own house; partly that he might be spiritually strengthened by a share in the religious exercises of the society (*v.* 20).

20. *prophets prophesying*] Some common religious exercise conducted by Samuel, who is described as **standing as president** over the prophets, is meant by "prophesying." See on x. 5. The Targum paraphrases: "They saw the company of scribes praising, and Samuel standing as instructor over them."



they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again  
 22 the third time, and they prophesied also. Then went he  
 also to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu:  
 and he asked and said, Where *are* Samuel and David? And  
 23 *one* said, Behold, *they be* at Naioth in Ramah. And he  
 went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the spirit of God  
 was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until  
 24 he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stript off his clothes  
 also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay  
 down naked all that day and all *that* night. Wherefore they  
 say, *Is* Saul also among the prophets?

CH. XX. 1—10. *David's consultation with Jonathan.*

20 And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and

21. *they prophesied also*] Carried away by the religious excitement they forgot their errand, and joined the chant of the prophets.

22. *a great well*] **The great cistern**, some well known landmark in *Sechu*, a place nowhere else mentioned, between Gibeah and Ramah. The reading is uncertain. The Sept. has "the well of the *threshing-floor* that is in Sephi (or, *the hill*)."

23. *until he came to Naioth*] The inspiration seized Saul even before he reached the company of prophets. He was to be convinced of the irresistible might of the Divine Spirit against whose influence he had striven. He was to be taught, if his heart was not already too utterly hardened to learn, that in fighting against David he was fighting against God, and engaging in a futile struggle. For this reason Saul, as the chief agent in David's persecution, was struck down more completely than his servants, and lay there unconscious "all that day and all that night."

24. *naked*] Not literally naked, but stripped of his outer garment.

*Is Saul also among the prophets?*] The origin of the proverb is related in x. 11. It now received a fresh exemplification. This burst of prophetic inspiration was a startling reminder to Saul of that former occasion when the Spirit of God came upon him to fit him for that office in which he had failed so sadly. See Maurice, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 17 ff.

CH. XX. 1—10. DAVID'S CONSULTATION WITH JONATHAN.

1. *David fled from Naioth*] While Saul lay helpless in his trance, David, perhaps by Samuel's advice, returned to consult with Jonathan. It may seem surprising that he could think of venturing back to Gibeah after Saul's late outbreak; but he on his part would be unwilling to break with Saul and become an outlaw till absolutely forced to do so; while Jonathan, knowing David's value to the kingdom, would use every effort to effect a reconciliation. This he might still hope for, since all

said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing *either* great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it *is* not so. And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death. Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee. And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow *is* the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in

Saul's actual attempts upon David's life had been made in his fits of insanity.

*What have I done*] The three questions are a virtual assertion of his innocence. Compare the passionate protests of the Seventh Psalm, written probably somewhat later, during his flight, but reflecting the feelings of this time. See on xxiv. 9.

2. *nothing either great or small*] i.e. absolutely nothing. Cp. xxii. 15, xxv. 36.

*shew it me*] Lit. "uncover mine ear," and so in v. 12. See on ix. 15.

*it is not so*] Bearing in mind Saul's oath (xix. 6), and attributing his recent violence to temporary madness, Jonathan refuses to believe that his father has any deliberate design against David's life.

3. *And David sware moreover*] Added an oath to the assertion in v. 1. The Sept. however reads simply, "And David answered Jonathan and said."

*Thy father certainly knoweth, &c.*] Jonathan's confidence that Saul would tell him all beforehand clearly implies that he supposed his father to be ignorant of the close friendship between him and David. David undeceives him on this point.

*there is but a step, &c.*] He stands, as it were, upon the very brink of a precipice.

5. *the new moon*] The New Moon or first day of the lunar month was celebrated with special sacrifices and blowing of trumpets. See Num. xxviii. 11—15, x. 10; Ps. lxxxi. 3. It was observed as a day of rest (Amos viii. 5), and apparently used as an opportunity for religious instruction (2 Kings iv. 23).

*to sit with the king at meat*] To join as a member of the royal household in the sacrificial feast (v. 24) which lasted for two days at least (v. 27).

*let me go*] As the sequel proved, the plan was well devised for ascer-

6 the fields unto the third *day* at even. If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me that *he* might run *to* Beth-lehem his city: for *there is* a yearly  
 7 sacrifice there for all the family. If he say thus, *It is* well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, *then*  
 8 be sure that evil is determined by him. Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why  
 9 shouldest thou bring me to thy father? And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then  
 10 would not I tell it thee? Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what *if* thy father answer thee roughly?

11—23. *David and Jonathan renew their covenant.*

11 And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out *into* the field. And they went out both of them *into*

taining whether the lesson of Naioth had wrought any change in Saul, or whether in his sane moments he was now deliberately resolved to kill David.

6. *a yearly sacrifice there for all the family*] This request incidentally throws light on the religious customs of the age. The annual meeting of the family or clan for sacrifice may have been a partial observance of the command in Deut. xii. 5 ff.; but in the unsettled state of religion the obligation to go up to the central sanctuary was neglected. It is not clear whether David really wanted to go to Bethlehem, and meant to hide "in the field" afterwards, or whether he regarded the story as a justifiable deception to avoid exciting Saul's anger.

8. *thou hast brought, &c.*] The initiative had been on Jonathan's side (xviii. 3). David calls their league of friendship "a covenant of Jehovah" as being ratified in His name by solemn oath. See v. 12 ff.

9. *Far be it from thee*] i.e. Do not suppose that I could either slay thee myself or give thee up to my father. The same phrase is rendered "God forbid" in v. 2.

10. *Who shall tell me, &c.*] The double question answers to Jonathan's double promise in vv. 12, 13, that he will let David know the result in either event. But perhaps the words should be rendered simply, **Who shall tell me if haply thy father answer thee roughly?**

11—23. DAVID AND JONATHAN RENEW THEIR COVENANT.

11. *into the field*] To escape observation they leave the city, in which the conversation has been held hitherto.



the field. And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of <sup>12</sup> Israel, when I have sounded my father about to morrow *any* time, *or* the third *day*, and behold, *if there be* good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee; the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: *but* if <sup>13</sup> it please my father *to do* thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father. And <sup>14</sup> thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: but *also* thou shalt not cut off <sup>15</sup> thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the <sup>16</sup>

**12.** *O LORD God*] Jonathan begins by addressing Jehovah, but afterwards instead of putting the verb in the second person (so mayest *Thou* do) he repeats the divine Name.

*about to-morrow any time, or the third day*] **About this time to-morrow or the day after.**

**13.** *The LORD do so, &c.*] See on iii. 17.

*the LORD be with thee, &c.*] Cp. xviii. 12. Jonathan already foresees David's destiny, as is clear from the following verses. See also xxiii. 17.

**14, 15.** Convinced that David will succeed to the kingdom, Jonathan exacts from him a promise to shew kindness to his posterity after his death as well as to himself during his life time. His words, like Saul's in ch. xxiv. 21, are prompted by a fear lest even David should conform to the barbarous Oriental custom by which the first king of a new dynasty often tried to secure himself on the throne by murdering his predecessor's family. Cp. 1 Kings xv. 29, xvi. 11; 2 Kings x. 6, xi. 1. David fulfilled his promise by shewing kindness to Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix. 1 ff., xxi. 7). This is clearly the general sense of the passage, though the exact rendering is doubtful. (1) Retaining the Heb. text we may translate: "And wilt thou not, if I am still alive (when thou comest to the throne), yea wilt thou not shew me the kindness of Jehovah, that I die not? And thou shalt not cut off, &c." But this involves a very harsh construction, and it is perhaps best (2) to alter the text slightly, and translate: "And mayest thou, if I am still alive, yea mayest thou shew me the kindness of Jehovah: and if I die, thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever, &c."

**16.** *So Jonathan, &c.*] (1) The E. V. treats this as a remark of the historian: and apparently understands Jonathan's words "Let the LORD, &c." to mean "Let the LORD exact vengeance from David by the hand of his enemies if he fails to fulfil the covenant." But this involves an unusual construction. We should expect, "Let the LORD require it at the hand of David," if he fails to fulfil the covenant

house of David, *saying*, Let the LORD even require *it* at the  
 17 hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to  
 swear again, because he loved him : for he loved him as he  
 18 loved his own soul. Then Jonathan said to *David*, To morrow  
 is the new moon : and thou shalt be missed, because thy  
 19 seat will be empty. And *when* thou hast stayed three days,  
 then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place  
 where thou didst hide thyself when the business was *in*  
 20 *hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel. And I will shoot  
 three arrows on the side *thereof*, as *though* I shot at a mark.  
 21 And behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the  
 arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows  
*are* on this side of thee, take them ; then come thou :  
 for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt ; *as* the LORD  
 22 liveth. But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the  
 arrows *are* beyond thee ; go *thy way* : for the LORD hath

(cp. Deut. xxiii. 21) : and possibly "David's enemies" is an euphemism for "David," substituted by a scribe in later times. Cp. note on xxv. 22.  
 (2) The Sept. points to a text making the whole of v. 16 part of Jonathan's speech : "And when the LORD hath cut off, &c. let not the name of Jonathan be cut off from the house of David, and may the LORD take vengeance on the enemies of David."

17. *caused David to swear again, because, &c.*] Jonathan exacted another oath beside that implied in v. 16, because the intensity of his love impelled him to bind David by the strongest possible obligation. The Sept. however reads : "And Jonathan swore yet again to David."

18—22. This section is the *Haphtarah* for the New Moon when it falls on the first day of the week.

18. *thy seat will be empty*] At the sacrificial feast. See vv. 5, 25.

19. *when the business was in hand*] Lit. "on the day of the business," either the incident recorded in xix. 1—7, or some unknown matter.

*the stone Ezel*] The name "stone of departure" may have been given in remembrance of the parting of David and Jonathan beside it. The Sept. however, (cp. v. 41), reads "beside yonder heap of stones;" either some natural rocks or a heap of ruins, which might serve for a hiding-place. The rendering of E. V. *marg.* "the stone that sheweth the way" comes from the Targum, which gives "sign-stone."

20. *I will shoot, &c.*] This sign was arranged in case Jonathan should be watched by Saul's spies, and prevented from getting an interview with David without endangering him. No suspicion would be excited by Jonathan's carrying the bow which was his usual weapon (xviii. 4).

22. *the young man*] **The stripling**, as in xvii. 56.

sent thee away. And *as touching* the matter which thou <sup>23</sup> and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.

24—34. *Saul's intention tested by Jonathan.*

So David hid himself in the field: and when the new <sup>24</sup> moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat. And <sup>25</sup> the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. Nevertheless <sup>26</sup> Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; surely *he is* not clean. And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was* the <sup>27</sup> second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day? And <sup>28</sup> Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me *to go* to Beth-lehem: and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; <sup>29</sup> for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother,

*the LORD hath sent thee away*] Bids thee depart. Jonathan is prepared to recognise the Divine Will in the banishment of David from Saul's court. God had another school in which the future king must be trained.

23. *as touching the matter, &c.*] The reciprocal covenant of friendship just renewed and ratified.

*the LORD, &c.*] As the witness of our covenant, and the avenger of any breach of it. Cp. Gen. xxxi. 49, 53.

24—34. SAUL'S INTENTION TESTED BY JONATHAN.

24. *meat*] Lit. *bread*. "Meat" in the E. V. signifies *food* in general, and is nowhere limited to the modern meaning *flesh*. This usage survives in some provincial dialects.

25. *upon a seat by the wall*] Saul occupied the place of honour at the top or the centre of the table opposite the entrance.

*and Jonathan arose*] This appears to mean that Jonathan first occupied his usual seat by Saul's side, but when Abner entered resigned the place to him, probably not wishing to sit next his father in David's absence. The Sept. has a different reading, "And he preceded Jonathan," which is equally obscure. Josephus says, "When they had sat down beside Saul, Jonathan on the right, and Abner on the left."

26. *he is not clean*] Persons who were ceremonially unclean were peremptorily excluded from participating in a religious festival. See Lev. vii. 20, 21; 1 Sam. xvi. 5.

29. *my brother*] The eldest brother probably made the arrangements in Jesse's old age. The Sept. reads "my brothers."



he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the  
 30 king's table. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion  
 31 of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be stablished, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me,  
 32 for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what  
 33 hath he done? And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his  
 34 father to slay David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35—42. *The parting between Jonathan and David.*

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out *into* the field at the time appointed with David, and

30. *Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman*] "To any Oriental, nothing is so grievously insulting as a reproach cast upon his mother.... The mother herself is not held to be affronted in such cases, but the son who hears such words applied to her is insulted, and meant to be insulted, beyond expiation." Kitto, *Bible Illustr.* The words might also be rendered, "thou son of perverse rebellion," i.e. according to a common Heb. idiom (cp. i. 16), "thou perverse rebel."

*that thou hast chosen*] The Sept. reads, "that thou consortest with." *to thine own confusion, &c.*] Thy unfilial conduct disgraces both thyself and the mother who bare thee.

31. *he shall surely die*] Lit. "he is a son of death." Cp. 2 Sam. xii. 5; Ps. cii. 20; Mt. xxiii. 15; John xvii. 12.

33. *cast a javelin*] Or, as in xviii. 11, **lifted his spear**: brandished it threateningly, without actually casting it.

34. *had done him shame*] Saul had insulted and wronged David by publicly charging him with treasonable intentions (v. 31). "The generosity of Jonathan's character is very apparent. He did not resent the injury and insult offered to himself so much as the wrong done to his friend." *Speaker's Comm.*

35—42. THE PARTING BETWEEN JONATHAN AND DAVID.

35. *at the time appointed*] Better, **to the place appointed** (v. 19).

a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, Run, find <sup>36</sup> out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. And when the lad was <sup>37</sup> come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is* not the arrow beyond thee? And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make <sup>38</sup> speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not <sup>39</sup> any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto <sup>40</sup> him, Go, carry *them* to the city. *And* as soon as the lad <sup>41</sup> was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to <sup>42</sup> David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went *into* the city.

*a little lad*] Who would not suspect the real purpose of Jonathan's shooting: a vivid touch of reality in the narrative.

<sup>38.</sup> *the arrows*] It is implied that the three arrows agreed upon were shot, but the narrator does not think it necessary to repeat full details thrice.

<sup>40.</sup> *his artillery*] i.e. his bow and quiver. From Lat. *ars*, used in late Latin to mean 'an implement,' came the late Latin *artillaria*, and O. Fr. *artillerie*, 'machines or equipment of war.' The word was used of missile weapons long before the invention of gunpowder. See *Bible Word-Book*, p. 37.

<sup>41.</sup> *out of a place toward the south*] Lit. "from the side of the south," i.e. from a hiding-place to the south of the stone Ezel. But the expression is anomalous, and it is best to adopt the Sept. reading, "from beside the heap of stones," as in v. 19.

*fell on his face, &c.*] As a token of reverence and loyalty to the king's son. Cp. Gen. xxxiii. 3, xlii. 6. An Oriental when he meets a superior, kneels down and touches the ground with his forehead.

<sup>42.</sup> *forasmuch as, &c.*] It is better to follow the marginal rendering in assuming an aposiopesis, which corresponds with Jonathan's deep emotion. "**That which we have sworn, &c.**"—**remember!** Jonathan's parting charge reminds David of their mutual vow.

CH. XXI. 1—9. *David's visit to Nob.*

- 21 Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee?
- 2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me* five *loaves* of bread
- 4 in mine hand, or what there is present. And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young
- 5 men have kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy,

## XXI. 1—9. DAVID'S VISIT TO NOB.

1. *to Nob*] Nob was at this time a city of the priests (xxii. 19), though it is not specified among the places assigned to them by Joshua: here, as is clearly to be inferred from v. 6, the Tabernacle, which has not been mentioned since the death of Eli, was now standing. The site of Nob has not been identified. The description of Sennacherib's march in Is. x. 28—32 shews that it was a day's march south of Geba on the road to Jerusalem, and within sight of the city. Dean Stanley supposes it to be the northern summit of Mount Olivet, the place of worship which David passed in his flight from Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 32). *Sin. and Pal.* p. 187. Hither David betook himself not as a permanent refuge, but to inquire the will of God concerning his future movements, and to procure food and weapons, for in the hurry of his flight he had brought nothing away with him.

*Ahimelech the priest*] See note on xiv. 3.

*was afraid at the meeting of David*] **Came to meet David trembling.** Cp. xvi. 4. Seeing the king's son-in-law unattended, he may have suspected the truth, and have been afraid of incurring Saul's displeasure.

2. *The king, &c.*] Again David has recourse to a lie. See xx. 6, and note on xix. 17. The consequences of it were disastrous.

*my servants*] **The young men**, as in v. 4. The words are David's own, not the continuation of Saul's directions. They were probably true. He must have had friends at court who were prepared to share his flight, and with whom he had made arrangements for a rendezvous.

4. *common*] Lit. profane or unholy, i.e. unconsecrated. Vulg. "laicos panes."

5. *the vessels*] The wallets or other utensils into which the bread



and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified *this* day in the vessel. So the priest gave him <sup>6</sup> hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. Now a *certain* <sup>7</sup> man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained

would be put. If these were Levitically unclean they would defile the bread. David assures Ahimelech that there is no ceremonial objection to their taking the bread either in their persons or their baggage.

and the bread, &c.] The further argument which David employs to persuade Ahimelech is stated in a sentence of almost hopeless obscurity. Perhaps either (1) "And when I came out the vessels of the young men were holy; how much more then, though it is a common journey, will it be holy in the vessel to-day:" i.e. the vessels were undefiled when we started, and though our journey has no religious object, yet as there has been no danger of pollution since. *a fortiori* they cannot defile bread put in them to-day:—or (2) "And if it is a profane procedure, yet it will be sanctified to-day by the instrument:" i.e. if the act is profane, the priest by whose instrumentality it is done, has power to sanction it under the exceptional circumstances of to-day:—a gentle flattery to persuade Ahimelech.

6. *the shewbread*] Lit. "the bread of the Presence" (Sept. *ἄρτοι τοῦ προσώπου*), so called because it was solemnly placed as an offering in the Presence of Jehovah. The mention of it implies that the Tabernacle with its furniture was at Nob. The directions for making the Table of Shewbread are given in Ex. xxv. 23—30; and the form of the table, as it existed in Herod's Temple, is preserved in the sculptures on the Arch of Titus at Rome. For the instructions concerning the bread itself, see Lev. xxiv. 5—9. It was to be renewed every Sabbath, and the loaves then removed were to be eaten by the priests in the Holy Place.

Our Lord refers to this as an instance of the great principle that where moral and ceremonial obligations come into conflict, it is the latter which must give way, because the rite is only the means and the moral duty the end. The high priest was bound to preserve David's life, even at the expense of a ceremonial rule. See Matt. xii. 3, 4; Mk. ii. 25, 26; Lk. vi. 3—5. In St Mark the high priest is called *Abiathar*, perhaps by an accidental error; perhaps because he was associated with his father as Hophni and Phinehas were with Eli.

*from before the LORD*] From the table on which they had lain in the Presence of Jehovah in the Tabernacle. It seems probable that the shewbread had just been renewed and consequently that the day was the Sabbath; otherwise there would have been no difficulty in preparing ordinary bread for David's use.

7. *detained before the LORD*] In charge of the priest for some religious purpose such as the fulfilment of a vow, or purification, or on

before the LORD; and his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite,  
 8 the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul. And  
 David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under  
 thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my  
 sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business  
 9 required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath  
 the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah,  
 behold, it *is here* wrapt in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou  
 wilt take that, take *it*: for *there is* no other save that here.  
 And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me.

#### 10—15. *David's flight to Gath.*

10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and  
 11 went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of

account of suspected leprosy (Lev. xiii. 4, 11, 31). His presence in the Tabernacle implies that he was a proselyte.

*Doeg, an Edomite*] He may have come over to Saul in his wars with Edom (xiv. 47).

*the chiefest of the herdmen, &c.*] An important post in a pastoral country. Cp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 29, 31. The Sept. reads, "Doeg the Syrian, the keeper of Saul's mules." Cp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 30. "Syrian" is certainly a mistake for "Edomite," the consonants of the Heb. words "Aramite" and "Edomite" being almost exactly alike.

9. *behind the ephod*] Hung up in a secure place, behind the most sacred part of the high-priestly vestments. It was probably dedicated as a memorial of the victory on the conclusion of the Philistine war. See xvii. 54.

*There is none like that*] The monument of God's deliverance in the past was a pledge of His help for the future.

#### 10—15. DAVID'S FLIGHT TO GATH.

10. *and went to Achish*] In the extremity of peril, David was driven to take refuge among Saul's bitterest enemies, and offer himself as a servant to Achish (v. 15). He hoped no doubt that the Philistines would not recognise the stripling who slew their champion. Unlike Themistocles and Alcibiades when they were banished from Athens, he had no intention of turning traitor to his country.

The circumstances of this sojourn at Gath and that recorded in ch. xxvii. are entirely unlike, and correspond exactly to the difference of occasion. In the present case David went alone, was ill received, and was compelled to feign madness for safety and escape as soon as possible: later on when his breach with Saul was notorious, he went with a numerous following, was received and established at Ziklag, and remained for more than a year.

Achish said unto him, *Is* not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, <sup>12</sup> and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he <sup>13</sup> changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said <sup>14</sup> Achish unto his servants, Lo, you see the man *is* mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me? *Have* I <sup>15</sup> need of mad men, that ye have brought this *fellow* to play the mad man in my presence? shall this *fellow* come into my house?

### CH. XXII. 1—5. *David's band of followers.*

David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave <sup>22</sup> Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house

**11.** *the king of the land*] The natural exaggeration of popular rumour. David had appeared as chief leader in the Philistine wars.

*did they not sing, &c.*] **Do they not sing.** It had become a popular song. See on xviii. 7.

**13.** *changed his behaviour*] Ps. xxxiv. is ascribed by its title to this occasion, but the contents do not bear out the reference. The title of Ps. lvi. states that it was written by David "when the Philistines laid hold on him in Gath," and though it is not expressly said here that he was arrested, the words "feigned himself mad *in their hands*" together with the mention of his *escape* in xxii. 1, seem to imply that he was a prisoner.

*feigned himself mad*] So that they might suppose him harmless. The Philistines moreover may have shared the Oriental feeling which regards madness with a kind of reverence. See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. 'Madness.' "Aghyle Aga, a well-known modern Arab chief, escaped from the governor of Acre in like manner, pretending to be a mad dervish." Stanley, *Lect.* II. 52.

*scrabled on the doors of the gate*] i.e. scratched, or made marks. The word is still used in some provincial dialects. The Sept. however reads "drummed on the doors of the gate," which is a more suitable gesture for a raving madman. "The doors" meant are probably those of the court of Achish's palace.

**15.** *come into my house*] Be taken into my service. Cp. Ps. ci. 7.

### CH. XXII. 1—5. DAVID'S BAND OF FOLLOWERS.

**1.** *the cave Adullam*] Rather, **the cave of Adullam.** Adullam was an ancient royal city of the Canaanites, in the neighbourhood of Jarmuth,



<sup>2</sup> heard *it*, they went down thither to him. And every one *that was* in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were <sup>5</sup> with him about four hundred men. And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of

Socoh, Azekah, and Shaaraim, all places in or near the valley of Elah (Josh. xii. 15, xv. 35). In this valley, about 2½ miles S. of the point where it takes an abrupt turn to the west, some ruins have been discovered bearing the name *Aid el Ma*, which is thought to be a corruption of Adullam. They lie at the foot of a high rounded hill, almost isolated by subordinate valleys, and commanding a fine view over the main valley to the east. It forms a natural fortress, well adapted for the site of a city, which numerous ruins shew once stood there. The sides of the tributary valleys are lined with rows of caves, amply sufficient to accommodate David's 400 men, and still used for habitations. See Conder's *Tent Work*, II. 157 ff. The traditional identification of Adullam with the cave at *Khureitun*, five miles S.E. of Bethlehem, is quite untenable.

*they went down thither to him*] For fear lest Saul might wreak his vengeance upon them. In the East it was not uncommon for a whole family to be put to death for the fault of one member, and the massacre at Nob soon shewed them what they might expect.

2. *And every one, &c.*] To the cave of Adullam resorted some who were smarting under the oppression of Saul's tyranny; some who were involved in debt through the neglect of the laws concerning usury (Ex. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 35—37); some who were in despair at the condition of the kingdom, and desired a leader from whom they might hope for better things.

*he became a captain over them*] That he could keep such a motley band in order is an evidence of David's natural genius for ruling, which was further developed by this training.

*about four hundred men*] Soon increased to six hundred (xxiii. 13). Among them were the three heroes who brought water from the well at Bethlehem (2 Sam. xxiii. 13 ff.; 1 Chr. xi. 15 ff.); possibly the stalwart Gadites whose names are given in 1 Chr. xii. 8—15; and also the detachment from Judah and Benjamin led by Amasai (1 Chr. xii. 16—18).

3. *Mizpeh of Moab*] Mentioned here only. Perhaps either the strong rock citadel afterwards known as Kir-Moab, now *Kerak*, is meant: or some place not in Moab proper, but on the mountains of Abarim or Pisgah north of the Arnon, which would be more easily accessible from Bethlehem by way of Jericho. The long purple wall of the mountains of Moab is a striking feature in the view from Bethlehem (*Sin. and Pal.* p. 104), and would naturally suggest a retreat thither: but no doubt it was his connexion with Moab through his great-grandmother Ruth, which chiefly induced David to choose that country as a refuge for his parents.

Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they <sup>4</sup> dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold. And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the <sup>5</sup> hold; depart, and get thee *into* the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came *into* the forest of Hareth.

6—19. *Saul's vengeance on the priests of Nob.*

When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the <sup>6</sup> men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his

<sup>4</sup>. *in the hold*] "Hold"=stronghold or fortress: here apparently the Mizpeh of v. 3. What became of David's parents when he quitted the hold does not appear. A Jewish tradition affirms that the king of Moab betrayed his trust and murdered them, for which David exacted a heavy vengeance when he came to the throne (2 Sam. viii. 2).

<sup>5</sup>. *the prophet Gad*] Mentioned here for the first time, and not again till David had come to the throne, when he appears as holding the office of "the king's seer." He was one of the chroniclers of David's reign (1 Chr. xxix. 29); helped in the arrangement of the musical services in the Temple (2 Chr. xxix. 25); and was sent to offer David his choice of punishments for his sin in numbering the people (2 Sam. xxiv. 11 ff.).

*Abide not in the hold*] The future king must not remain in a foreign land, but in the face of all risk return to his own country, in order that by such exploits as the relief of Keilah he might gain reputation, and prepare his way to the throne.

*the forest of Hareth*] Nowhere else mentioned and not identified with any certainty. Perhaps the name survives in *Kharâs* on the edge of the mountain chain two or three miles east of Keilah.

Psalms lxxiii. is referred by its title to the time when David was in the wilderness of Judah: but internal evidence points rather to his flight from Absalom; v. 11 implies that he was already king.

6—19. SAUL'S VENGEANCE ON THE PRIESTS OF NOB.

<sup>6</sup>. *that David was discovered*] Lit. "was known." Saul found out that some of his courtiers knew of David's hiding-place in the forest of Hareth.

*now Saul abode, &c.*] Render, **Now Saul was sitting at Gibeah under the tamarisk tree on the height.** We have here a vivid picture of a solemn conclave met to deliberate on affairs of state or to administer justice. The king sits in state under some venerable tamarisk (cp. xiv. 2; Jud. iv. 5); his spear, the emblem of royalty (see on xviii. 10), is in his hand; his servants, still chiefly the men of his own tribe (v. 7), stand round him.

7 servants *were* standing about him;) then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and  
8 captains of hundreds; that all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that sheweth me that my son hath made *a league* with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at  
9 this day? Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which *was* set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub:  
10 and he inquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals,  
11 and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in Nob:  
12 and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I  
13 *am*, my lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that *he* should rise against me, to lie in

7. *ye Benjamites*] Saul appeals to tribal jealousies. Will not David promote his own fellow-tribesmen rather than the Benjamites?

*captains of thousands, &c.*] The sarcasm of these words gains point, if we may suppose that Saul had just heard of the organization of David's handful of men (1 Chr. xii. 16—18).

8. *hath made a league*] **Hath made a covenant**, as in xx. 16. Saul seems to have heard what happened upon that occasion.

9. *Then answered Doeg*] The title of Ps. lii. states that it was composed by David in reference to this occasion. vv. 1—4 describe such a character as we may well suppose Doeg to have been. His tongue was "a false tongue," because, though the facts he reported were true, he helped to confirm Saul in a false and cruel suspicion. It "devised destruction," and "loved devouring words," for his story was told with malicious intent and fatal result.

*which was set over the servants of Saul*] Or, **for he was standing with the servants of Saul**. The presence of the *foreigner* Doeg among the Benjamites is specially noticed. The Sept. (cp. xxi. 7) reads, "Doeg the Syrian who was set over Saul's mules."

10. *he inquired of the LORD for him*] See on x. 22. This, though not expressly mentioned in ch. xxi., was probably the chief object of David's visit, and Ahimelech does not disclaim the charge (v. 15).



wait, as at this day? Then Ahimelech answered the king, <sup>14</sup> and said, And who *is so* faithful among all thy servants as David, which *is* the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and *is* honourable in thine house? Did I then <sup>15</sup> begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute *any* thing unto his servant, *nor* to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more. And the king said, Thou shalt surely <sup>16</sup> die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. And the <sup>17</sup> king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall <sup>18</sup> upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the <sup>19</sup> city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

**14.** *goeth at thy bidding*] Probably, “has access to thy audience,” i.e. is a trusted privy-councillor. Cp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 23, *marg.*

**15.** *Did I then begin*] **That day did I begin**, &c.? The stress is upon these words. Ahimelech pleads that there was no harm in doing as he had often done before.

*be it far from me*] To plot against the king.

*knew nothing of all this*] Was in no way a party to the alleged conspiracy.

**17.** *the footmen*] Lit. “the runners.” See on ch. viii. 11; and for their employment as executioners comp. 2 Kings x. 25 (E. V. *guard*).

*would not put forth their hand*] They shrank from executing a command at once so cold-blooded and sacrilegious.

**18.** *that did wear a linen ephod*] See on ii. 18. The distinctive priestly dress should have reminded Saul of the sacredness of their persons.

**19.** *And Nob, &c.*] In the madness of his self-willed fury Saul wreaked upon an innocent city in his own kingdom the vengeance he had failed to execute upon a guilty heathen nation at God's command (xv. 3). Thus the doom upon the house of Eli (ii. 31) received a fresh fulfilment. So heavy a blow was inflicted upon the family of Ithamar, that when David organized the courses of the priests for the temple ser-

20—23. *Abiathar's escape to David.*

20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub,  
 21 named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And  
 Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD's  
 22 priests. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that  
 day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would  
 surely tell Saul: I have occasioned *the death* of all the per-  
 23 sons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not:  
 for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me  
 thou *shalt be* in safeguard.

CH. XXIII. 1—6. *The rescue of Keilah.*

23 Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines  
 fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors.

vice only eight "chief men" could be found in it, against sixteen in the  
 family of Eleazar (1 Chr. xxiv. 4).

## 20—23. ABIATHAR'S ESCAPE TO DAVID.

20. *Abiathar*] Possibly Abiathar had remained at Nob in charge of  
 the Tabernacle, and got timely warning of the approach of Doeg's  
 ruffians. Henceforward he was the companion of David's wanderings,  
 and helped him by "inquiring of the LORD" for him (xxiii. 9, xxx. 7;  
 2 Sam. ii. 1, &c.). He held the office of high-priest till the close of  
 David's reign, when by some strange infatuation, after remaining faithful  
 through Absalom's rebellion, and "being afflicted in all wherein David  
 was afflicted," he took part in Adonijah's rebellion, and was in conse-  
 quence deposed by Solomon (1 Kings ii. 26, 27).

22. *I have occasioned, &c.*] David's conscience pricks him for having  
 been, even indirectly, the cause of so great a calamity.

23. *he that seeketh my life*] Our lives are both in danger from one  
 common enemy, so that our interests will be identical.

## XXIII. 1—6. THE RESCUE OF KEILAH.

1. *Then they told David*] Simply, **And they told.** There is no  
 mark of time. The appeal to David shews that he was growing to be  
 regarded as the champion of Israel.

*Keilah*] A fortified city (v. 7), named in Josh. xv. 44 as one of a  
 group of cities in the *Shephêlah* or "Lowland," which included the low  
 limestone hills bordering on the Philistine plain. It was perched on a  
 steep hill above the valley of Elah, about three miles south of Adullam,  
 where the name *Kila* still survives to mark the site.

*they rob the threshingfloors*] This indicates that the raid took place  
 immediately after harvest, when the corn was stacked by the floors ready  
 for threshing.

Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go<sup>2</sup> and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we *be* afraid here<sup>3</sup> in Judah: how much more then if we come *to* Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? Then David inquired<sup>4</sup> of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down *to* Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. So David and his men went *to*<sup>5</sup> Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them *with* a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. And it came *to*<sup>6</sup> pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David *to* Keilah, *that* he came down *with* an ephod in his hand.

### 7—15. *The treachery of the Keilites.*

And it was told Saul that David was come *to* Keilah.<sup>7</sup> And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. And Saul called all the people together to war, *to*<sup>8</sup>

2. *inquired of the LORD*] Through the high-priest Abiathar. See on v. 6.

3. *here in Judah*] Keilah belonged to the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 44): so that *Judah* must here be used in a limited sense of the highlands of Judah.

*the armies of the Philistines*] David's men exaggerate the marauding bands of Philistines into a regular army.

6. *fled to David to Keilah*] Since (a) it is implied by xxii. 20 that Abiathar joined David before the expedition to Keilah: and (b) the inquiry in vv. 2, 4 implies the presence of the high-priest with the Ephod: it seems best either to strike out "to Keilah," or to follow the Sept. in reading, "And it came to pass when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David, that he went down with David to Keilah with the Ephod in his hand." This note is inserted here to explain how David could inquire of God both in Judah and at Keilah.

### 7—15. THE TREACHERY OF THE KEILITES.

7. *hath delivered him*] Lit. *hath rejected him and delivered him*. So blind was Saul as to imagine that it was not himself but David whom God had rejected. The Sept. reads "sold."

*a town, &c.*] **A city.** It may have been one of the old Canaanite fortresses (see on Josh. xi. 13), or have been fortified as an outpost against the Philistines.



9 go down *to* Keilah, to besiege David and his men. And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the  
 10 ephod. Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to  
 11 Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He  
 12 will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the  
 13 LORD said, They will deliver *thee* up. Then David and his men, *which were* about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and  
 14 he forbore to go forth. And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God  
 15 delivered him not into his hand. And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

9. *secretly practised*] Lit. **was forging**. Omit "secretly."

*Bring hither the ephod*] For the high-priest did not always wear it. See note on xiv. 18, and cp. xxx. 7.

11. *the men of Keilah*] Lit. "the lords," or "masters," i.e. the governing body of citizens, as distinguished from the mass of inhabitants (v. 5). The same word is used in Josh. xxiv. 11; Jud. ix. 2 ff., xx. 5; 2 Sam. xxi. 12.

*will Saul come down*] The logical order of the questions is inverted, and the most important put first, indicating the anxiety of the questioner.

12. *They will deliver thee up*] With the cowardice and ingratitude of thorough selfishness. Cp. Jud. xv. 10—13.

14. *And David abode in the wilderness*] David's next resort was "the wilderness of Judah," the wild uncultivated tract lying between the mountains of Judah and the Dead Sea. His chief abode was "the mountain (perhaps the hill of Hachilah, v. 19) in the wilderness of Ziph," a district S. E. of Hebron, where a rounded hill half way between Hebron and Carmel still bears the name *Tell Zif*. Ziph is mentioned in Josh. xv. 55, and was fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr. xi. 8).

*every day*] Continually: not that he literally spent all his time in the pursuit of David.

15. *in a wood*] The word *chôresh* translated "wood" in vv. 15, 16, 18, 19 does not occur again in Samuel. Lieut. Conder argues from the

# 16—18. *Jonathan's last meeting with David.*

And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David *into* <sup>16</sup> the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he <sup>17</sup> said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before <sup>18</sup> the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

# 19—28. *The treachery of the Ziphites.*

Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, <sup>19</sup> Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of

dry unwatered character of the district that no wood of trees can ever have flourished there, and conjectures that *Chôresh* was a proper name with a different signification. He found the ruin of *Khoreisa* and the Valley of *Hires* in the neighbourhood of Ziph. It is perhaps too bold to assert that no wood can ever have existed, and it seems best to understand *Chôresh* as a quasi-proper name for a district overgrown with brushwood.

## 16—18. JONATHAN'S LAST MEETING WITH DAVID.

16. *strengthened his hand in God*] Revived his courage by pointing him to the true ground of confidence. Cp. ch. xxx. 6; Job iv. 3.

17. *Saul my father knoweth*] Both that thou art destined to be king (see on xviii. 9), and that I am ready to resign my claims in thy favour. This is the climax of Jonathan's unselfish generosity.

18. *to his house*] Home to Gibeah, where Saul was (v. 19). It was the final parting of the friends.

## 19—28. THE TREACHERY OF THE ZIPHITES.

19. *Then came up the Ziphites*] The title of Ps. liv. refers it to this occasion, or that recorded in xxvi. 1, and the contents agree with the situation. See especially v. 3.

On the relation between this narrative and that in ch. xxvi. see Note VII. p. 243.

*in the hill of Hachilah, &c.*] This hill was situated on the south of, or according to xxvi. 3, "in front of" or "facing" **the Waste**. *Jeshimon* is not a proper name, but means **the Waste**, and denotes the district on which the plateau of Ziph looks down, "with white peaks and cones of chalk and deep narrow watercourses, terminated by the great pointed cliff of Ziz above Engedi, and by the precipices over the Dead Sea, two thousand feet high." Hachilah is not identified with any certainty.

<sup>20</sup> Jeshimon? Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part  
<sup>21</sup> *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand. And Saul said, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion  
<sup>22</sup> on me. Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there:  
<sup>23</sup> for it is told me *that* he dealeth very subtilly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the  
<sup>24</sup> thousands of Judah. And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness  
<sup>25</sup> of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. Saul also and his men went to seek *him*. And they told David: wherefore he came down *into* a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David *in* the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed  
<sup>27</sup> David and his men round about to take them. But there

Lieut. Conder proposes to recognise it in the long ridge of *El Kôlah*, running out of the Ziph plateau eastwards. From *Tell Zif* the Ziphites could observe the movements of David's men over this region.

22. *where his haunt is*] Lit. "where his **foot** is." Observe his tracks as you would those of a wild beast.

23. *the thousands of Judah*] i.e. the families. See on x. 19.

24. *in the wilderness of Maon*] The district round the conical hill about seven miles south of Hebron still known as *Tell Maîn*. It is mentioned in Joshua xv. 55 among the cities of Judah in the mountains. It was the home of Nabal (ch. xxv. 2).

*in the plain on the south of Jeshimon*] **In the steppe on the south of the Waste.** The *Arâbah* or "steppe" is here the name of the district south of "the Waste," where the plateau falls away towards the plains of Beersheba. The term *Arâbah* generally denotes either the depressed valley of the Jordan, or the valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba, but neither of these can be intended here.

25. *into a rock*] **To the rock**, or, **cliff**, which was afterwards called "the rock of divisions" (v. 28). The Sept. reads "which is in the wilderness of Maon" in place of "and abode in the wilderness of Maon," perhaps rightly.

26. *compassed.....round about*] i.e. encompassed, surrounded. Cp. Ps. v. 12.



came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul<sup>28</sup> returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth.

29—XXIV. 8. *David spares Saul's life in the cave at En-gedi.*

And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong<sup>29</sup> holds at En-gedi. And it came to pass, when Saul was<sup>24</sup> returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of En-gedi.

27. *there came a messenger, &c.*] Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Cp. 2 Kings xix. 7, 9.

28. *Sela-hammahlekôth*] Either (1) "Rock of escapes;" or more probably (2) "Rock of divisions," because there Saul had to relinquish the pursuit of David.

Lieut. Conder thinks he has discovered the scene of David's escape. Between the ridge of *El Kôlah* and the neighbourhood of Maon there is a great gorge called "the Valley of the Rocks:" to part of this the name *Wady Malâki* now applies, and there is no other place near Maon where cliffs, such as are to be inferred from the word *Sela*, can be found. See *Tent Work*, II. 91.

29.—XXIV. 8. DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE IN THE CAVE AT EN-GEDI.

This narrative and that in ch. xxvi. are regarded by some commentators as different accounts of the same event. See Note VII. p. 243, and the notes on ch. xxvi.

Pss. lvii. and cxlii. are referred by their titles to the time when David fled from Saul in the cave; but whether this occasion or his sojourn in the cave of Adullam is meant, must remain uncertain.

29. *at En-gedi*] En-gedi (= *fountain of the kid*), now *Ain-Fidy*, is situated about half way along the western shore of the Dead Sea. The precipitous cliffs recede from the water's edge, and enclose a sloping plain watered by the stream which gushes copiously from the limestone rock. Here in the days of Abraham stood the Amorite city of Hazazon-tamar (= *pruning of the palm*). See Gen. xiv. 7; 2 Chr. xx. 2. It is still an oasis in the limestone desert, and though palm-trees and vineyards (Cant. i. 14) have vanished, the petrified leaves of the one and the terraces cut on the hills for the other attest its ancient fertility. On all sides the country is full of caverns which might serve as lurking places for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day. See Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* I. 508 ff.; Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 277 ff.; Stanley, *Sin. and Pal.* p. 295 ff., for descriptions of this remarkable spot.

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks  
 3 of the wild goats. And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.  
 4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off  
 5 the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off  
 6 Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he  
 7 *is* the anointed of the LORD. So David stayed his servants with *these* words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on *his* way.  
 8 David also rose afterward, and went out of the cave, and

CH. XXIV. 2. *upon the rocks of the wild goats*] On precipitous cliffs scarcely accessible except to the ibex and chamois. Wild goats and antelopes still abound on the heights above Ain-Jidy.

3. *the sheepcotes by the way*] Sheepfolds are still formed in the East by building a wall of loose stones round the mouth of a cave, which serves for shelter in case of bad weather. See *The Land and the Book*, p. 603.

*to cover his feet*] An euphemism for performing the necessities of nature.

*remained, &c.*] **Were abiding in the recesses of the cave.** Large caves with numerous side passages are found in the district. "They are as dark as midnight, and the keenest eye cannot see five paces *inward*: but one who has been long within, and is looking *outward* toward the entrance, can observe with perfect distinctness all that takes place in that direction." Hence David and his men could watch Saul without being seen.

4. *of which the LORD said*] David may have received from Samuel and Gad assurances of his ultimate deliverance from Saul's persecutions, which his followers interpret in their own way. Cp. xxiii. 17, xxv. 28—30.

*the skirt*] See on xv. 27. He wished to have some proof to convince Saul that his life had been in his power.

5. *David's heart smote him*] David's conscience reproached him for offering even to slight an indignity to the king.

7. *stayed*] Lit. **tore**, or **lashed**: a strong expression. Vulg. "congregit viros suos sermonibus."

cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped *with his face* to the earth, and bowed himself.

9—15. *David pleads his innocence.*

And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's <sup>9</sup> words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, <sup>10</sup> this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and *some* bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he *is* the LORD's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea see the <sup>11</sup> skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. The LORD judge between me and thee, and the <sup>12</sup> LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness <sup>13</sup> proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out? <sup>14</sup>

8. *stooped, &c.*] Better, **bowed himself with his face to the ground and did obeisance.** The usual Oriental gesture of reverence to a king or superior is described. See on xx. 41. Cp. 1 Kings i. 16, 31.

9—15. DAVID PLEADS HIS INNOCENCE.

9. *men's words*] Calumniators like "Cush the Benjamite," against whom Ps. vii. is directed, strove to inflame Saul's mind against David. That Psalm has been with much probability referred to this period of his life. David's protestation of innocence in vv. 3, 4 of the Psalm is closely parallel to his words in vv. 10, 11; and his appeal to the judgment of Jehovah in vv. 8, 9 of the Psalm resembles that in v. 15.

11. *my father*] The address of respect and affection. Cp. 2 Kings v. 13, vi. 21.

*evil*] The same word as that rendered "thy hurt" in v. 9.

*my soul*] i.e. my life.

13. *Wickedness, &c.*] A man's character is known by his actions. If I were wicked at heart, I should have shewn it by killing you. Cp. Mt. vii. 16—20.

*but mine hand shall not be upon thee*] It is not clear whether this is part of the proverb or David's own utterance. In the first case the proverb is a general disclaimer of a desire for vengeance: in the second, David reaffirms his resolution not to touch Saul as a consequence of his moral integrity.



after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.  
 15 The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

16—22. *Saul's momentary remorse.*

16 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lift up his voice, and  
 17 wept. And he said to David, 'Thou *art* more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have  
 18 rewarded thee evil. And thou hast shewed *this* day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me  
 19 not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou  
 20 hast done unto me this day. And now behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and *that* the kingdom of  
 21 Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out

14. *after a dead dog, &c.*] "A dead dog, a **single** flea," express what is absolutely contemptible, harmless, and insignificant. A worthy object truly for an expedition of the King of Israel with his picked troops!

15. *plead my cause*] Cp. Ps. xxxv. 1 ff.; possibly written about this time.

*deliver me out of thy hand*] Lit. *judge me out of thy hand*: give me my right, and set me free.

16—22. SAUL'S MOMENTARY REMORSE.

16. *my son David*] The old fatherly feeling revived. The generous loving heart of the old days had not yet utterly perished.

19. *find his enemy*] Get him into his power. Cp. xxiii. 17; Ps. xxi. 8.

*will he let him go well away*] A negative answer is of course to be supplied. "No: yet thou hast done so to me: wherefore, &c."

20. *I know well, &c.*] See note on xviii. 9. And yet, knowing the Will of God, he resists it!

*the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand*] A sad echo of Samuel's words to himself, "But now thy kingdom shall not be established" (xiii. 14).

21. *Swear now, &c.*] Saul pledges his successor not to follow the barbarous Oriental custom. See on xx. 14.

of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul. And <sup>22</sup> Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

### CH. XXV. 1. *Samuel's death and burial.*

And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered <sup>25</sup> together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

### 2—13. *Nabal's churlish behaviour to David.*

And *there was* a man in Maon, whose possessions <sup>2</sup> *were* in Carmel; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name <sup>3</sup>

<sup>22</sup>. *gat them up unto the hold*] Returned to the fastnesses of En-gedi. Experience had proved that Saul's repentance was not to be trusted.

### CH. XXV. 1. SAMUEL'S DEATH AND BURIAL.

1. *all the Israelites, &c.*] A public mourning was held as after the death of Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 8), and the whole nation met to do honour to him, who for well nigh eighty years had gone in and out amongst them as Prophet, Judge, and Counsellor of the King.

*in his house*] Not actually in the house, which would have been inconsistent with the laws of ceremonial purity (Num. xix. 16), but in some court or garden attached to the house. Compare 2 Chr. xxxiii. 20 with 2 Kings xxi. 18. The Mussulman tradition places the prophet's tomb on the hill known as *Neby Samwil*, five miles N.W. of Jerusalem, but see note on i. 1.

*the wilderness of Paran*] A general name for the great tract of desert south of Palestine, between the wilderness of Shur on the west, Edom on the east, and the wilderness of Sinai on the south. It was the abode of Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 21); the scene of the wanderings of the Israelites; and the place from which the spies were sent (Num. x. 12, xiii. 3). The Sept. reads *Maon*, but the change is unnecessary, if we suppose the term Paran to be used with some latitude.

### 2—13. NABAL'S CHURLISH BEHAVIOUR TO DAVID.

2. *a man in Maon*] Nabal's home was in the city of Maon, and his possessions (or, **his business**) about a mile to the north at Carmel. These places are mentioned together in Josh. xv. 55. See also note on ch. xv. 12.

*very great*] i.e. very rich. The same epithet is applied to Barzillai (2 Sam. xix. 32).

of the man *was* Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man *was* churlish and evil  
 4 *in* his doings; and he *was* of the house of Caleb. And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his  
 5 sheep. And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to  
 6 Nabal, and greet him in my name: and thus shall ye say to him that liveth *in prosperity*, Peace *be* both *to* thee, and peace *be* *to* thine house, and peace *be* *unto* all that thou hast.  
 7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were  
 8 in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son  
 9 David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David,  
 10 and ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who *is* David? and who *is* the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from

3. *Nabal*] The name means *Fool*. It is the word used in Ps. xiv. 1; Prov. xxx. 22; &c.

*churlish*] Lit. **hard**. Cp. Mt. xxv. 24, where the same Greek word is used as in the Sept. here (*σκληρός*).

*of the house of Caleb*] Who settled at Hebron (Josh. xv. 13). Cp. "the south of Caleb" in ch. xxx. 14. The Sept. rendering "dog-like" (*κυνικός*), referring to his character, is not to be followed.

6. *to him that liveth in prosperity*] The meaning of the single Heb. word thus rendered is exceedingly obscure. It seems best to explain it as an exclamation, "Hail!" literally, "For life!"

7. *that thou hast shearers*] Sheep-shearing was and still is an occasion of festivity. See 2 Sam. xiii. 23, 24. David's message was not a demand for black-mail. He had done Nabal real service, by protecting his flocks from roving marauders, and he was entitled to recompence. "On such a festive occasion near a town or village, even in our own time, an Arab Sheikh of the neighbouring desert would hardly fail to put in a word, either in person or by message; and his message, both in form and substance, would be only the transcript of that of David." Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* i. 498.

8. *a good day*] A day of festivity and rejoicing. Cp. Esth. viii. 17.

10. *Who is David, &c.*] Cp. Jud. ix. 28.



his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, <sup>11</sup> and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* unto men, whom I know not whence they *be*? So David's <sup>12</sup> young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. And David said unto his <sup>13</sup> men, Gird you on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

#### 14—22. *Abigail's wise counsel.*

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, <sup>14</sup> saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. But the <sup>15</sup> men *were* very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: they were a wall unto us <sup>16</sup> both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know and consider what <sup>17</sup> thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he *is such* a son of Belial, that *a man* cannot speak to him. Then Abigail made haste, <sup>18</sup> and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and

11. *my water*] Perhaps water is specially mentioned because it is scarce in the district. Cp. Josh. xv. 19. The Sept. however has "wine."

13. *abode by the stuff*] Remained to guard their property. On "stuff" see x. 22: cp. xxx. 24.

#### 14—22. ABIGAIL'S WISE COUNSEL.

14. *to salute*] Lit. *to bless*, as in ch. xiii. 10. Cp. 2 Kings iv. 29, and the form of salutation in 1 Sam. xv. 13.

*he railed on them*] Lit. **flew upon them**; the same word as in xiv. 32.

15. *as long as we were conversant with them*] Lit. *all the days we went to and fro with them*. "Conversant" from Lat. *conversari*, to dwell or abide with, signifies "associated" or "living along with."

16. *a wall unto us*] A defence against the predatory tribes of the desert. See Job i. 15, 17.

17. *such a son of Belial*] **Such an evil man**. See on i. 16. So wilful and obstinate that his servants dared not try to reason with him, but appealed to Abigail instead.

18. *Abigail made haste, and took*] A store of provisions was prepared for the shearing feast (v. 11). For the different items of the present compare 2 Sam. xvi. 1; 1 Chr. xii. 40.

five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched *corn*, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes  
 19 *of figs*, and laid *them* on asses. And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But  
 20 she told not her husband Nabal. And it was *so*, *as* she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and behold, David and his men came down against her;  
 21 and she met them. Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this *fellow* hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *pertained* unto him: and  
 22 he hath requited me evil for good. So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that *pertain* to him by the morning light *any that* pisseth against the wall.

*two bottles of wine*] **Skins**, holding a considerable quantity. Ziba only brought one "bottle" of wine for David in his flight (2 Sam. xvi. 1). Those now used in the East are made of kid, goat, or ox skins, according to the size required.

*five measures of parched corn*] See on xvii. 17. The "measure" (Heb. *seah*) contained one third of an ephah. See on i. 24. Parched corn was only a delicacy, which accounts for the comparatively small quantity.

*clusters of raisins*] Lumps of dried grapes. The vineyards near Hebron still produce the largest and best grapes in all the country, and the finest of them are dried as raisins. Robinson's *Bibl. Res.* I. 214, II. 81.

*cakes of figs*] Figs dried and compressed. They still grow in abundance in the neighbourhood of Hebron.

20. *came down by the covert of the hill*] Abigail was apparently riding down a defile between two hills, which is called "the covert" (lit. "the secret place of the mountain"), because it was concealed from observation. David's troop came down the opposite hill to meet her. "Covert" from Fr. *couvert* means shelter, hiding-place. On "against" see ix. 14.

21. *Surely in vain*] Only to be deceived and disappointed. The same word is used in Jer. iii. 23.

*pertained*] i.e. belonged. "Pertain" is derived from Lat. *pertineo*, through O. Fr. *partenir*. Cp. "appertain" from *appartenir*.

22. *unto the enemies of David*] In the usual oath-formula the swearer invokes divine vengeance upon himself (xx. 13), or upon the person adjured (iii. 17). And so the Sept. here; "So God do to David." "The enemies of David" may possibly be an euphemism, introduced by a corrector who was unwilling to let David invoke vengeance upon himself for an oath which he afterwards broke. Comp. the note on xx. 16.

*if I leave.....any, &c.*] David vows that he will exterminate the family and not leave a single man alive. Cp. Deut. xx. 13.

23—31. *Abigail's meeting with David.*

And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off <sup>23</sup> the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself *to* the ground, and fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, <sup>24</sup> my lord, *upon* me *let this* iniquity *be*: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, <sup>25</sup> regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name *is*, so *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore, my lord, *as* the LORD <sup>26</sup> liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to *shed* blood, and *from* avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this <sup>27</sup> blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: <sup>28</sup>

## 23—31. ABIGAIL'S MEETING WITH DAVID.

**23.** *lighted off the ass*] i.e. got down from, an old form of *alighted*. The Heb. word is different from that similarly translated in Josh. xv. 18, and simply means "to descend."

**24.** *and fell at his feet*] Apparently she first prostrated herself and did the usual obeisance as soon as she saw David, while he was still some distance off, and then afterwards approached and knelt down at his feet in the posture of a suppliant to make her petition.

**26.** *Now therefore, &c.*] Render, **And now, my lord, as Jehovah liveth, and by the life of thy soul, surely Jehovah hath withholden thee from coming into blood-guiltiness, and saving thyself with thine own hand. And now let thine enemies, &c.** Abigail solemnly affirms that it is God who by her means has restrained David from committing a great crime. She feels at once that she has gained her point, and clenches the matter by putting the whole question in the most solemn light.

*let thine enemies.....be as Nabal*] As foolish, and consequently as little able to injure thee. In view of Nabal's fate, the words are almost prophetic.

**27.** *this blessing*] So a complimentary present is styled in ch. xxx. 26. Cp. Gen. xxxiii. 11; 2 Cor. ix. 5 (*εὐλογία*, as here in the Sept.).

*unto the young men*] She does not presume to offer it for David's own use.

**28.** *the trespass of thine handmaid*] She takes the blame of the wrong done to David upon herself, as in v. 24.



for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil  
 29 hath not been found in thee *all* thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he  
 30 sling out *as out* of the middle of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee,  
 31 and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my

*for the LORD, &c.*] Abigail grounds her request on the conviction that David will succeed to the kingdom, when, as she points out in vv. 30, 31, such an act of violence as he was minded to commit would be a burden on his conscience. Her conviction rests (1) on the fact that he has proved himself the champion of Jehovah's people (see on xviii. 17); (2) on his blameless life. Doubtless the nation was already anxiously looking forward to David as its future king.

*will certainly make my lord a sure house*] Will establish him and his posterity on the throne. For the phrase see ii. 35; and compare the promise in 2 Sam. vii. 16. The same epithet is applied to David himself in xxii. 14 (E. V. *faithful*).

*evil hath not been found in thee*] Cp. xxiv. 11; Ps. vii. 3. David's generous and winning character was in sharp contrast to Saul's jealous suspicion and mad cruelty.

29. *Yet a man, &c.*] Better, **And though men have arisen.....yet the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of the living.** The figure is taken from the practice of binding up valuables in a bag or bundle. Cp. Gen. xlii. 35. Of course the immediate reference is only to the safe preservation of David's temporal life.

*shall he sling out, &c.*] A vigorous metaphor to express total rejection. Cp. Jer. x. 18.

*the middle of a sling*] Lit. the *pan* or *hollow* in which the stone was placed. The marginal rendering "bought" means "the bowed or bent part of a sling on which the stone was placed." See the *Bible Word-Book*, p. 73.

30. *appointed thee ruler*] The same Heb. words are used in xiii. 14, where the E. V. has "commanded him to be captain." Cp. also ix. 16, x. 1.

Abigail's prudence, and her familiarity with the true idea of the theocratic king which was to be realised in David, suggest that she may have received instruction from Samuel, or some other prophet. Cp. 2 Kings iv. 8 ff.

31. *grief*] The Heb. word, which occurs nowhere else, probably means **stumbling-block**. Such a crime as David had meditated would have remained as an obstacle in the way of his enjoying a clear conscience.

lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

32—35. *David's favourable answer.*

And David said to Abigail, Blessed *be* the LORD God of <sup>32</sup> Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed *be* <sup>33</sup> thy advice, and blessed *be* thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to *shed* blood, and *from* avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, *as* the LORD God <sup>34</sup> of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light *any that* <sup>35</sup> pisseth against the wall. So David received of her hand *that* which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

36—38. *Nabal's death.*

And Abigail came to Nabal; and behold, he held a feast <sup>36</sup> in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. But it <sup>37</sup> came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out

32—35. DAVID'S FAVOURABLE ANSWER.

32. *Blessed be the LORD*] David rightly recognises that the intervention of Providence has saved him from a foolish and wicked revenge. Compare his prayer in Ps. xix. 13. There is no lack of faults in David's life, and this outburst of passion was one of them; but with all his faults he had that spirit of genuine repentance which makes it possible for men

“To rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.”

33. *advice*] Better, **discretion**.  
*from coming to shed blood*] **From coming into blood-guiltiness**, as in v. 26.

35. *have accepted thy person*] Here in a good sense = I have granted thy petition. Cp. Gen. xix. 21.

36—38. NABAL'S DEATH.

36. *a feast...like the feast of a king*] His shearing-revel (cp. 2 Sam. xiii. 23) was on a scale of regal luxury.

of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his  
 38 heart died within him, and he became *as* a stone. And it  
 came to pass about ten days *after*, that the LORD smote  
 Nabal, that he died.

39—44. *David's marriage with Abigail.*

39 And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said,  
 Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my re-  
 proach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant  
 from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal  
 upon his own head. And David sent and communed with  
 40 Abigail, to take her to him to wife. And when the servants  
 of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake  
 unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee  
 41 to him to wife. And she arose, and bowed herself *on*  
*her* face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* thine handmaid  
*be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.  
 42 And Abigail hasted, and rose, and rode upon an ass, with  
 five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after  
 43 the messengers of David, and became his wife. David also

37. *and his wife, &c.*] Better, **that his wife told him...and his heart died, &c.** An outburst of passion on hearing that his will had been thwarted brought on a fit of apoplexy, in which he lingered on insensible for ten days, until

38. *the LORD smote Nabal*] His death was a divine judgment none the less that a partly natural cause may be assigned for it in his intemperance and passion. For "smote" comp. the use of the same word in ch. xxvi. 10, and 2 Chr. xiii. 20 (E. V. *struck*).

39—44. DAVID'S MARRIAGE WITH ABIGAIL.

39. *pleaded the cause, &c.*] Exacted from Nabal a due penalty for the injury he did me. Cp. xxiv. 15. In those days godly men looked for visible judgments upon the wicked in this world, and rejoiced in them as a vindication of God's righteous government.

*hath kept his servant from evil, &c.*] The E. V. misses the striking contrast between David and Nabal. Render, **hath restrained his servant from wickedness, but the wickedness of Nabal hath Jehovah returned upon his own head.**

41. *and bowed herself, &c.*] With the obsequiousness characteristic of Oriental nations, she expresses her devotion both by gesture and word. "Washing the feet" like "loosing the shoe-latchet" (Mk. i. 7) was the service of the meanest slaves.



took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives. But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's 44 wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of Gallim.

### CH. XXVI. 1—4. *Saul's renewed pursuit of David.*

And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth 26 not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon? Then Saul arose, and went down to the 2 wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* before 3 Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul 4 was come in very deed.

43. *took*] **Had taken**, before his marriage with Abigail. Ahinoam stands first in the list of his wives in 2 Sam. iii. 2.

*of Jezreel*] A city in the mountains of Judah near Carmel and Juttah. See Josh. xv. 55, 56.

44. *Saul had given Michal*] Probably he did it when David fled, to mark the completeness of the breach between them. David afterwards compelled Phalti (or Phaltiel) to restore him Michal (2 Sam. iii. 15).

*Gallim*] Only referred to again in Is. x. 30, from which passage it appears that it was between Gibeah and Jerusalem. The name of Phalti's father *Laish* was probably derived from the place *Laish* mentioned in the same verse.

### CH. XXVI. 1—4. SAUL'S RENEWED PURSUIT OF DAVID.

1. *And the Ziphites came*] On the theory that this is only another account of the incidents related in xxiii. 19—xxiv. 22, see Note VII. p. 243. The view there taken that the narratives refer to different events, is assumed in the notes.

Ps. liv. is referred by its title either to this occasion or to that of xxiii. 19 ff.

*the hill of Hachilah*] See on xxiii. 19.

*is before Jeshimon*] **Looketh towards the Waste.** See on xxiii. 19 where the position of the hill of Hachilah is more particularly defined as "on the south of the Waste."

2. *three thousand chosen men*] Cp. xxiv. 2. This was the number of his standing army. See xiii. 2.

3. *by the way*] Close to some well-known high road. Cp. xxiv. 3. *he saw*] i.e. perceived or learned. Cp. xxiii. 15.

5—12. *Saul's life again in David's power.*

5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round  
6 about him. Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.  
7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground *at* his bolster: but Abner and the  
8 people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David,

## 5—12. SAUL'S LIFE AGAIN IN DAVID'S POWER.

5. *in the trench*] See on xvii. 20. The Sept. rendering "in a chariot" is a mistake.

6. *Ahimelech the Hittite*] Not mentioned elsewhere. Uriah was also a Hittite. The Hittites, or descendants of Heth, the second son of Canaan, occupied Kirjath-Arba, afterwards called Hebron, in the days of Abraham (Gen. xxiii. 2 ff.). Esau married Hittite wives (Gen. xxvi. 34). The Hittites are repeatedly mentioned as one of the nations inhabiting the land of Canaan, which were to be driven out by the Israelites (Josh. iii. 10). It is now known that a branch of the Hittites established an extremely powerful empire to the north of Syria, the chief centres of which were Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Kadesh on the Orontes. It was strong enough to threaten Assyria on the one hand and Egypt on the other, and lasted from the sixteenth century B.C. until it was destroyed by the Assyrians in the eighth century. Allusions to the "kings of the Hittites" are found in 1 Kings x. 29; 2 Kings vii. 6. Our chief information about them is derived from Assyrian and Egyptian inscriptions.

*Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab*] The first mention of David's valiant but hard-hearted nephews, the sons of his sister Zeruiah, who play such an important part in his history. Abishai distinguished himself by saving David's life in one of his Philistine wars (2 Sam. xxi. 17); shared the command of the army with his brother Joab (2 Sam. x. 10), and with him was implicated in the murder of Abner (2 Sam. iii. 30); in Absalom's rebellion both of them remained faithful to David (2 Sam. xvi. 9, xviii. 2), but Joab, like Abiathar, supported Adonijah, and was put to death by Solomon's order (1 Kings i. 7, ii. 28—34).

7. *to the people*] i.e. to Saul's army. Cp. xiv. 45.

*his spear*] See on xviii. 10.

*at his bolster*] **At his head**; and so in vv. 11 and 16. Cp. xix. 13.

God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand *this* day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: <sup>9</sup> for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless? David said furthermore, *As* <sup>10</sup> the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The LORD forbid that *I* should stretch forth mine hand <sup>11</sup> against the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is at* his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of <sup>12</sup> water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

13—25. *David's final expostulation with Saul.*

Then David went over *to* the *other* side, and stood on the <sup>13</sup> top of a hill afar off; a great space *being* between them: and <sup>14</sup> David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king? And David <sup>15</sup>

8. *hath delivered*] Lit. *shut up*, as in xxiv. 18.

*at once*] Not "immediately," but "**with one stroke.**"

10. *David said, &c.*] **And David said, Nay, but Jehovah shall strike him, &c.** The person of the anointed king is inviolable: his life is in Jehovah's hands. It may be ended either (a) by a sudden stroke, such as that which smote Nabal (xxv. 38); or (b) by a natural death; or (c) by death in battle; but violent hands may not be laid upon him with impunity.

11. *cruse*] A small cup or jar. The word is found in Icelandic, Danish, and other languages, and is probably akin to *crook* and *crucible*.

12. *from Saul's bolster*] **From Saul's head.**

*a deep sleep*] The word is used especially of *supernaturally* caused sleep, as in Gen. ii. 21, xv. 12.

13—25. DAVID'S FINAL EXPOSTULATION WITH SAUL.

13. *a great space being between them*] This precaution indicates that David trusted Saul less now than upon the former occasion. Cp. v. 22.

14. *that criest to the king*] The Sept. omits "to the king;" but the Vulg. gives the sense rightly; "Who art thou that criest and disturbest the king?"



said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy  
 16 the king thy lord. This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the LORD liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water  
 17 that *was* at his bolster. And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It*  
 18 *is* my voice, my lord, O king. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done?  
 19 or what evil *is* in mine hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the LORD; for they have driven me out *this* day from

15. *a [valiant] man*] Heb. simply, **a man**, i.e. one worthy of the name. *who is like to thee in Israel*] Abner was evidently the most powerful man in Saul's court. His course of action after Saul's death shews plainly the influence he had gained.

*kept*] i.e. kept guard over.

16. *worthy to die*] Lit. *sons of death*. Cp. xx. 31.

17. *Saul knew David's voice*] It was still too dark to see him at a distance. Saul's question is the same as in xxiv. 16, but there it stands in quite a different connexion.

18. *And he said, &c.*] With David's speech here compare that in xxiv. 9 ff. Here he affirms his innocence indirectly by challenging Saul to give his reasons for persecuting him: there he appeals directly to his having spared Saul's life as a proof of his loyalty.

19. *If the LORD, &c.*] Saul may be acting as the executioner of a divine punishment. In that case David desires to obtain pardon by a propitiatory offering. This seems the obvious explanation. But according to the view of many commentators, David suggests that this perverse persecution is the consequence of the evil spirit continuing to vex Saul as a punishment for his sin, and advises him to seek the removal of it by an expiatory sacrifice.

In the language of the O. T. God is sometimes said to incite or command men to do acts in themselves evil. See 2 Sam. xvi. 11, xxiv. 1. The Hebrew mind was profoundly impressed with the great truth of the universal sovereignty of God, and regarding Him as the Cause of all things, did not distinguish, as we do, between what is *caused* or *commanded*, and what is *permitted* by Him.

*let him accept an offering*] Lit. *smell*. Cp. Gen. viii. 21.

*if they be the children of men*] See on xxiv. 9.

abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when *one* doth hunt a partridge in the mountains. Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold, the king's spear; and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the

*from abiding in, &c.]* From **being associated with** the people of Israel who are Jehovah's inheritance (x. 1). The word "to-day" is emphatic: as much as to say, 'It has at last come to this that I must flee the country: and such a banishment is tantamount to bidding me go serve false gods, for it is only in the land of promise and at the place which He has chosen that Jehovah manifests Himself and can be worshipped.' Cp. note on x. 3.

**20. before the face of the LORD]** Slay me not, lest Jehovah avenge my blood upon thee. But it is possible to render "**far from the presence of Jehovah:**" i.e. let me not die a violent death in a heathen land: and this suits the context better.

*a flea]* **A single flea.** Cp. xxiv. 14. The Sept. however reads instead, perhaps rightly, "my life."

*a partridge]* "David alludes to the mode of chase practised now as of old, when the partridge continuously chased was at length, when fatigued, knocked down by sticks thrown along the ground. It must be remembered that both the species of partridge common in the Holy Land, unlike our bird, endeavour to save themselves by running in preference to flight, unless when suddenly started; that they are not inhabitants of plains or cornfields but of rocky hill-sides." The Hebrew name means "caller," from "its ringing call-note, which in early morning echoes from cliff to cliff alike amidst the barrenness of the wilderness of Judaea, and in the glens of the forest of Carmel." Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, p. 225.

David means to say that the King of Israel's pursuit of him is altogether unworthy of his dignity.

**21. I have sinned, &c.]** Compare and contrast xxiv. 16 ff.

**22. let one of the young men, &c.]** For he durst not now venture to put himself in Saul's power, as he appears to have done upon the former occasion. Cp. v. 13.

**23. The LORD render, &c.]** Better, **shall render.** In xxiv. 19 the equivalent of these words is put into Saul's mouth. David is not sounding his own praises, but as before (xxiv. 12) declaring his confidence that God will eventually recompense him for his upright and loyal behaviour. Cp. Ps. vii. 8, xviii. 20.

LORD delivered thee into *my* hand to day, but I would not  
 24 stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed. And  
 behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes,  
 so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and  
 25 let him deliver me out of all tribulation. Then Saul said to  
 David, Blessed *be* thou, my son David: thou shalt both do  
 great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on  
 his way, and Saul returned to his place.

CH. XXVII. 1—7. *David's flight to Achish, and residence  
 at Ziklag.*

27 And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day  
 by the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than  
 that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philis-  
 tines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in  
 2 any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand. And  
 David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men  
 that *were* with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of  
 3 Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his

24. *was much set by*] For the expression cp. xviii. 30, though a  
 different Heb. word is used here: lit. "was great."

*deliver me out of all tribulation*] Cp. Ps. xxxiv. 17; liv. 7.

25. *to his place*] i.e. to his home. Cp. ii. 20.

CH. XXVII. 1—7. DAVID'S FLIGHT TO ACHISH, AND RESIDENCE  
 AT ZIKLAG.

1. *into the land of the Philistines*] The result anticipated in xxvi.  
 19 has come to pass. David is forced to seek refuge in a heathen  
 land. The circumstances of this flight are entirely different from those  
 related in xxi. 10 ff. Then the solitary fugitive, recognised as the  
 slayer of Goliath, narrowly escaped losing his life; now the outlaw  
 leader of a band of stalwart warriors is welcomed as an ally. He  
 entered the king's service as an independent chieftain, like an  
 Italian Condottiere of the middle ages.

Traces of this residence at Gath may be observed in the attachment  
 of Ittai the *Gittite* to David (2 Sam. xv. 19); and possibly the *Gittith*,  
 mentioned in the title to Ps. viii., was an instrument or a melody brought  
 from Gath.

2. *Achish, the son of Maach*] If he was the same as the Achish of  
 xxi. 10, and the Achish son of Maachah of 1 Kings ii. 39, he must  
 have reigned some fifty years. But more probably the same name was  
 borne by different individuals.



men, every man with his household, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. And it was told Saul that David was <sup>4</sup> fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him. And <sup>5</sup> David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? Then Achish gave him Ziklag <sup>6</sup> that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. And the time that David dwelt in <sup>7</sup> the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

### 8—12. *David's raids upon neighbouring tribes.*

And David and his men went up, and invaded the <sup>8</sup>

3. *every man with his household*] Cp. ch. xxx. 3 ff.; 2 Sam. ii. 3.

5. *in some town in the country*] In one of the provincial cities as distinguished from the metropolis Gath.

*why should thy servant dwell, &c.*] He wished for a more independent position, where he might be less exposed to the jealousy of the Philistine lords, and have free opportunity for ruling and organizing his followers.

6. *Ziklag*] One of the cities in the *Negeb* or "South Country," originally assigned to Judah (Josh. xv. 31), but transferred to Simeon (Josh. xix. 5), and either never occupied by them or reconquered by the Philistines. Its site has not been identified, but was probably somewhere W. or N.W. of Beersheba, next to which it is mentioned in Neh. xi. 28.

*Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day*] This note from the hand of the compiler indicates that the book was composed after the separation of the kingdom of Judah from the kingdom of Israel, and before the Captivity. Ziklag was, so to speak, one of the crown estates of the royal house.

7. *a full year and four months*] The Sept. reading "four months" is improbable, though the Heb. might be rendered "a space of time, even four months." Ch. xxix. 3 implies a much longer residence. "In this city David laid the foundation of his kingdom. Here he could already rule with greater freedom and independence, collect fugitives and deserters around him in larger and larger numbers, send or receive embassies like a prince (1 Sam. xxx. 26—31), and as a ruler over soldiers and peaceable citizens rehearse, on a small scale, those arts by which he afterwards acquired and maintained his great kingdom." Ewald, *Hist. of Israel*, III. 101. Here a band of archers and slingers from Saul's own tribe joined him, together with men from the southern towns of Judah, and from Manasseh (1 Chr. xii. 1—7, 20—22).

Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land as thou goest  
 9 to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt. And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish.  
 10 And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day?

8—12. DAVID'S RAIDS UPON NEIGHBOURING TRIBES.

8. *the Geshurites*] A tribe dwelling south of Philistia near the Amalekites (see Josh. xiii. 2), to be distinguished from the Geshurites in Syria (2 Sam. xv. 8).

*the Gezrites*] These cannot be the inhabitants of Gezer (Josh. x. 33), which was far away from the scene of David's operations. The written text (*Kthibh*) as distinguished from the traditional reading (*Qrf*) has **Gerzites**. It has been conjectured that this was an ancient Arab tribe which at one time wandered up northwards and gave its name to Mount Gerizim; as their neighbours the Amalekites left traces of former migrations in the name "the mountain of the Amalekites" in the territory of Ephraim (Jud. xii. 15).

*the Amalekites*] Such remnants of them as had escaped from Saul's sword. See on xv. 8.

*those nations were of old, &c.*] If the text is right, the E. V. gives the general sense correctly. The allusion to their ancient occupation of the district may be inserted with reference to the Amalekite attack upon Israel in the march from Egypt (Ex. xvii. 8 ff.). But the Heb. is obscure, and possibly should be emended so as to give the sense, "for these nations inhabited the land from Telem until thou comest to Shur, and unto the land of Egypt." Telem would be mentioned as the southernmost city of Israel. See on xv. 4.

9. *the sheep, &c.*] In which the wealth of nomad tribes consists. Cp. xv. 3, &c.; Job i. 3. "We rode through five large Arab camps, and every hill-side and valley was filled with thousands of sheep, goats, oxen, asses, and camels." Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 532.

*returned and came to Achish*] After these expeditions he reported himself to Achish at Gath, and handed over to him the covenanted share of the plunder. It is to be inferred that Achish expected David to pay a kind of tribute, as well as to render personal service in war (xxviii. 2).

10. *Whither*] The Heb. word does not mean *whither*, and must be emended. It is best to follow the Sept. and Vulg. in reading "against whom."

*have ye made a road*] The same word as that translated "invaded" in v. 8. "Road" means a plundering excursion or raid, from A.-S. *rād*, a riding. Compare the compound *in-road*. "Him hee named, who at that time was absent, making *roades* upon the Lacedemonians." Sidney's *Arcadia*.

And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to <sup>11</sup> bring *tidings to Gath*, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so *will be* his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines. And Achish <sup>12</sup> believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

CH. XXVIII. 1, 2. *David forced to join the Philistine army.*

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines <sup>28</sup> gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

*the Jerahmeelites*] Descendants of Jerahmeel the son of Hezron (1 Chr. ii. 9, 25), who were settled on the southern frontier of Judah, apparently as an independent tribe. Cp. xxx. 29.

*the Kenites*] Who were in alliance with the Israelites. See on xv. 6.

11. *And David said, &c.*] The tribes which David really plundered must evidently have lived in the neighbourhood of the southern boundary of Judah, so that he could represent his expeditions as made against his own countrymen and their allies, not, as was the fact, against allies of the Philistines. David's falsehoods are not of course to be judged by the Christian standard of morality.

*to bring tidings to Gath*] Rather, **to bring them to Gath**, as prisoners. Such barbarity was nothing strange at the time, and David did not rise above the practice of his contemporaries.

*tell on us*] "On" used as we now use "of" is common in Shakespeare: e.g. *Macbeth*, A. i. Sc. 3:

"Or have we eaten *on* the insane root  
That takes the reason prisoner?"

*and so will be his manner, &c.*] Render, "and so **was** his manner all the while **he dwelt** in the country of the Philistines." A full stop must be placed after *David*, and the following words taken as a remark of the historian. Cp. v. 7.

12. *Achish believed David*] Connect v. 12 with v. 10. Achish believed that David had brought himself into ill odour (see on xiii. 4) with his own countrymen by his attacks on them, and would now be his permanent vassal.

CH. XXVIII. 1, 2. DAVID FORCED TO JOIN THE PHILISTINE ARMY.

1. *in those days*] While David was at Ziklag, as related in the previous chapter.



- 2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

3—14. *Saul resorts to the witch of Endor.*

- 3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards,  
4 out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul

2. *Surely thou shalt know*] Better, **Therefore now shalt thou know**: reading *now* for *thou* with the Sept. and Vulg. David's answer is designedly ambiguous. He is placed in a perplexing dilemma. It seems as though he must either fight against his own nation, or appear false to his liege lord Achish. The difficulty was providentially solved by the suspicion of the Philistine princes (xxix. 3 ff.).

*keeper of mine head*] Captain of his body-guard. Achish accepts David's answer as a profession of loyalty.

3—14. SAUL RESORTS TO THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

3. *Now Samuel, &c.*] From v. 3 to the end of the chapter is an independent narrative. v. 3 states by way of introduction certain facts as the key to the incidents about to be related: (1) the death and burial of Samuel (xxv. 1); (2) Saul's expulsion of the soothsayers. This he probably did in the early part of his reign. An allusion to it may be traced in xv. 23. It was in accordance with the Law. See Lev. xix. 31, xx. 27; Deut. xviii. 10 ff.

*those that had familiar spirits*] The Hebrew word *Ob* signifies (1) the demon or spirit supposed to speak through the necromancer; (2) the possessor of such a spirit. It is generally rendered by the Sept. "ventriloquist" (ἐγγαστριμυθός), probably because the spirit was supposed to speak from the necromancer's belly, not as some suppose, because ventriloquists abused their powers for imposing upon the credulous.

*the wizards*] Wizard, connected with *wit* and *wise*, is an exact equivalent of the Heb. word, which means "a knowing one:" one who is supposed to possess a knowledge of the future by mysterious means.

4. *the Philistines gathered themselves together*] This was no border foray, but a gathering of the whole force of the confederacy, as is clear from v. 1 and xxix. 1—4, for a decisive struggle with Israel. They marched northwards along the coast to the plain of Esdraelon, the great battle-field of Palestine, where their chariots and horsemen could move freely.

*in Shunem*] Now *Sôlam*, on the S.W. slope of the range called Little Hermon (*Neby Dâhy*), opposite Jezreel and Mount Gilboa, having the deep broad valley of Jezreel between, and overlooking the whole western plain to Carmel. Shunem is elsewhere mentioned as the abode

gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, <sup>5</sup> and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul inquired <sup>6</sup> of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his <sup>7</sup>

of Abishag (1 Kings i. 3), and the home of the woman who entertained Elisha (2 Kings iv. 8 ff.).

*in Gilboa*] A mountainous tract on the E. of the plain of Esdraelon. It is now called *Jebel Fukûa*, but the ancient name is still preserved in the village of *Jelbôn*, situated on the top of the mountain.

<sup>5</sup>. *he was afraid*] The consciousness that "the Spirit of Jehovah had departed from him" made the once brave king a coward.

<sup>6</sup>. *when Saul inquired of the LORD*] In 1 Chr. x. 13, 14 it is said that "Saul died...for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it, and inquired not of the LORD." The contradiction is only in appearance. Instead of humbling himself in penitence for the sin which he knew must be withholding the Divine answer (xiv. 37), and persevering in his inquiry, he resorted to a plan which was tantamount to apostasy from Jehovah.

*answered him not*] See Prov. i. 24—30.

*by dreams*] A recognised method of divine communications to man (Num. xii. 6).

*by Urim*] Since Abiathar had carried off the Ephod with the Urim and Thummim when he fled from Nob, it would appear that Saul had had a new Ephod made, and appointed a high-priest in the room of Ahimelech. This conjecture is supported by the double high-priesthood of Zadok and Abiathar in David's reign (2 Sam. viii. 17, &c.), which may be accounted for by supposing that David allowed Zadok to retain the office to which Saul had elevated him.

The following points may be noted with respect to the obscure question of the *Urim*, or *Urim and Thummim*. For a full discussion see Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*.

(a) The name signifies *The Light and the Perfection* (or *the Truth*), the words being 'plurals of excellence.'

(b) It denotes certain material objects, placed inside the breastplate of judgment which formed part of the high-priest's Ephod (Ex. xxviii. 30). There are no directions for making them; it is implied that they were already in existence.

(c) The purpose of this mysterious instrument is clear. It was a means by which the will of Jehovah was ascertained through the high-priest. The present passage is the only mention by name of its use after the entry into Canaan, though it is implied in ch. xiv. 3, 18, xxiii. 2, 9, xxx. 7, 8; 2 Sam. xxi. 1. After the Captivity it became a proverbial expression with reference to questions of special difficulty that they must wait for solution "until there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim" (Ezra ii. 63; Neh. vii. 65).

(d) The origin of the Urim and Thummim was not improbably

servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit  
 8 at En-dor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up,  
 9 whom I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards,

Egyptian. A plausible conjecture connects them with the symbol of Truth worn by the priest-judges of Egypt, and the symbol of Light worn by members of the priestly caste.

(e) The method of use must remain an enigma. The most probable theories are either (1) that they were consecrated objects by gazing on which the high-priest passed into a state of spiritual ecstasy, and purified from selfish and worldly thoughts became receptive of a supernatural illumination: or (2) that they were a special means of casting lots. Cp. note on xiv. 41.

*by prophets*] Cp. ix. 6, xxii. 5, for instances of counsel given through prophets. The same three methods of inquiry are mentioned in Hom. *Il.* i. 62:

“But seek we first some prophet or some priest,  
 Or some wise vision-seer, since visions too  
 From Zeus proceed.”

7. *that hath a familiar spirit*] Lit. “possessor of an *Ob.*” See on v. 3, and cp. Acts xvi. 16. Cp. Virg. *Aen.* vii. 312:

“Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo.”  
 “If heaven bends not, I will stir hell beneath.”

*En-dor*] = *fountain of the dwelling*, was on the northern slope of the Little Hermon (*Neby Dûhy*), where the village of *Endôr* still marks the site. It was famous as the scene of Sisera's defeat and death (Ps. lxxxiii. 10).

8. *they came to the woman by night*] It was an adventurous journey. They had to pass over the shoulder of the hill on which the Philistines were encamped, and traverse a distance of not less than ten or twelve miles. The darkness around was a fit emblem of the darkness in Saul's soul. Cp. John xiii. 30, and Augustine's comment “Nox erat, et ipse qui exivit erat nox,” (It was night, and he who went forth was night).

*bring me him up, &c.*] A more precise definition of the method of divination “by *Ob.*” Cp. Deut. xviii. 10, 11. Probably Saul expected to hear a voice, but not to see a form. Necromancy was practised among the Greeks and other heathen nations. There was a famous oracle of this kind on the River Acheron in Epirus (*νεκυομαντεῖον*).



out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped *with his* face to the ground, and bowed himself.

15—19. *Samuel pronounces Saul's doom.*

And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, 15

11. *Bring me up Samuel*] From *Sheol*, the realm of departed spirits, which is always spoken of as beneath the earth. The nature of the transaction here recorded is discussed in Additional Note VIII. on p. 244. It is assumed in the notes here that Samuel really appeared and spoke.

12. *thou art Saul*] The woman had not previously recognised her visitor, but simultaneously with the apparition of Samuel, discovered that he was Saul, either by the fact of the apparition for which she was unprepared, or by her intensified perception in a state of clairvoyance.

13. *gods*] The Heb. word *Elôhîm* is plural, and when not applied to God Himself is generally to be so rendered. But it is evident from v. 14 that only a *single* figure appeared. *Elôhîm* here denotes a *supernatural, non-earthly being*; or as Josephus paraphrases it, "one of god-like form."

14. *An old man cometh up*] The Sept. has "a man coming up upright," a reading which is possibly due to the strange Rabbinic fable that the witch knew her visitor to be Saul because Samuel came up erect to do honour to the king, instead of appearing feet foremost as ghosts evoked usually did!

*a mantle*] The prophet's garb. Cp. xv. 27.

*Saul perceived*] Lit. *knew*. Saul recognised from the description that it was Samuel, and shewed his reverence for the great prophet by the usual gesture. Cp. xxiv. 8. At first Samuel was seen by the witch only, but Saul's obeisance, and the conversation carried on between them, seem to indicate that he afterwards became visible to Saul also.

15—19. SAMUEL PRONOUNCES SAUL'S DOOM.

15. *Why hast thou disquieted me*] Disturbed me from my rest in

to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that  
 16 *thou* mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine  
 17 enemy? And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand,  
 18 and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David: because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done  
 19 this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

Sheôl. Samuel utters this complaint, because although he came as God's messenger, Saul's sin was the moving cause of so unnatural a mission.

16. *Wherefore then, &c.*] As if in such extremity I who am only God's servant could do aught for thee.

*is become thine enemy*] The expression is startling, and it is almost certain that there is some corruption in the text. (a) The word for "enemy" is an Aramaic form, found elsewhere in Hebrew only in one or two doubtful instances. (b) The ancient versions point to some different reading. The Sept. gives "has turned to be with thy neighbour;" the Vulg. "has passed over to thy rival;" the Targ. "has become the help of a man who is thine enemy." It seems best to follow the Sept. Comp. xv. 28; xvi. 13, 14.

17. *to him*] i.e. if the Sept. reading is adopted in v. 16, *to David*: or it may refer to God, and mean "**for himself**," in fulfilment of His will. But the Sept. and Vulg. read "**to thee**."

*as he spake by me*] See xv. 28.

18. *Because thou obeyedst not, &c.*] Cp. xv. 20, 26.

*executedst.....hath the LORD done*] The connexion between the sin and the sentence is emphasized by the use of the same verb in the original in both clauses.

19. *will also deliver Israel*] **Will deliver Israel also.** The guilt of the king involves the nation also in punishment. In this clause the impending disaster is foretold generally; in the second and third clauses it is further defined as the death of the king and the defeat of the army.

*with me*] In Sheôl or Hades, the abode of departed spirits of righteous and wicked alike. Cp. Job iii. 17; 2 Sam. xii. 23.

20—25. *Saul entertained by the woman.*

Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was <sup>20</sup> sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. And the woman came unto Saul, and <sup>21</sup> saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken <sup>22</sup> thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on *thy* way. But he refused, <sup>23</sup> and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the <sup>24</sup> woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: and she brought *it* before Saul, <sup>25</sup> and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they arose up, and went away that night.

CH. XXIX. 1—5. *The Philistine lords' distrust of David.*

Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to 29

## 20—25. SAUL ENTERTAINED BY THE WOMAN.

20. *all along*] **His full length**, lit. "the fulness of his stature." Terror of mind and exhaustion of body left him powerless.

21. *I have put my life in my hand*] By doing that which rendered her liable to the punishment of death. Cp. xix. 5.

22. *hearken thou also unto the voice*] **Obey thou also the voice.** The E. V. fails to bring out the exact parallel which the woman draws between her own compliance and the compliance she asks from Saul.

23. *upon the bed*] Probably the *divan*, or platform running along the wall, which in the East serves for a seat by day and a bed at night. Cp. Esth. i. 6; Ezek. xxiii. 41. Portable couches were also in use (ch. xix. 15).

24. *And the woman, &c.*] Meals are rapidly prepared in the East. "With the Bedawin it is nearly universal to cook the meat immediately after it is butchered, and to bake fresh bread for every meal." *The Land and the Book*, p. 446. Cp. Gen. xviii. 6 ff.

## CH. XXIX. 1—5. THE PHILISTINE LORDS' DISTRUST OF DAVID.

1. *Now the Philistines, &c.* The narrative of xxviii. 1, 2 is resumed, with a further description of the positions of the armies before the battle.



Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in  
 2 Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hun-  
 dreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on  
 3 in the rereward with Achish. Then said the princes of the

*Aphek]* This cannot be the Aphek of iv. 1, in the neighbourhood of Bethhoron, for in that case there would be no reason to account for Saul's army being already encamped at Jezreel. Possibly it is to be identified with *Fâleh*, about two miles to the W. of Shunem: or, as Lieut. Conder thinks, with *Fukûa*, 6 miles S.E. of Jezreel. In the latter case, the Philistines had shifted their camp from Shunem, and turned the strong position of Jezreel on the side where it is most assailable: but this seems less probable, and does not agree with the account of the flight of the Israelites to Mount Gilboa (xxx. 1).

*a fountain which is in Jezreel]* "The fountain in Jezreel" was probably the present *Ain Fâlûd*, less than two miles E.S.E. of *Zerîn*. "It is a very large fountain, flowing out from under a sort of cavern in the wall of conglomerate rock, which here forms the base of Gilboa. It spreads out at once into a fine limpid pool, forty or fifty feet in diameter. A stream sufficient to turn a mill flows off eastwards down the valley." Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* II. 323. It may have been the identical "spring of Harod" at which Gideon tested his men (Jud. vii. 1 ff.). The modern name of Jezreel is *Zerîn*: the feeble initial *j* (*y*) having been dropped, and the termination *el* changed to *în*, as in *Beitîn* for Bethel.

Jezreel was a strong and central position. It stood upon the brow of a steep rocky descent of at least 100 feet to the N.E., at the opening of the middle branch of the three eastern forks of the plain of Esdraelon, commanding the broad and fertile valley which slopes eastward to the Jordan, and all the extent of the great plain reaching westward to the long blue ridge of Carmel. See Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* II. 318 ff. Jezreel was the favourite residence of Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 1 ff.); there Jezebel established a temple of Astarte with 400 priests (1 Kings xviii. 19); here was enacted the tragedy of Naboth's judicial murder (1 Kings xxi. 13); and here Jezebel met with her end (2 Kings ix. 30 ff.).

2. *And the lords, &c.]* Render, **Now the lords...were passing on.** The narrative now goes back to a point of time during the march of the Philistine army northwards, probably soon after the junction of the confederate forces from the different cities of the league. It must have been after they had passed the Philistine frontier, as David "returned into the land of the Philistines" (v. 11), but soon after, as he reached Ziklag on the third day (xxx. 1).

*the lords]* For the special title *Seren* translated "lord" see on ch. v. 8. They were marching at the head of "the hundreds and the thousands" which were the military divisions of the army.

*the rereward]* The rear-guard, *ward* and *guard* being related as *wise* and *guise*. Cp. Is. lii. 12.

3. *princes]* The Hebrew equivalent for the special title *Seren* rendered *lord*.

Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is* not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no *fault* in him since he fell *unto me* unto this day? And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make *this* fellow return, that he may go again to his place, which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it* not *be* with the heads of these men? *Is* not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

6—11. *David dismissed from the army.*

Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, *as* the LORD liveth, thou *hast been* upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host *is* good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and

*Hebrews]* See on iv. 6.

*these days, or these years]* Lit. "now days (=a year) or now years," i.e. for a considerable time, sufficient to test his fidelity. Cp. xxvii. 7.

*since he fell unto me]* i.e. deserted and came over to me. Cp. 1 Chr. xii. 19, 20.

4. *this fellow]* Simply, "**the man:**" but below, "wherewith should **this fellow make himself acceptable** unto his master? should it not be with the heads of **those** men?" Pointing to the troops marching past.

5. *of whom they sang]* "Of whom they **sing** one to another in **the** dances;" i.e. in popular songs at festivals. See on xxi. 11.

6—11. DAVID DISMISSED FROM THE ARMY.

6. *as the LORD liveth]* Either the exact wording of the speech is due to the historian, or Achish, to convince David of his sincerity, swears by the God of Israel.

*thou hast been upright]* Better, **thou art upright.**

*thy going out, &c.]* Thy company in this expedition would please me, for I have always found thee a faithful ally.

8. *And David said, &c.]* A hypocritical answer, designed to confirm

what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against  
 9 the enemies of my lord the king? And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art* good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the  
 10 battle. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.  
 11 So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

CH. XXX. 1—6. *Sack of Ziklag in David's absence.*

30 And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burnt it with

Achish in the belief of his fidelity. Compare David's previous conduct (ch. xxvii. 10—12). But David can scarcely have intended to fight against his countrymen, and must have inwardly rejoiced that God had delivered him out of so perplexing a dilemma.

9. *I know that, &c.*] Better, **I know it, for, &c.**

*as an angel of God*] Cp. 2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20, xix. 27. The Sept. (B) omits the words.

10. *with thy master's servants*] Achish speaks of David's men as *Saul's subjects*, in view of the objection which has been made to their presence in the army.

*with thee*] After these words the Sept. (A B) adds: "And go ye unto the place which I have appointed you; and lay not up any evil thought in thine heart, for thou art good in my sight."

11. *to Jezreel*] The Sept. reading (A B) "to fight against Israel" is plausible.

CH. XXX. 1—6. SACK OF ZIKLAG IN DAVID'S ABSENCE.

1. *on the third day*] After leaving the Philistine army. Evidently he had not accompanied them far beyond the frontier. See note on xxix. 2.

*the Amalekites*] Possibly they had got information of David's absence, and took the opportunity to make reprisals for his raids on them (xxvii. 8).

*the south, and Ziklag*] The *Negeb* or "south country" is the technical name for the district between the hills of Judah and the actual desert. It is a series of rolling hills, clad with scanty herbage here and there. In places there is fine upland pasture, but not a tree nor a shrub to



fire; and had taken the women captives, that *were* therein: <sup>2</sup> they slew not any, either great or small, but carried *them* away, and went on their way. So David and his men came <sup>3</sup> to the city, and behold, *it was* burnt with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that *were* with him <sup>4</sup> lift up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, <sup>5</sup> Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the <sup>6</sup> people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

#### 7—20. *The pursuit.*

And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's <sup>7</sup> son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David <sup>8</sup> inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*. So David went, he and the six hundred men that *were* with <sup>9</sup> him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were

relieve its bareness. See Tristram, *Land of Israel*, pp. 360—373. In this district Ziklag was situated.

4. *wept*] See on xi. 4.

6. *spake of stoning him*] Cp. Ex. xvii. 4; Num. xiv. 10. They laid the blame on him, because he had left no force to guard Ziklag.

*was grieved*] **Was exasperated**, lit. "was bitter." Cp. xxii. 2.

*encouraged himself*] **Strengthened himself**. Cp. xxiii. 16; Eph. vi. 10; and many of the Psalms, e.g. xviii. 2, xxvii. 14, xxxi. 1 ff., 24, &c.

#### 7—20. THE PURSUIT.

7. *bring me hither the ephod*] He desired to consult God by means of the Urim and Thummim, as before at Keilah (xxiii. 9).

8. *inquired at*] = inquired of. Cp. Gen. xxiv. 57.

*pursue...overtake*] Cp. Ex. xv. 9.

9. *the six hundred men*] For a rapid pursuit a small force of picked men was most suitable. Cp. xxvii. 2. No doubt by this time he had a much larger force at his command.

*the brook Besor*] The Heb. word is *nachal*, which means *a ravine*, or *torrent-bed*, with a stream at the bottom. The brook Besor is men-

- <sup>10</sup> left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode *behind*, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.
- <sup>11</sup> And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they
- <sup>12</sup> made him drink water; and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread,
- <sup>13</sup> nor drunk *any* water, three days and three nights. And David said unto him, To whom *belongest* thou? and whence *art* thou? And he said, I *am* a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days
- <sup>14</sup> ago I fell sick. We made an invasion *upon* the south of the Cherethites, and upon *the coast* which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burnt Ziklag with

tioned here only, and has not been identified with certainty. Perhaps it was the *Wady es Sheriah*, which runs down to the sea a few miles south of Gaza.

**10.** *abode behind*] **Stayed**, as in v. 9. The condensed expression of the last clause of v. 9 is explained by v. 10.

*were so faint*] A verb found only here and in v. 21, connected with a substantive meaning *a corpse*; as we should say, they were *dead-beat*.

**11.** *bread*] **Food**: what it was is specified in the next verse: a piece of fig-cake and two lumps of raisins. See on xxv. 18. The Sept. (B) omits the raisins.

**12.** *his spirit came again to him*] He revived. Cp. Jud. xv. 19.

**13.** *To whom belongest thou*] His appearance shewed that he was a slave.

*servant*] **Slave**: captured in some Amalekite foray.

*three days ago*] So that more than three days had elapsed since the sack of Ziklag, for they had gone at least one long day's march before he was deserted. "Agone," now usually written *ago*, is the past participle of an obsolete verb *agon*, to go away.

*my master left me*] "A barbarous act, to leave him there to perish, when they had camels good store, for the carriage of men as well as of their spoil (v. 17): but this inhumanity cost them dear; for by this means they lost their own lives." Patrick.

**14.** *the Cherethites*] Evidently a tribe of Philistines living on the southern border of Philistia, as the spoil is said in v. 16 to have been taken "out of the land of the Philistines." Cp. Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5. The name may possibly be connected with *Crete*.

*coast*] **Border**. See on ch. v. 6.

*the south of Caleb*] Joshua's faithful companion received Hebron for his inheritance (Josh. xiv. 13), and when he ceded the city to the priests for a city of refuge, retained the surrounding land in his own possession

fire. And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to <sup>15</sup> this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company. And when he had brought him down, behold *they were* <sup>16</sup> spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. And David smote them from the twilight even <sup>17</sup> unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. And David recovered all that the <sup>18</sup> Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither <sup>19</sup> small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any *thing* that they had taken to them: David recovered all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* <sup>20</sup>

(Josh. xxi. 11, 12; cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 3). Apparently he gave his name to part of the *Negeb* (v. 1), which was known as *the Negeb of Caleb*.

15. *company*] **Troop**, as in v. 8, and again in v. 23. It is the regular word for a band of roving plunderers. Cp. Ps. xviii. 29. Is it fanciful to think that David there refers to this successful pursuit of the Amalekites? He must always have remembered it as one of the signal mercies of his life.

16. *dancing*] Or, **feasting**.

17. *And David smote, &c.*] He reached the neighbourhood of their camp in the evening, and found them scattered about in disorder, carousing over the spoil. As soon as the morning began to dawn he attacked them (cp. xi. 11), and the fight lasted till nightfall. After the first surprise, the Amalekites made a stubborn resistance.

*the evening of the next day*] The battle can scarcely have lasted two whole days. If the reading is right, the phrase *the evening towards the morrow* may denote the evening with which the next day commenced, Jewish days being reckoned from sunset to sunset, so that the fight lasted from early dawn till past sunset.

*young men*] Perhaps servants, as in xvi. 18. The Amalekites were famous for camels. Cp. Jud. vii. 12; 1 Sam. xv. 3.

18. *recovered...rescued*] Different renderings of the same Heb. word, used also in v. 8. **Rescue** is the best equivalent. "Recovered" in v. 19 is a different word; literally meaning "**brought back**."

19. *that they had taken to them*] i.e. which the Amalekites had taken for themselves. They carried off the women and children alive to use or sell for slaves.

20. This verse as it stands admits of no satisfactory explanation. It



they drave before those *other* cattle, and said, This is David's spoil.

21—25. *The division of the spoil.*

- <sup>21</sup> And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that *were* with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them.
- <sup>22</sup> Then answered all the wicked men and *men* of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the spoil that we have recovered, save *to* every man his wife and his children,
- <sup>23</sup> that they may lead *them* away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with *that* which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered
- <sup>24</sup> the company that came against us into our hand. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by
- <sup>25</sup> the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was *so* from that day

is best to follow the Vulgate, with which the Sept. in the main agrees, and read, **And he took all the flocks and the herds, and drave them before him: and they said, This is David's spoil:** i.e. he not only recovered his own property, but took a rich booty besides, which his men drove off with shouts of triumph. The number of places to which he sent presents (vv. 26—31) shews how large it must have been.

21—25. THE DIVISION OF THE SPOIL.

22. *Then answered, &c.] Then answered every wicked man and every worthless man...Because they went not with me.* Each spoke for himself, in the true spirit of selfishness.

24. *For who, &c.] Better, And who will hearken unto you as regards this saying?* A negative answer is implied: No one; for, &c. The Sept. adds, "for they are not inferior to us."

*as his part, &c.]* The rule for the division of the spoil between combatants and non-combatants was an ancient one. See Num. xxxi. 27; and cp. Josh. xxii. 8. David now enforced a special application of it with reference to the divisions of the army. A similar law existed at Rome. According to Polybius (x. 16. 5), Scipio after the sack of New Carthage directed the tribunes to divide the booty in equal portions to all, including the reserves, the guards of the camp, and the sick.

*the stuff]* **The baggage.** See on x. 22.

forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

26—31. *The presents sent to the elders of Judah.*

And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD; to *them* which *were* in Beth-el, and to *them* which *were* in south Ramoth, and to *them* which *were* in Jattir, and to *them* which *were* in Aroer, and to *them* which *were* in Siphmoth, and to *them* which *were* in Eshtemoa, and to *them* which

*they shall part alike*] “Part” = *share*. The use of the verb in this sense is an archaism. Cp. Acts ii. 45.

26—31. THE PRESENTS SENT TO THE ELDERS OF JUDAH.

26. *he sent of the spoil, &c.*] In gratitude for the assistance he had received from them during his wanderings, and to secure their good will when Saul’s death should open the way for him to the throne. On the *elders* see at viii. 4.

*a present*] Lit. **a blessing**, as in xxv. 27.

*the spoil of the enemies of the LORD*] Since Israel was Jehovah’s people, the enemies of Israel were the enemies of His kingdom and His cause, and every war against them was a holy war. Cp. xviii. 17, xxv. 28.

27. *Bethel*] Not the well known Bethel in the tribe of Benjamin, but *Bethul* or *Bethuel*, called also *Chesil*, a city in the neighbourhood of Ziklag and Hormah, originally assigned to Judah, and subsequently transferred to Simeon (Josh. xv. 30, xix. 4; 1 Chr. iv. 30).

*south Ramoth*] **Ramoth-Negeb**, or *Ramoth in the south country*, as distinguished from *Ramoth Gilead*, is probably the same as *Ramath-Negeb* in Josh. xix. 8. Perhaps “Shimei the Ramathite,” the overseer of David’s vineyards, came from it (1 Chr. xxvii. 27).

*Jattir*] A priestly city in the mountains of Judah (Josh. xv. 48, xxi. 14), probably the modern *Attir*, 4½ miles S.W. of Eshtemoa. It may have been the native place of David’s heroes Ira and Gareb the *Ithrites* (2 Sam. xxiii. 38).

28. *Aroer*] Obviously not the famous city on the R. Arnon. Perhaps the name survives in the *Wady Arârah*, some 20 miles south of Hebron, where Robinson found evident traces of an ancient village or town (II. 199). “Shama and Jehiel the sons of Hothan the Aroerite” are mentioned in the catalogue of David’s valiant men (1 Chr. xi. 44).

*Siphmoth*] mentioned nowhere else, unless it was the home of Zabdi the *Shiphmite*, the steward of David’s wine-cellars (1 Chr. xxvii. 27).

*Eshtemoa*] A priestly city (Josh. xv. 50, xxi. 14); now *Es Semâa*,

were in Rachal, and to *them* which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which were in the cities of the  
 30 Kenites, and to *them* which were in Hormah, and to *them* which were in Chor-ashan, and to *them* which were in  
 31 Athach, and to *them* which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

nine miles S.S.W. of Hebron, "a considerable village, situated on a low hill, with broad valleys round about, full of flocks and herds. In several places there are remains of walls built of very large stones, marking the site of an extensive ancient town." Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* II. 204.

29. *Rachal*] Nowhere else mentioned. The Sept. reads **Carmel**, but its list is corrupt and not to be trusted.

*the Jerahmeelites*] See on xxvii. 10.

*the Kenites*] See on xv. 6.

30. *Hormah*] Or *Zephath* (Jud. i. 17), an ancient Canaanite city (Josh. xii. 14), assigned to Judah (Josh. xv. 30) and transferred to Simeon (Josh. xix. 4).

*Chor-ashan*] The true reading is **Bor-ashan** (= *Cistern of Ashan*). It was doubtless the same as *Ashan*, a Simeonite city in the Negeb originally given to Judah (Josh. xv. 42, xix. 7).

*Athach*] Nowhere else mentioned. Perhaps a corruption for *Ether*, the letters of which are very similar, (Josh. xv. 42, where the Sept. reads *Ithak*; xix. 7), another city of Judah transferred to Simeon.

31. *Hebron*] One of the most ancient cities in the world (Num. xiii. 22). When Abraham entered Canaan it was already existing under the name of *Kirjath Arba*. In its neighbourhood he often sojourned, and there he bought the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite for a family sepulchre for himself and his posterity (Gen. xxiii. 2 ff.). On the conquest of Canaan it became the inheritance of Caleb (Josh. xiv. 13—15), and was made a priestly settlement and a city of refuge (Josh. xxi. 11—13). It was soon to attain greater importance as the capital of David's kingdom during the first seven years and a half of his reign. It lies 20 miles south of Jerusalem, picturesquely situated in a narrow valley surrounded by rocky hills, whose sides are clothed with luxuriant vineyards. Its modern name is *El Khulil* = "The Friend," in memory of Abraham who was called "the friend of God" (2 Chr. xx. 7; Is. xli. 8; James ii. 23).

*all the places, &c.*] It is evident that David's outlaw life must have lasted for some considerable time, and have proved an important factor in preparing the men of Judah to welcome him as their king. The instances quoted above indicate that it was during this period that he gained many of the faithful friends who afterwards filled offices of trust in his kingdom.



# CH. XXXI. 1—7. *The death of Saul on Mount Gilboa.*

Now the Philistines fought against Israel : and the men of 31  
Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in  
mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon 2  
Saul and upon his sons ; and the Philistines slew Jonathan,  
and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle 3  
went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him ; and he was  
sore wounded of the archers. Then said Saul unto his 4  
armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through  
therewith ; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me

## CH. XXXI. 1—7. THE DEATH OF SAUL ON MOUNT GILBOA.

1. The narrative of this chapter has been inserted by the compiler of Chronicles in his work (1 Chron. x. 1—12) with only a few verbal variations.

*Now the Philistines]* The notices of the Philistine muster in xxviii. 4, xxix. 1, 11 have prepared the way for the account of the battle.

Four battles memorable in the history of Israel were fought in or near the plain of Esdraelon "the great battlefield of Palestine."

(1) The battle of Kishon, in which Deborah and Barak defeated the host of Sisera (Jud. iv. 15, v. 21).

(2) The battle of Jezreel, in which Gideon's three hundred routed the vast horde of Midianites (Jud. vii.).

(3) The disastrous battle of Mount Gilboa recorded here.

(4) The battle of Megiddo, where Josiah lost his life fighting against Pharaoh Necho.

(5) A fifth may be added, the battle of Hattin, on the fifth of July, 1187, "the last struggle of the Crusaders, in which all was staked in the presence of the holiest scenes of Christianity, and all miserably lost." See Stanley's *Sin. and Pal.* p. 335 ff., 369.

*the men of Israel fled]* Probably the battle took place in the plain of Jezreel; the men of Israel were driven back on their camp, and finally fled in confusion up the heights of Gilboa, pursued by the Philistines.

2. *Saul's sons]* See xiv. 49. There is a tragic pathos in the simplicity of the account. Cp. v. 6.

3. *the battle went sore against Saul]* Cp. 1 Kings xxii. 31 ff. The Vulg. has a striking paraphrase: "the whole weight of the battle was directed against Saul," (*totumque pondus praelii versum est in Saul*).

*he was sore wounded]* So the Sept. and Vulg. But the Heb. may also be rendered, "and he was sore afraid." Despair and the fear of insult paralysed his courage. For "of the archers" the Sept. reads "in the abdomen," but the Heb. text is preferable.

4. *Then said Saul, &c.]* Cp. Jud. ix. 54.

*these uncircumcised]* No indignity could be more intolerable than for the sacred person of Jehovah's Anointed to be the butt of the heathen who had no part in His covenant. Cp. xiv. 6.

through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid: therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that *same* day together.

And when the men of Israel that *were* on the *other* side of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the *other* side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

### 8—13. *The burial of Saul and his Sons.*

And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and

*abuse me]* Maltreat me for their own amusement.

*a sword]* **His sword.**

*fell upon it]* This account of Saul's death is obviously inconsistent with that given by the Amalekite (2 Sam. i. 9 ff.). His story was a fabrication. He found the king's corpse on the field, stripped it, and brought the spoil to David in the hope of a reward.

*5. and died with him]* Being answerable for the king's life he feared punishment: or from a nobler motive of true fidelity, refused to survive his master.

*6. and all his men]* The Sept. (B) omits these words. 1 Chron. x. 6 reads "all his house." Probably the soldiers of the royal body guard are meant, who fell fighting round him like Harold's *hus-carls* at the battle of Hastings. If so, there is no difficulty in the escape of Ishbosheth, who probably was not on the field, and of Abner, who as general would not be in attendance on the king's person.

*7. on the other side of the valley]* On the side of the valley (*emek*, see on vi. 13) or plain of Jezreel opposite to the battle-field. The district to the north is meant, in which the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali dwelt. 1 Chron. x. 7 however reads simply "in the valley," and perhaps the phrase only means "on the side of the valley." See next note.

*on the other side Jordan]* This is the usual sense of the Hebrew words. The panic spread even to the eastern side of the Jordan. But possibly the phrase here means "on the side of the Jordan," i.e. in the district between the battle-field and the river; which agrees better with the account of the exploit of the Jabeshites, and the establishment of Ishbosheth's kingdom at Mahanaim. The greater part of the north of Canaan was thus occupied by the Philistines. Note that this clause is omitted in 1 Chron. x. 7.

his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut<sup>9</sup> off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish *it in* the house of their idols, and among the people. And<sup>10</sup> they put his armour *in* the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. And when the<sup>11</sup> inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went<sup>12</sup> all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and

### 8—13. THE BURIAL OF SAUL AND HIS SONS.

**9.** *they cut off his head*] The Anointed of Jehovah fares no better than the uncircumcised Goliath, now that God has forsaken him.

*to publish it*] **To publish the good news.** Sept. εὐαγγελίζοντες. Cp. 2 Sam. i. 20.

*in the house of their idols*] In the temples of their idols, which were regarded as the givers of the victory. Cp. ch. v. 2. Chron. reads "to carry tidings to their idols."

**10.** *the house of Ashtaroth*] See on vii. 3. "This was doubtless the famous temple of Venus in Askalon mentioned by Herodotus (I. 105) as the most ancient of all her temples. Hence the special mention of Askalon in 2 Sam. i. 20." *Speaker's Comm.*

*they fastened his body to the wall*] Together with the bodies of his sons (v. 12). They were hung on the wall in the "open place" (2 Sam. xxi. 12, E. V. *street*) by the gate, that all the passers by might join in exulting over the defeat and disgrace of Israel.

*Beth-shan*] Now *Beisân*, situated in the *Wady Fâlûd* four miles west of the Jordan, "on the brow just where the plain of Jezreel drops down by a rather steep descent some three hundred feet to the level of the Ghôr," or Jordan valley. After the Return from the Captivity it was known as Scythopolis (2 Macc. xii. 29; cp. the Sept. of Jud. i. 27).

In 1 Chr. x. 10 this statement about Saul's body is omitted, and in its place we read that "they fastened his head in the temple of Dagon."

**11.** *the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead*] Mindful of the debt of gratitude they owed to Saul for rescuing them from Nahash (ch. xi.). The isolated round-topped hill on the south side of the *Wady Yâbis*, which has been conjecturally fixed upon as the site of Jabesh, is in full view of Beth-shan (Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 556). The distance over the hills, down into the Jordan valley, and up the *Wady Fâlûd* is not much under twenty miles.

**12.** *burnt them*] Cremation was not a Hebrew practice, but in the present case was probably adopted to avoid the possibility of further insult to the bodies, if the Philistines should take Jabesh. The condensed account in Chronicles omits the mention of the burning.



<sup>13</sup> burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

**13.** *under a tree*] **Under the tamarisk**, some well-known tree at Jabesh. Chron. reads "under the terebinth," (*ēlah*). David removed the bones to the family sepulchre at Zelah (2 Sam. xxi. 12—14).

*fasted seven days*] A sign of general mourning. Cp. 2 Sam. i. 12, iii. 35, &c.

## APPENDIX.

### NOTE I.

#### THE LORD OF HOSTS<sup>1</sup>.

(1) The title *Jehovah Tsebaoth* translated "LORD of hosts" meets us for the first time in the O. T. in 1 Sam. i. 3. In the various forms "LORD of hosts," "LORD God of hosts," "God of hosts," it is found in the books of Samuel (and the parallel passages in 1 Chr.), Kings, the first three books of Psalms, very frequently in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Minor Prophets, but never in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Job, Proverbs, Ezekiel, Daniel.

(2) In the LXX. it is sometimes rendered "Lord of hosts" (*Kύριος δυνάμεων*), sometimes "Lord Almighty" (*Kύριος παντοκράτωρ*), sometimes left untranslated (*Kύριος Σαβαώθ*); and with this latter form "Lord of Sabaoth" we are familiar from Rom. ix. 29; James v. 4; and the Te Deum. The Vulgate renders it *Dominus exercituum*, "Lord of armies," or *Dominus (Deus) virtutum*, "Lord of powers."

(3) What then is the significance of the title? The word translated *hosts* denotes (1) *earthly hosts* or *armies*, as in Ex. vii. 4; Ps. xlv. 9; (2) *heavenly hosts*: either (a) *celestial bodies*, sun moon and stars, as in Gen. ii. 1; Deut. iv. 19; Is. xl. 26; or (b) *celestial beings*, angels, as in Josh. v. 14; 1 Kings xxii. 19; Ps. cxlviii. 2. From the first of these meanings the title has been explained to mean "Lord of the armies of Israel," and regarded "as an expression of the warlike spirit of the age:" in connexion with the second, the title "Lord of the heavenly hosts" has been thought to have originated in a protest against the idolatrous worship of "the host of heaven" already beginning to spread among the people.

(4) Whatever its origin, it should be noted that the title first appears simultaneously with the foundation of the Monarchy. It is used by David in Ps. xxiv. 10, as the loftiest title of Jehovah. May we not then take "hosts" in its widest sense, including both earthly and heavenly hosts, and see in the title a proclamation of the universal sovereignty of Jehovah, needed within the nation, lest that invisible sovereignty should be forgotten in the visible majesty of the king; and outside the nation,

<sup>1</sup> There is an interesting essay on this title in Prof. Plumptre's *Biblical Studies*.

lest Jehovah should be supposed to be merely a national deity? If we understand the title in this larger sense, it includes the idea that the sovereign power was specially exercised on behalf of the covenant people, and that "the LORD of hosts" was "the God of the armies of Israel" (1 Sam. xvii. 45).

(5) For us its significance is well explained by the words of the Te Deum, "Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy Glory." Cp. Is. vi. 3; Rev. iv. 6—11.

## NOTE II.

### ON THE NAME JEHOVAH.

From very early times the sacred name JEHOVAH was never pronounced by the Jews, owing to a mistaken interpretation of Lev. xxiv. 16, which was supposed to prohibit its utterance. In reading the Scriptures they substituted for it *Adônāi*, which means "Lord," except when *Adônāi* is joined with JEHOVAH, in which case *Elôhîm* (= "God") was substituted.

This practice was followed by the LXX. and Vulgate, and in general by the English Version, which however, whenever LORD and GOD represent the Sacred Name, indicates the fact by the use of capital letters.

The true pronunciation is almost certainly lost. JEHOVAH is a combination of the consonants of the Name with the vowels of *Adônāi* which are now written with it in the Hebrew text<sup>1</sup>. Modern grammarians argue that it ought to be read *Yahveh* or *Yahaveh*; but JEHOVAH seems firmly rooted in the English language, and the really important point is not the exact pronunciation, but to bear in mind that it is a Proper Name, not merely an appellative title like Lord. It probably means "The Eternal," or "The Self-existent," the "I AM," and denotes God as the Covenant-God of His people Israel. See Ex. iii. 14.

## NOTE III.

### THE TARGUM ON 1 SAM. II. 1—10.

And Hannah prayed in the spirit of prophecy and said: Behold Samuel my son shall be a prophet over Israel: in his days shall they be delivered from the hand of the Philistines, and by his hands shall be done unto them signs and mighty acts: therefore is my heart strong in the portion which Jehovah hath given me. And likewise Heman the son of Joel, the son of my son Samuel, shall arise with his fourteen sons to chant with psalteries and harps along with their brethren the Levites, to

<sup>1</sup> See Introd. p. 14.



praise in the house of the sanctuary<sup>1</sup>: therefore is my horn exalted in the gift which the Lord hath bestowed on me: and also concerning the miraculous vengeance which shall befall the Philistines, who shall bring the ark of Jehovah in a new cart, and a trespass-offering with it: therefore shall the congregation of Israel say, I will open my mouth to speak great things against mine enemies, because I rejoice in Thy deliverance.

Concerning Sanchêrib [Sennacherib] king of Asshur she prophesied and said, He shall arise with all his host against Jerusalem, and a great sign [miracle] shall be done upon him: the corpses of his armies shall fall there. Therefore shall all the peoples nations and tongues give thanks and say, There is none holy but Jehovah, for there is none beside Thee: and Thy people shall say, There is none strong save our God.

Concerning Nebuchadnezzar king of Babel she prophesied and said, Ye Chaldeans and all peoples who shall bear rule over Israel, ye shall not multiply many great words; blasphemies shall not come forth out of your mouth; for God knoweth all things, and over all His works is His judgment spread: and unto you will He recompense vengeance for your guilt.

Concerning the kingdom of Javan [Greece] she prophesied and said, The bows of the mighty men of Javan shall be broken, and the house of the Hasmoneans<sup>2</sup> who have been weak shall have signs and mighty deeds done for them.

Concerning the sons of Haman she prophesied and said, Those who have been full of bread, and boasting in their riches, and abounding in wealth, have become poor, and have turned to hire themselves out for bread and victual. Mordecai and Esther who were obscure and poor are made rich and have forgotten their poverty, they have become free: so Jerusalem, who hath been as a barren woman, shall be filled with the people of her captivity: and as for guilty Rome<sup>3</sup> which was full and abounding in peoples, her armies shall come to an end, she shall be made desolate and utterly destroyed.

All these are the mighty acts of Jehovah who Himself reigneth over the world, killing and calling to life, bringing down to Sheol, and also causing to come up into the life of the world.

<sup>4</sup>[But Korah the son of Izhar the son of Kohath, from whom my son Samuel is descended, was brought down to Sheol because he arose and strove against Moses and Aaron. The righteous shall go forth out of the house of their destruction, and shall give thanks, because there is no God save Him.]

Jehovah maketh poor and maketh rich, He bringeth low and lifteth up. He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the obscure from the dunghill, to make them sit with the righteous, the great ones of the world: and the throne of glory He maketh them inherit, for before Jehovah are the deeds of the sons of men revealed. Below hath he pre-

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Chr. xxv. 4—6.

<sup>2</sup> i. e. The Maccabees. See *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. *Maccabees*.

<sup>3</sup> So De Lagarde's ed. Walton's Polyglot has *Aram*, a mistake for *Edom*, the name which the later Jews constantly used for their deadly enemy *Rome*.

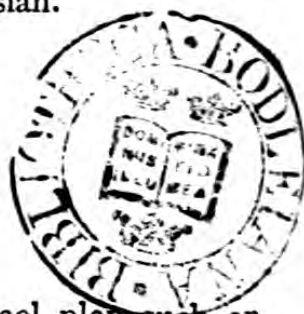
<sup>4</sup> So De Lagarde's ed. Walton does not contain the passage in brackets.

pared Gehenna for the wicked, who transgress His word: and for the righteous who do His will hath He founded the world. The bodies of His righteous servants will He preserve from Gehenna, and the wicked shall be judged in darkness in Gehenna, to shew that there is no man in whom is the strength of innocence for the day of judgment.

Jehovah shall break in pieces His enemies, who arise to do evil to His people. Out of heaven shall he smite them with a loud voice. He shall execute vengeance upon Gog<sup>1</sup> and the army of the plundering peoples who come with him from the ends of the earth, and shall give strength unto His King, and magnify the kingdom of His Messiah.

#### NOTE IV.

#### THE PHILISTINES.



The bitterest and most successful enemies of Israel play such an important part in the history of this period as to require special notice.

(1) *Their origin.* The Philistines, as their name, which signifies 'Immigrants' and is translated by the LXX. ἀλλόφυλοι = *aliens*, imports, were not aboriginal inhabitants of Canaan. They came from Caphtor (Amos ix. 7), and expelled or conquered the Avim who lived in villages in the Shephêlah. (Deut. ii. 23; Josh. xiii. 3). Caphtor has generally been identified with Crete, but there seems good reason for regarding it as a district of Egypt, and Gen. x. 13, 14 places the Philistine among Mizraite or Egyptian races. If so, however, the migration must have taken place before the distinctive national characteristics of the Egyptians had been developed.

(2) *Their country.* They occupied the southern portion of the Shephêlah or Low Country, the maritime plain stretching along the western coast of Canaan, and divided into two parallel tracts of sandy plain and cultivated corn-land. Their territory extended from Ekron on the north to the River of Egypt (the *Wady-el-Arish*) on the south. It was famous for its fertility. "The cities are all remarkable for the extreme beauty and profusion of the gardens which surround them—the scarlet blossoms of the pomegranates, the enormous oranges which gild the green foliage of their famous groves. . . . But the most striking and characteristic feature of Philistia is its immense plain of cornfields, stretching from the edge of the sandy tract right up to the very wall of the hills of Judah, which look down its whole length from north to south. These rich fields must have been the great source at once of the power and value of Philistia. . . . It was, in fact, "a little Egypt" (cp. 2 Kings viii. 2, 3). These are the fields of "standing corn" with "vineyards and olives" amongst them, into which the Danite hero sent down the three hundred jackals from the neighbour-

<sup>1</sup> Walton reads *Magog*. See Ezek. xxxviii. 2, &c.; Rev. xx. 8. In the Targums and Talmud *Gog* and *Magog* denote the final combination of the enemies of the kingdom of God, which is to be destroyed by the Messiah.

ing hills" (Jud. xv. 4). *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 257, 258. But they were not merely an agricultural people. Their geographical position gave them a commercial importance. Their land was the highway for traffic between Phoenicia and Syria on the north, and Egypt and Arabia on the south, and though we find no distinct mention in the Bible of their trade by sea, it is probable that such existed.

(3) *Their government.* At this period the five great strongholds of Gaza, Gath, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron were united in a formidable confederacy. Each was governed by its *seren* or *lord* and had an independent jurisdiction, but common interests bound them together for purposes of offence and defence. The "circles (E. V. borders) of the Philistines" (Josh. xiii. 2; Joel iii. 4) were probably the districts attached to these towns.

(4) *Their history.* Already in the time of Abraham the Philistines appear as a pastoral tribe occupying the land, in occasional rivalry but generally on friendly terms with Abraham (Gen. xxi. 32, xxvi. 1, 14, 20).

By the time of the Exodus they were sufficiently powerful to deter the Israelites from taking the shortest route to the Promised Land (Ex. xiii. 17).

In the division of Canaan, their territory was assigned to the tribe of Judah, which seems temporarily to have occupied Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron (Jud. i. 18), but never really subjugated the people (Josh. xiii. 2, 3; Jud. iii. 3).

About the middle of the period of the Judges their power appears to have increased considerably, which has given rise to the conjecture that they were strengthened by a fresh immigration from their original home. This supposition is unnecessary; the agricultural and commercial advantages of their country, the suitability of its level plain for military manœuvres (1 Sam. xiii. 5), the necessity of a special effort to resist the encroachments of their new neighbours, are quite sufficient to account for this development.

They now became a constant source of annoyance to the Israelites, establishing strong posts and making predatory raids, so that there was no security for life or property. Cp. Jud. v. 6; 1 Sam. xxiii. 1. The first hint of their active hostility is in connexion with Shamgar (Jud. iii. 31): and somewhat later they reduced the Israelites to the condition of tributary vassals (1 Sam. iv. 9). Samson's heroic exploits relieve the disgrace of a forty years' submission: but after his death, and the capture of the Ark, the nation seems to have resigned itself to despair till Samuel rallied their scattered energies, and routed the Philistines at Ebenezer. But their power was not broken; Saul was constantly at war with them, and met his death fighting against them on the fatal field of Gilboa. David captured Gath (1 Chr. xviii. 1), and Solomon included Philistia in his empire (1 Kings iv. 21, 24 Azzah=Gaza). But the Division of the Kingdom was the signal for the revival of their power, and they continued enemies of both kingdoms to the end. It was not till after the time of the Maccabees that their national existence finally came to an end, and Philistia was at length annexed to the Roman province of Syria.



Two notices in profane history may be mentioned to illustrate the strength and importance of the Philistine cities. Ashdod held out against Psammitichus king of Egypt for twenty-nine years, about 630 B.C. (i.e. in the reign of Josiah), "the longest siege," says Herodotus, "of any that we know" (Herod. II. 157). Three hundred years later Gaza dared to challenge the triumphant progress of Alexander the Great, and baffled all the efforts of his engineers to take it for at least two months. See Grote's *Hist. of Greece*, ch. XCIII.

(5) By a strange irony of fate the name of the territory of the detested Philistines has become our familiar title for the whole of the Holy Land. *Palestine* is a Greek form of *Pelesheth*, the Hebrew for Philistia, and the name of the district with which Greek traders became familiar through Philistine commerce gradually came to be applied to the whole country of Canaan. In the E. V. "Palestine" is only used as synonymous with Philistia, and though its modern and extended meaning appears already in Shakespeare, the limited meaning survived till the time of Milton, who speaks of Dagon as "that twice battered god of Palestine." (*Hymn on the Nativity*, 199.)

#### NOTE V.

##### ON THE EXTERMINATING WARS OF THE ISRAELITES.

The "moral difficulty" of the exterminating wars of the Israelites is admirably treated by Professor Mozley in his lectures on the Old Testament entitled *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*. (See especially Lectures IV and X). Such wars, involving the innocent along with the guilty in a common destruction, are incompatible not only with the Law of Love but with the Idea of Justice taught by the Gospel. How, it is asked, could they ever have been commanded by God? "It is replied that God is the Author of life and death, and that He has the right at any time to deprive any number of His creatures of life, whether by the natural instrumentality of pestilence or famine, or by the express employment of man as His instrument of destruction<sup>1</sup>. This as an abstract defence is unquestionably true, nor can it be denied that as soon as a Divine command to exterminate a whole people becomes known to another people, they have not only the right, but are under the strictest obligation to execute such a command<sup>2</sup>." To some minds such a command seems strange and perplexing, but it must be remembered that there are times when a signal demonstration of Divine Justice is needed for mankind in the interests of morality; that there are times when stern judgment is the truest mercy; and that the penalty of premature physical death is by no means the most terrible fate which can overtake men even in this world.

<sup>1</sup> This is Butler's defence in his *Analogy*, Part II. ch. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ruling Ideas*, p. 84.

But the difficulty still remains, how a nation could be convinced that it was to be the executioner of God's judgments, and how it could execute them in so terrible a way without injury to its moral consciousness.

The solution is to be found in the defective Oriental idea of Justice. The destruction of a nation for the sin of its ancestors, or of a family for the offence of its head, was a common Oriental practice. It was not repugnant to the current sense of right; rather it satisfied a certain passionate excess of justice, which craved for vengeance and desired to vent itself on the criminal's surroundings as well as himself. This indiscriminating kind of vengeance was due to the defective sense of human individuality, the want of a true perception of the rights and responsibilities of each man as an independent being. This feeling was no doubt shared by the Israelites. But with them such acts were expressly prohibited as a part of ordinary judicial procedure (Deut. xxiv. 16), and in this respect they were on a higher level than other Oriental nations. But when God saw fit by the mouth of a prophet who was recognised as His accredited messenger to enjoin the execution of such a sentence, there was no moral resistance to it. It could be accepted without hesitation as coming from God, and executed without any violation of their sense of justice.

Such commands were an "accommodation" to the moral and religious state of the nation to which they were given. Revelation is progressive, and God's dealings with the chosen people, while designed to raise and educate them, were necessarily conditioned by their moral state at any given period. It need hardly be said that such commands are inconceivable under the Gospel dispensation. The fanatics of the seventeenth century, who sought to justify regicide by the example of Samuel and Agag, "knew not what spirit they were of."

## NOTE VI.

### ON THE TEXT OF CHAPTERS XVII. AND XVIII.

1. The Septuagint Version in its oldest form as preserved in the Vatican MS. (B) differs considerably from the present Hebrew text in chapters xvii. and xviii. It does not contain the following passages: xvii. 12—31, 41, 48 (partly), 50, 55—58; xviii. 1—5, and the greater part of 6, 9—11, 17—19, 29 b, 30. There are besides a few minor variations.

Some of these passages are wanting in a few other MSS. beside B: in the Alexandrine (A) and most other MSS. they have been inserted: but it is clear that at least xvii. 12—31 was not in the archetype from which A was copied, and the style of the version proves conclusively that it is no part of the original Septuagint, but derived from some other source, perhaps the version of Theodotion, which was executed in the second century A. D.

The result of these omissions is a straightforward and consistent narrative free from the difficulties of the Hebrew text. David, in virtue of his appointment as armour-bearer (xvi. 21) has accompanied Saul into the valley of Elah: he challenges and slays Goliath, and on his return at the close of the campaign is welcomed by the songs of the women of Israel: by his further military successes he wins the affections of the people and the love of Michal. Three stages in the development of Saul's enmity are clearly marked: (a) xviii. 12, "he was afraid of him;" (b) xviii. 15, "he stood in awe of him," and endeavoured indirectly to get rid of him; (c) xviii. 29, xix. 1, "he was yet more afraid of David," and gave orders for his murder.

2. The Hebrew text, on the other hand, presents serious internal difficulties, and appears to combine two inconsistent accounts of David's introduction to the court of Saul. Ch. xvi. 19 ff. relates how David was summoned to court for his musical skill, won Saul's affection, and became his armour-bearer: whereas in ch. xvii. we find him absent from the army in time of war, and only accidentally brought to the camp by an errand to his brothers: regarded as a mere shepherd-boy unaccustomed to the use of weapons: unknown apparently to the king and to Abner.

Minor objections are (a) that the notice of Jesse in ch. xvii. 12 ff. appears superfluous after that in ch. xvi., and the Hebrew shews evident signs of having been pieced together at this point: (b) that the anticipation in xviii. 5 of facts which are recorded in their natural order in *vv.* 13, 14 is strange: (c) that Saul's threat to murder David on the very day after their return appears premature, and is inconsistent with his subsequent promotion of him: (d) that the marriage of Merab to Adriel is involved in some doubt, for in 2 Sam. xxi. 8 the Heb. reads "the five sons of Michal...whom *she* bare to Adriel."

3. The following explanations of the chief difficulties have been offered. (1) That David's residence at the court related in xvi. 22 was not permanent; he was only summoned when Saul's madness required his services; and the notice "he became his armour-bearer" refers to what happened eventually after the slaughter of Goliath; the writer, according to a common practice of Hebrew historians, anticipating the course of events. (2) That Saul's ignorance may be accounted for by supposing that he had only seen David in his fits of madness, and possibly not for some time, and so failed to recognise him; while Abner would not be likely to trouble himself to inquire about the family of a minstrel-boy in occasional attendance on the king. (3) According to another hypothesis, Saul's inquiry in xvii. 55 ff. concerns not David but his father, and does not shew any want of recognition of David, but was prompted by the wish to ascertain "whether his coming of any warrior lineage might justify some hope of a prosperous issue of the unequal conflict;" or by a desire to know the parentage of his future son-in-law. (4) Another theory assumes that the events of ch. xvi. were really subsequent to those of ch. xvii.; and in support of this view stress is laid upon the expression "man of war" applied to David in xvi. 18. But this explanation is incompatible with xviii. 2, which definitely states that David's residence at court after the slaughter of Goliath was continuous.



4. The most probable conclusion appears to be that the Septuagint preserves the text of these chapters in the form in which it was originally published, and that at some subsequent date the additions now found in the Hebrew text were made from a different source, either documentary or traditional. It is unlikely that the Septuagint translators would have been guilty of a deliberate mutilation of the text; and still more unlikely that a number of intentional omissions would have resulted in a simple and connected narrative, if the Hebrew text was originally a homogeneous whole, derived from the same source or written by one hand.

5. The historical value of these additions must remain a moot question. Perhaps the two narratives might be satisfactorily harmonized if we had all the facts before us: as it is, the difficulties must be candidly acknowledged.

It may seem to some readers rash to doubt the integrity of the Hebrew text. But it must be borne in mind that the Septuagint is by far the most ancient evidence we possess for the text of the O.T., the oldest known Hebrew MS. not being earlier than the 10th (or possibly 9th) century A.D., and that though the additions to the Hebrew text were doubtless made before the Christian era, the Greek Scriptures used by the Evangelists and Apostles in all probability did not contain the passages of which the genuineness is suspected.

#### NOTE VII.

#### ON THE NARRATIVES OF CHAPTERS XXIII. 19—XXIV. 22 AND XXVI.

The striking resemblance of the narrative of ch. xxvi. in many points to that of ch. xxiii. 19—xxiv. 22 has led some commentators to suppose that it is only a more detailed account of the same event. The main points of agreement between the narratives are (*a*) the conduct of the Ziphites; (*b*) Saul's pursuit of David; (*c*) David's generous refusal to take Saul's life. Besides these there are several minor coincidences both of circumstance and language.

But on the other hand (*a*) there is no great improbability in supposing that David twice occupied a convenient position in the hill of Hachilah, and was twice betrayed by the Ziphites. (*b*) Saul, it is said, must have been "a moral monster" deliberately to repeat his pursuit of David under the same circumstances. To this it may be answered that all the history proves Saul to have been fickle and untrustworthy. (*c*) David may well have spared Saul's life on two different occasions. (*d*) It is only natural that in the accounts of two similar events there should be several close coincidences.

Further, if the narratives are closely examined, it will be found that the differences outweigh the resemblances, and the difficulty of reconciling the narratives, if they refer to the same occurrence, is far greater than that of supposing that somewhat similar events happened twice,

during a pursuit which lasted several years, and was confined to a small district. The following points should be noticed.

(a) The section xxiii. 19—xxiv. 22 contains a narrative of what took place upon two distinct occasions, separated by Saul's being called away to repel a Philistine raid (xxiii. 27); here there is no indication of such an interval between Saul's arrival at Hachilah and David's visit to his camp.

(b) *The scene* of the interview is different in each case. Here it is the camp at Hachilah: there a cave at En-gedi.

(c) *The circumstances* differ. Here David deliberately enters Saul's camp and takes his spear, &c.: there he accidentally gets Saul into his power in the cave in which he was concealed, and deprives him of the lappet of his robe.

(d) *The persons* concerned here are mentioned by name: there only "the men" in general are spoken of.

(e) *The point of the conversation* is different: here Saul only uses general language; there he acknowledges that David will be king and exacts an oath from him: here David indignantly demands to know why he is persecuted; there he lays stress on his having spared the king's life as a proof of his innocence.

(f) The general circumstances of this narrative correspond to a later period of David's life, when David was bolder, and Saul more hardened; and it would appear from xxvii. 1 that this pursuit was the final act of persecution which drove David to quit the country and take refuge at Gath.

## NOTE VIII.

### ON THE NARRATIVE OF CHAPTER XXVIII. 7 ff.

Does the scene in the witch of Endor's house describe a real apparition, or an imposture? In the former case, was it (1) Samuel himself who appeared and spoke, or (2) a demon counterfeiting the form of Samuel? In the latter case, (3) was the woman self-deceived, or (4) did she deliberately impose upon Saul?

(1) That the spirit of Samuel himself appeared was the view of the ancient Jewish church. This is attested (a) by the Sept. addition in 1 Chr. x. 13; "Saul asked counsel of her that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of her; and Samuel made answer to him: (b) by the book of Ecclesiasticus (xlv. 20); "After his death [Samuel] prophesied, and shewed the king his end, and lifted up his voice from the earth in prophecy:" (c) by Josephus; and the generality of Jewish commentators.

The same opinion was maintained by early Christian writers, e.g. Justin Martyr, Origen, Augustine, and others.

Unquestionably it is the plain and natural meaning of the narrative. The expressions in v. 15, "Samuel said to Saul;" v. 16, "Then said Samuel;" v. 20, "the words of Samuel;" leave no doubt of this.

The objection however is made that it is impossible to believe that God would have allowed the witch to call up the spirit of Samuel. This objection has some weight. But it does not appear that his appearance is to be regarded as the result of the witch's incantations. "None was more amazed at the success of her necromancies than the sorceress herself." It was not the witch who compelled Samuel to appear but God who sent the spirit of His servant to confound her, and to punish the king and pronounce final sentence on him for his sins. The apparition was a fulfilment of God's words by the prophet Ezekiel (xiv. 4, 7); "Every one of the house of Israel...which separateth himself from Me, and setteth up his idols in his heart...and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me; I the LORD will answer him by myself."

(2) The view that the appearance of Samuel was a diabolical delusion appears first in Tertullian, who says: "The pythonic spirit was permitted to assume the form of Samuel, for it is inconceivable that the soul of any saint, much less of a prophet, was drawn forth by a demon" (*De anima* c. 57). Jerome followed him; and the theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, led by Luther and Calvin, held the same opinion, arguing that it was impossible that God should have allowed His prophet to be the victim of diabolical sorceries. This view starts from *a priori* reasoning as to what is possible and what is not, instead of taking the plain sense of the narrative: and the difficulty on which it is based has been answered above.

(3) A modern hypothesis supposes that the witch wrought herself into a state of ecstasy in which she deceived herself into imagining that she saw Samuel, and heard him speak. But though this may have been the usual character of her sorceries, it would appear that on the present occasion the apparition was of a character for which she was not prepared; and though it is not certain that Saul saw the figure of Samuel, the dialogue is carried on between them directly, without the witch's intervention.

(4) Another theory regards the affair as a deliberate imposture practised upon Saul by the witch, who pretended to see Samuel when she really saw nothing, and contrived to make Saul believe that her own voice or that of a confederate was the voice of Samuel. This view finds no support in the narrative, which implies throughout that the sentence of doom pronounced upon Saul was a true prophecy; and it destroys the dread significance of the whole transaction.





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