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Preface

An Exposition, With Practical Observations, of The First Book of Chronicles

In common things repetition is thought needless and nauseous; but, in sacred things, *precept must be upon precept and line upon line*. To me, says the apostle, *to write the same things is not grievous, but for you it is safe*, Phil. 3:1. These books of Chronicles are in a great measure repetition; so are much of the second and third of the four evangelists: and yet there are no tautologies either here or there no *vain repetitions*. We may be ready to think that of all the books of holy scripture we could best spare these two books of Chronicles. Perhaps we might, and yet we could ill spare them: for there are many most excellent useful things in them, which we find not elsewhere. And as for what we find here which we have already met with, 1. It might be of great use to those who lived when these books were first published, before the canon of the Old Testament was completed and the particles of it put together; for it would remind them of what was more fully related in the other books. Abstracts, abridgments, and references, are of use in divinity as well as law. That, perhaps, may not be said in vain which yet has been said before. 2. It is still of use, that *out of the mouth of two witnesses every word may be established*, and, being inculcated, may be remembered. The penman of these books is supposed to be Ezra, that *ready scribe in the law of the Lord*, Ezra 7:6. It is a groundless story of that apocryphal writer (2 Esdr. 14:21, etc.) that, all the law being burnt, Ezra was divinely inspired to write it all over again, which yet might take rise from the books of Chronicles, where we find, though not all the same story repeated, yet the names of all those who were the subjects of that story. These books are called in the Hebrew *words of days*—journals or annals, because, by divine direction, collected out of some public and authentic records. The collection was made after the captivity, and yet the language of the originals, written before, it sometimes retained, as 2 Chr. 5:9, *there it is unto this day*, which must have been written before the destruction of the temple. The Septuagint calls it a book *Paraleipomenon*—of *things left*, or overlooked, by the preceding historians; and several such things there are in it. It is the rerecord, the gathering host, of this sacred camp, which gathers up what remained, that nothing might be lost. In this first book we have, I. A collection of sacred genealogies, from Adam to David: and they are none of those which the apostle calls *endless genealogies*, but have their use and end in Christ, ch. 1-9. Divers little passages of history are here inserted which we had not before. II. A repetition of the history of the translation of the kingdom from Saul to David, and of the triumph of David's reign, with large additions, ch. 10-21. III. An original account of the settlement David made of the ecclesiastical affairs, and the preparation he made for the building of the temple, ch. 22-29. These are *words of days*, of the oldest days, of the best days, of the Old-Testament church. The reigns of kings and dates of kingdoms, as well as the lives of common persons, are reckoned by *days*; for a little time often gives a great turn, and yet all time is nothing to eternity.

Chapter 1

This chapter and many that follow it repeat the genealogies we have hitherto met with in the sacred history, and put them all together, with considerable additions. We may be tempted, it may be, to think it would have been well if they had not been written, because, when they come to be compared with other parallel places, there are differences found, which we can scarcely accommodate to our satisfaction; yet we must not therefore stumble at the word, but bless God that the things necessary to salvation are plain enough. And since the wise God has thought fit to write these things to us, we should not pass them over unread. All scripture is profitable, though not all alike profitable; and we may take occasion for good thoughts and meditations even from those parts of scripture that do not furnish so much matter for profitable remarks as some other parts. These genealogies, 1. Were then of great use, when they were here preserved, and put into the hands of the Jews after their return from Babylon; for the captivity, like the deluge, had put all into confusion, and they, in that dispersion and despair, would be in danger of losing the distinctions of their tribes and families. This therefore revives the ancient landmarks even of some of the tribes that were carried captive into Assyria. Perhaps it might invite the Jews to study the sacred writings which had been neglected, to find the names of their ancestors, and the rise of their families in them. 2. They are still of some use for the illustrating of the scripture-story, and especially for the clearing of the pedigrees of the Messiah, that it might appear that our blessed Saviour was, according to the prophecies which went before of him, the son of David, the son of Judah, the son of Abraham, the son of Adam. And, now that he has come for whose sake these registers were preserved, the Jews since have so lost all their genealogies that even that of the priests, the most sacred of all, is forgotten, and they know not of any one man in the world that can prove himself of the house of Aaron. When the building is reared the scaffolds are removed. When the promised Seed has come the line that was to lead to him is broken off. In this chapter we have an abstract of all the genealogies in the book of Genesis, till we come to Jacob. I. The descents from Adam to Noah and his sons, out of Gen. 5, (v. 1-4). II. The posterity of Noah's sons, by which the earth was repopled, out of Gen. 10, (v. 5-23). III. The descents from Shem to Abraham, out of Gen. 11, (v. 24-28). IV. The posterity of Ishmael, and of Abraham's sons by Keturah, out of Gen. 25, (v. 29-35). V. The posterity of Esau, out of Gen. 36, (v. 36-54). These, it is likely, were passed over lightly in Genesis; and therefore, according to the law of the school, we are made to go over that lesson again which we did not learn well.

Verses 1-27

This paragraph has *Adam* for its first word and *Abraham* for its last. Between the creation of the former and the birth of the latter were 2000 years, almost the one-half of which time Adam himself lived. Adam was the common father of our flesh, Abraham the common father of the faithful. By the breach which the former made of the covenant of innocency, we were all made miserable; by the covenant of grace made with the latter, we all are, or may be, made happy. We all are, by nature, the seed of Adam, branches of that wild olive. Let us see to it that, by faith, we become the seed of Abraham (Rom. 4:11, 12), that we be grafted into the good olive and partake of its root and fatness.

I. The first four verses of this paragraph, and the last four, which are linked together by Shem (v. 4, 24), contain the sacred line

of Christ from Adam to Abraham, and are inserted in his pedigree, Lu. 3:34–38, the order ascending as here it descends. This genealogy proves the falsehood of that reproach, *As for this man, we know not whence he is*. Bishop Patrick well observes here that, a genealogy being to be drawn of the families of the Jews, this appears as the peculiar glory of the Jewish nation, that they alone were able to derive their pedigree from the first man that God created, which no other nation pretended to, but abused themselves and their posterity with fabulous accounts of their originals, the Arcadians fancying that they were before the moon, the people of Thessaly that they sprang from stones, the Athenians that they grew out of the earth, much like the vain imaginations which some of the philosophers had of the origin of the universe. The account which the holy scripture gives both of the creation of the world and of the rise of nations carries with it as clear evidences of its own truth as those idle traditions do of their own vanity and falsehood.

II. All the verses between repeat the account of the replenishing of the earth by the sons of Noah after the flood. 1. The historian begins with those who were strangers to the church, the sons of Japhet, who were planted in the isles of the Gentiles, those western parts of the world, the countries of Europe. Of these he gives a short account (v. 5-7), because with these the Jews had hitherto had little or no dealings. 2. He proceeds to those who had many of them been enemies to the church, the sons of Ham, who moved southward towards Africa and those parts of Asia which lay that way. Nimrod the son of Cush began to be an oppressor, probably to the people of God in his time. But Mizraim, from whom came the Egyptians, and Canaan, from whom came the Canaanites, are both of them names of great note in the Jewish story; for with their descendants the Israel of God had severe struggles to get out of the land of Egypt and into the land of Canaan; and therefore the branches of Mizraim are particularly recorded (v. 11, 12), and of Canaan, v. 13–16. See at what a rate God valued Israel when he gave *Egypt for their ransom* (Isa. 43:3), and cast out all these nations before them, Ps. 70:8. 3. He then gives an account of those that were the ancestors and allies of the church, the posterity of Shem, v. 17–23. These peopled Asia, and spread themselves eastward. The Assyrians, Syrians, Chaldeans, Persians, and Arabians, descended from these. At first the originals of the respective nations were known; but at this day, we have reason to think, the nations are so mingled with one another, by the enlargement of commerce and dominion, the transplanting of colonies, the carrying away of captives, and many other circumstances, that no one nation, no, nor the greatest part of any, is descended entire from any one of these fountains. Only this we are sure of, that God has *created of one blood all nations of men*; they have all descended from one Adam, one Noah. *Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?* Mal. 2:10. Our register hastens to the line of Abraham, breaking off abruptly from all the other families of the sons of Noah but that of Arphaxad, from whom Christ was to come. The great promise of the Messiah (says bishop Patrick) was translated from Adam to Seth, from him to Shem, from him to Eber, and so to the Hebrew nation, who were entrusted, above all nations, with that sacred treasure, till the promise was performed and the Messiah had come, and then that nation was made *not a people*.

Verses 28-54

All nations but the seed of Abraham are already shaken off from this genealogy: they have no part nor lot in this matter. *The Lord's portion is his people*. Of them he keeps an account, knows them by name; but those who are strangers to him he beholds

afar off. Not that we are to conclude that therefore no particular persons of any other nation but the seed of Abraham found favour with God. It was a truth, before Peter perceived it, *that in every nation he that feared God and wrought righteousness was accepted of him*. Multitudes will be brought to heaven out of *all nations* (Rev. 7:9), and we are willing to hope there were many, very many, good people in the world, that lay out of the pale of God's covenant of peculiarity with Abraham, whose names were in the book of life, though not descended from any of the following families written in this book. *The Lord knows those that are his*. But Israel was a chosen nation, elect in type; and no other nation, in its national capacity, was so dignified and privileged as the Jewish nation was. That is the holy nation which is the subject of the sacred story; and therefore we are next to shake off all the seed of Abraham but the posterity of Jacob only, which were all incorporated into one nation and joined to the Lord, while the other descendants from Abraham, for aught that appears, were estranged both from God and from one another.

I. We shall have little to say of the *Ishmaelites*. They were the sons of the bondwoman, that were to be cast out and not to be heirs with the child of the promise; and their case was to represent that of the unbelieving Jews, who were rejected (Gal. 4:22, etc.), and therefore there is little notice taken of that nation. Ishmael's twelve sons are just named here (v. 29–31), to show the performance of the promise God made to Abraham, in answer to his prayer for him, that, for Abraham's sake, he should become a great nation, and particularly that he should beget twelve princes, Gen. 17:20.

II. We shall have little to say of the *Midianites*, who descended from Abraham's children by Keturah. They were *children of the east* (probably Job was one of them), and were separated from Isaac, the heir of the promise (Gen. 25:6), and therefore they are only named here, v. 32. The sons of Jokshan, the son of Keturah, are named also, and the sons of Midian (v. 32, 33), who became most eminent, and perhaps gave denomination to all these families, as Judah to the Jews.

III. We shall not have much to say of the *Edomites*. They had an inveterate enmity to God's Israel; yet because they descended from Esau, the son of Isaac, we have here an account of their families, and the names of some of their famous men, v. 35 to the end. Some slight differences there are between some of the names here, and as we had them in Gen. 36, whence this whole account is taken. Three of four names that were written with a *Vau* there are written with a *Jod* here, probably the pronunciation being altered, as is usual in other languages. we now write many words very differently from what they were written but 200 years ago. Let us take occasion, from the reading of these genealogies, to think, 1. Of the multitudes that have gone through this world, have acted their part in it, and then quitted it. Job, even in his early day, saw not only *every man drawing after him*, but *innumerable before him*, Job 21:33. All these, and all theirs, had their day; many of them made a mighty noise and figure in the world; but their day came to fall, and their place knew them no more. The paths of death are trodden paths, but *vestigia nulla retrorsum*—*none can retrace their steps*. 2. Of the providence of God, which keeps up the generations of men, and so preserves that degenerate race, though guilty and obnoxious, in being upon earth. How easily could he cut it off without either a deluge or a conflagration! Write but all the children of men childless, as some are, and in a few years the earth will be eased of the burden under which it groans; but the divine patience lets the trees that cumber the ground not only grow, but propagate. As one generation, even of sinful men, passes away, another comes (Eccl. 1:4; Num. 32:14), and

will do so while the earth remains. *Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.*

Chapter 2

We have now come to what was principally intended, the register of the children of Israel, that distinguished people, that were to "dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations." Here we have, I. The names of the twelve sons of Israel (v. 1, 2). II. An account of the tribe of Judah, which has the precedency, not so much for the sake of David as for the sake of the Son of David, our Lord, who sprang out of Judah, Heb. 7:14. 1. The first descendants from Judah, down to Jesse (v. 3–12). 2. The children of Jesse (v. 13–17). 3. The posterity of Hezron, not only through Ram, from whom David came, but through Caleb (v. 18–20), Segub (v. 21–24), Jerahmeel (v. 25–33, and so to v. 41), and more by Caleb (v. 42–49), with the family of Caleb the son of Hur (v. 50–55). The best exposition we can have of this and the following chapters, and which will give the clearest view of them, is found in those genealogical tables which were published with some of the first impressions of the last English Bible about 100 years ago, and continued for some time; and it is a pity but they were revived in some of our later editions, for they are of great use to those who diligently search the scriptures. They are said to be drawn up by that great master in scripture-learning, Mr. Hugh Broughton. We meet with them sometimes in old Bibles.

Verses 1-17

Here is, I. The family of Jacob. His twelve sons are here named, that illustrious number so often celebrated almost throughout the whole Bible, from the first to the last book of it. At every turn we meet with the twelve tribes that descended from these twelve patriarchs. The personal character of several of them was none of the best (the first four were much blemished), and yet the covenant was entailed on their seed; for it was of grace, free grace, that it was said, *Jacob have I loved—not of works, lest any man should boast.*

II. The family of Judah. That tribe was most praised, most increased, and most dignified, of any of the tribes, and therefore the genealogy of it is the first and largest of them all. In the account here given of the first branches of that illustrious tree, of which Christ was to be the top branch, we meet, 1. With some that were very bad. Here is Er, Judah's eldest son, that was *evil in the sight of the Lord*, and was cut off, in the beginning of his days, by a stroke of divine vengeance: *The Lord slew him*, v. 3. His next brother, Onan, was no better, and fared no better. Here is Tamar, with whom Judah, her father-in-law, committed incest, v. 4. And here is Achan, called *Achar—a troubler*, that troubled Israel by taking of the accursed thing, v. 7. Note, The best and most honourable families may have those belonging to them that are blemishes. 2. With some that were very wise and good, as Heman and Ethan, Calcol and Dara, who were not perhaps the immediate sons of Zerah, but descendants from him, and are named because they were the glory of their father's house; for, when the Holy Ghost would magnify the wisdom of Solomon, he declares him wiser than these four men, who, though the sons of Mahol, are called Ezrahites, from Zerah, 1 Ki. 4:31. That four brothers should be eminent for wisdom and grace was a rare thing. 3. With some that were very great, as Nahshon, who was prince of the tribe of Judah when the camp of Israel was formed in the wilderness, and so led the van in that glorious march, and Salman, or Salmon, who was in that post of honour when they entered into Canaan, v. 10, 11.

III. The family of Jesse, of which a particularly account is kept for the sake of David, and the Son of David, who is *a rod out of*

the stem of Jesse, Isa. 11:1. Hence it appears that David was a seventh son, and that his three great commanders, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, were the sons of one of his sisters, and Amasa of another. Three of the four went down slain to the pit, though they were the terror of the mighty.

Verses 18-55

The persons mentioned in the former paragraph are most of them such as we read of, and most of them such as we read much of, in other scriptures; but very few of those to whom this paragraph relates are mentioned any where else. It should seem, the tribe of Judah were more full and exact in their genealogies than any other of the tribes, in which we must acknowledge a special providence, for the clearing of the genealogy of Christ. 1. Here we find Bezaleel, who was head-workman in building the tabernacle, Ex. 31:2. 2. Hezron, who was the son of Pharez (v. 5), was the father of all this progeny, his sons, Caleb and Jerahmeel, being very fruitful, and he himself likewise, even in his old age, for he left his wife pregnant when he died, v. 24. This Hezron was one of the seventy that went down with Jacob into Egypt, Gen. 46:12. There his family thus increased, as other oppressed families there did. We cannot but suppose that he died during the Israelites' bondage in Egypt; and yet it is here said he died in Caleb-Ephratah (that is, Bethlehem), in the land of Canaan, v. 24. Perhaps, though the body of the people continued in Egypt, yet some that were more active than the rest, at least before their bondage came to be extreme, visited Canaan sometimes and got footing there, though afterwards they lost it. The achievements of Jair, here mentioned (v. 22, 23), we had an account of in Num. 32:41; and, it is supposed, they were long after the conquest of Canaan. The Jews say, Hezron married his third wife when he was sixty years old (v. 21), and another afterwards (v. 24), because he had a great desire of posterity in the family of Pharez, from whom the Messiah was to descend. 3. Here is mention of one that *died without children* (v. 30), and another (v. 32), and of one that *had no sons, but daughters*, v. 34. Let those that are in any of these ways afflicted not think their case new or singular. Providence orders these affairs of families by an incontestable sovereignty, as pleaseth him, giving children, or withholding them, or giving all of one sex. He is not bound to please us, but we are bound to acquiesce in his good pleasure. To those that love him he will himself be better than ten sons, and give them in his house a place and a name better than of sons and daughters. Let not those therefore that are written childless envy the families that are built up and replenished. Shall our eye be evil because God's is good? 4. Here is mention of one who had an only daughter, and married her to his servant an Egyptian, v. 34, 35. If it be mentioned to his praise, we must suppose that this Egyptian was proselyted to the Jewish religion and that he was very eminent for wisdom and virtue, otherwise it would not have become a true-born Israelite to match a daughter to him, especially an only daughter. If Egyptians become converts, and servants do worthily, neither their parentage nor their servitude should be a bar to their preferment. Such a one this Egyptian servant might be that she who married him might live as happily with him as if she had married one of the rulers of her tribe. 5. The pedigree of several of these terminates, not in a person, but in a place or country, as one is said to be *the father of Kirjath-jearim* (v. 50), another of Bethlehem (v. 51), which was afterwards David's city, because these places fell to their lot in the division of the land. 6. here are some that are said to be *families of scribes* (v. 55), such as kept up learning in their family, especially scripture-learning, and taught the people the good knowledge of God. Among all these great families we are glad to find some that were *families*

of scribes. Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets—all the families of Israel families of scribes, well instructed to the kingdom of heaven, and able to bring out of their treasury things new and old!

Chapter 3

Of all the families of Israel none was so illustrious as the family of David. That is the family which was mentioned in the foregoing chapter (v. 15). Here we have a full account of it. I. David's sons (v. 1-9). II. His successors in the throne as long as the kingdom continued (v. 10-16). III. The remains of his family in and after the captivity (v. 17-24). From this family, "as concerning the flesh, Christ came."

Verses 1-9

We had an account of David's sons, 2 Sa. 3:2, etc., and 5:14, etc. 1. He had many sons; and no doubt wrote as he thought, Ps. 127:5. *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of these arrows.* 2. Some of them were a grief to him, as Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah; and we do not read of any of them that imitated his piety or devotion except Solomon, and he came far short of it. 3. One of them, which Bath-sheba bore to him, he called Nathan, probably in honour of Nathan the prophet, who reproved him for his sin in that matter and was instrumental to bring him to repentance. It seems he loved him the better for it as long as he lived. It is wisdom to esteem those our best friends that deal faithfully with us. From this son of David our Lord Jesus descended, as appears Lu. 3:31. 4. Here are two Elishamas, and two Eliphelets, v. 6, 8. Probably the two former were dead, and therefore David called two more by their names, which he would not have done if there had been any ill omen in this practice as some fancy. 5. David had many concubines; but their children are not named, as not worthy of the honour (v. 9), the rather because the concubines had dealt treacherously with David in the affair of Absalom. 6. Of all David's sons Solomon was chosen to succeed him, perhaps not for any personal merits (his wisdom was God's gift), but so, *Father, because it seemed good unto thee.*

Verses 10-24

David having nineteen sons, we may suppose them to have raised many noble families in Israel whom we never hear of in the history. But the scripture gives us an account only of the descendants of Solomon here, and of Nathan, Lu. 3. The rest had the honour to be the sons of David; but these only had the honour to be related to the Messiah. The sons of Nathan were his fathers as man, the sons of Solomon his predecessors as king. We have here, 1. The great and celebrated names by which the line of David is drawn down to the captivity, the kings of Judah in a lineal succession, the history of whom we have had at large in the two books of Kings and shall meet with again in the second book of Chronicles. Seldom has a crown gone in a direct line from father to son for seventeen descents together, as here. This was the recompence of David's piety. About the time of the captivity the lineal descent was interrupted, and the crown went from one brother to another and from a nephew to an uncle, which was a presage of the eclipsing of the glory of that house. 2. The less famous, and most of them very obscure, names, in which the house of David subsisted after the captivity. The only famous man of that house that we meet with at their return from captivity was Zerubbabel, elsewhere called *the son of Salathiel*, but appearing here to be his grandson (v. 17-19), which is usual in scripture. Belshazzar is called *Nebuchadnezzar's son*, but was his grandson. Salathiel is said to be *the son of Jeconiah* because adopted by him, and because, as some think, he succeeded him in the dignity to which he was restored by

Evil-merodach. Otherwise Jeconiah was written childless: he was *the signet God plucked from his right hand* (Jer. 22:24), and in his room Zerubbabel was placed, and therefore God saith to him (Hag. 2:23), *I will make thee as a signet*. The posterity of Zerubbabel here bear not the same names that they do in the genealogies (Mt. 1, or Lu. 3), but those no doubt were taken from the then herald's office, the public registers which the priests kept of all the families of Judah, especially that of David. The last person named in this chapter is Anani, of whom bishop Patrick says that the Targum adds these words, *He is the king Messiah, who is to be revealed*, and some of the Jewish writers give this reason, because it is said (Dan. 7:13), the son of man came *gnim gnanani—with the clouds of heaven*. The reason indeed is very foreign and far-fetched; but that learned man thinks it may be made use of as an evidence that their minds were always full of the thoughts of the Messiah and that they expected it would not be very long after the days of Zerubbabel before the set time of his approach would come.

Chapter 4

In this chapter we have, I. A further account of the genealogies of the tribe of Judah, the most numerous and most famous of all the tribes. The posterity of Shobal the son of Hur (v. 1-4), of Ashur the posthumous son of Hezron (who was mentioned, 2:24), with something particular concerning Jabez (v. 5-10), of Chelub and others (v. 11-20), of Shelah (v. 21-23). II. An account of the posterity and cities of Simeon, their conquest of Gedon, and of the Amalekites in Mount Seir (v. 24-43).

Verses 1-10

One reason, no doubt, why Ezra is here most particular in the register of the tribe of Judah is because it was that tribe which, with its appendages, Simeon, Benjamin, and Levi, made up the kingdom of Judah, which not only long survived the other tribes in Canaan, but in process of time, now when this was written, returned out of captivity, when the generality of the other tribes were lost in the kingdom of Assyria. The most remarkable person in this paragraph is Jabez. It is not said whose son he was, nor does it appear in what age he lived; but, it should seem, he was the founder of one of the families of Aharhel, mentioned v. 8. Here is,

I. The reason of his name: his mother gave him the name with this reason, *Because I bore him with sorrow*, v. 9. All children are borne with sorrow (for the sentence upon the woman is, *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children*), but some with much more sorrow than others. Usually the sorrow in bearing is afterwards forgotten *for joy that the child is born*; but here it seems it was so extraordinary that it was remembered when the child came to be circumcised, and care was taken to perpetuate the remembrance of it while he lived. Perhaps the mother called Habez, as Rachel called her son Benoni, when she was dying of the sorrow. Or, if she recovered it, yet thus she recorded it, 1. That it might be a continual memorandum to herself, to be thankful to God as long as she lived for supporting her under and bringing her through that sorrow. It may be of use to be often reminded of our sorrows, that we may always have such thoughts of things as we had in the day of our affliction, and may learn to rejoice with trembling. 2. That it might likewise be a memorandum to him what this world is into which she bore him, a vale of tears, in which he must expect *few days and full of trouble*. The sorrow he carried in his name might help to put a seriousness upon his spirit. It might also remind him to love and honour his mother, and labour, in every thing, to be a comfort to her who brought him into the world with so much sorrow. It is piety in children thus to requite their parents, 1 Tim. 5:4.

II. The eminence of his character: *He was more honourable than his brethren*, qualified above them by the divine grace and dignified above them by the divine providence; they did virtuously, but he excelled them all. Now the sorrow with which his mother bore him was abundantly recompensed. That son which of all her children cost her most dear she was most happy in, and was made glad in proportion to the affliction, Ps. 90:15. We are not told upon what account he was *more honourable than his brethren*, whether because he raised a greater estate, or was preferred to the magistracy, or signalized himself in war; we have most reason to think it was upon the account of his learning and piety, not only because these, above any thing, put honour upon a man, but because we have reason to think that in these Jabez was eminent. 1. In learning, because we find that *the families of the scribes dwelt at Jabez* (ch. 2:55), a city which, it is likely, took its name from him. The Jews say that he was

a famous doctor of the law and left many disciples behind him. And it should seem, by the mentioning of him so abruptly here, that his name was well known when Ezra wrote this. 2. In piety, because we find here that he was a praying man. His inclination to devotion made him truly honourable, and by prayer he obtained those blessings from God which added much to his honour. The way to be truly great is to be truly good and to pray much.

III. The prayer he made, probably like Solomon's prayer for wisdom, just when he was setting out in the world. He set himself to acknowledge God in all his ways, put himself under the divine blessing and protection, and prospered accordingly. Perhaps these were the heads on which he enlarged in his daily prayers; for this purpose it was his constant practice to pray alone, and with his family, as Daniel. Some think that it was upon some particular occasion, when he was straitened and threatened by his enemies, that he prayed this prayer. Observe,

1. To whom he prayed, not to any of the gods of the Gentiles; no, he *called on the God of Israel*, the living and true God, who alone can hear and answer prayer, and in prayer had an eye to him as the God of Israel, a God in covenant with his people, the God with whom Jacob wrestled and prevailed and was thence called Israel.

2. What was the nature of his prayer. (1.) As the *margin* reads it, it was a solemn vow—*If thou wilt bless me indeed, etc.* and then the sense is imperfect, but may easily be filled up from Jacob's vow, or some such like—*then thou shalt be my God*. He did not express his promise, but left it to be understood, either because he was afraid to promise in his own strength or because he resolved to devote himself entirely to God. He does, as it were, give God a blank paper, let him write what he pleases: "Lord, if thou wilt bless me and keep me, do what thou wilt with me, I will be at thy command and disposal for ever." (2.) As the *text* reads it, it was the language of a most ardent and affectionate desire: *O that thou wouldst bless me!*

3. What was the matter of his prayer. Four things he prayed for:—(1.) That God would bless him indeed: "That, *blessing, thou wilt bless me*, bless me greatly with manifold and abundant blessings." Perhaps he had an eye to the promise God made to Abraham (Gen. 22:17), *In blessing, I will bless thee*. "Let that blessing of Abraham come upon me." Spiritual blessings are the best blessings, and those are blessed indeed who are blessed with them. God's blessings are real things and produce real effects. We can but wish a blessing: he commands it. Those whom he blesses are blessed indeed. (2.) That he would enlarge his coast, that he would prosper his endeavours for the increase of what fell to his lot either by work or war. That God would enlarge our hearts, and so enlarge our portion in himself and in the heavenly Canaan, ought to be our desire and prayer. (3.) That God's hand might be with him. The prayer of Moses for this tribe of Judah was, That his own *hands might be sufficient for him*, Deu. 33:7; but Jabez expects not that this can be the case, unless he have *God's hand* with him and the presence of his power. God's hand with us, to lead us, protect us, strengthen us, and to work all our works in us and for us, is indeed a hand sufficient for us, all-sufficient. (4.) That he would keep him from evil, the evil of sin, the evil of trouble, all the evil designs of his enemies, that they might not hurt him, nor grieve him, nor make him a *Jabez* indeed, *a man of sorrow*: in the original there is an allusion to his name. *Father in heaven, deliver me from evil*.

4. What was the success of his prayer: *God granted him that which he requested*, prospered him remarkably, and gave him success in his undertakings, in his studies, in his worldly business, in his conflicts with the Canaanites, and so he became *more*

honourable than his brethren. God was of old always ready to hear prayer, and *his ear is not yet heavy.*

Verses 11-23

We may observe in these verses, 1. That here is a whole family of craftsmen, handicraft tradesmen, that applied themselves to all sorts of manufactures, in which they were ingenious and industrious above their neighbours, v. 14. There was a valley where they lived which was, from them, called *the valley of craftsmen*. Those that are craftsmen are not therefore to be looked upon as mean men. These craftsmen, though two of a trade often disagree, yet chose to live together, for the improving of arts by comparing notes, and that they might support one another's reputation. 2. That one of these married the daughter of Pharaoh (v. 18), which was the common name of the kings of Egypt. If an Israelite in Egypt before the bondage began, while Joseph's merits were yet fresh in mind, was preferred to be the king's son-in-law, it is not to be thought strange: few Israelites could, like Moses, refuse an alliance with the court. 3. That another is said to be the *father of those that wrought fine linen*, v. 21. It is inserted in their genealogy as their honour that they were the best weavers in the kingdom, and they brought up their children, from one generation to another, to the same business, not aiming to make them gentlemen. This Laadah is said to be the *father of those that wrought fine linen*, as before the flood Jubal is said to be *the father of musicians* and Jabal of *shepherds*, etc. His posterity inhabited the city of Mareshah, the manufacture or staple commodity of which place was linen-cloth, with which their kings and priests were clothed. 4. That another family had had *dominion in Moab*, but were now in *servitude in Babylon*, v. 22, 23. (1.) It was found among the *ancient things* that they had the *dominion in Moab*. Probably in David's time, when that country was conquered, they transplanted themselves thither, and were put in places of power there, which they held for several generations; but this was a great while ago, time out of mind. (2.) Their posterity were now potters and gardeners, as is supposed in Babylon, where they *dwelt with the king for his work*, got a good livelihood by their industry, and therefore cared not for returning with their brethren to their own land, after the years of captivity had expired. Those that now have dominion know not what their posterity may be reduced to, nor what mean employments they may be glad to take up with. But those were unworthy the name of *Israelites* that would dwell among *plants and hedges* rather than be at the pains to return to Canaan.

Verses 24-43

We have here some of the genealogies of the tribe of Simeon (though it was not a tribe of great note), especially the princes of that tribe, v. 38. Of this tribe it is said that they *increased greatly*, but *not like the children of Judah*, v. 27. Those whom God increases ought to be thankful, though they see others that are more increased. Here observe, 1. The cities allotted them (v. 28), of which see Joshua 19:1, etc. When it is said that they were theirs *unto the reign of David* (v. 31) intimation is given that when the ten tribes revolted from the house of David many of the Simeonites quitted these cities, because they lay within Judah, and seated themselves elsewhere. 2. The ground they got elsewhere. When those of this tribe that revolted from the house of David were carried captive with the rest into Assyria those that adhered to Judah were remarkably owned of God and prospered in their endeavours to enlarge their coasts. It was in the days of Hezekiah that a generation of Simeonites, whose tribe had long crouched and truckled, was animated to make these bold efforts. (1.) Some of them attacked a place in Arabia, as it should

seem, called *the entrance of Gedor*, inhabited by the posterity of accursed Ham (v. 40), made themselves masters of it, and dwelt there. This adds to the glory of Hezekiah's pious reign, that, as his kingdom in general prospered, so did particular families. It is said that they found fat pastures, and yet *the land was quiet*; even when the kings of Assyria were giving disturbance to all their neighbours this land escaped their alarms. The inhabitants being shepherds, who molested none, were not themselves molested, till the Simeonites came and drove them out and succeeded them, not only in the plenty, but in the peace, of their land. Those who dwell (as we do) in a fruitful country, and whose land is wide, and quiet, and peaceable, have reason to own themselves indebted to that God who *appoints the bounds of our habitation*. (2.) Others of them, to the number of 500, under the command of four brethren here named, made a descent upon Mount Seir, and smote the remainder of the devoted Amalekites, and took possession of their country, v. 42, 43. Now the curses on Ham and Amalek had a further accomplishment, when they seemed dormant, if not dead; as had also the curse on Simeon, that he should be divided and scattered (Gen. 49:7): yet to him it was turned into a blessing, for the families of Simeon, which thus transplanted themselves into those distant countries, are said to *dwell there unto this day* (v. 43), by which it should seem they escaped the calamities of the captivity. Providence sometimes sends those out of trouble that are designed for preservation.

Chapter 5

This chapter gives us some account of the two tribes and a half that were seated on the other side Jordan. I. Of Reuben (v. 1–10). II. Of Gad (v. 11–17). III. Of the half-tribe of Manasseh (v. 23, 24). IV. Concerning all three acting in conjunction we are told, 1. How they conquered the Hagarites (v. 18–22). 2. How they were, at length, themselves conquered, and made captives, by the king of Assyria, because they had forsaken God (v. 25, 26).

Verses 1-17

We have here an extract out of the genealogies,

I. Of the tribe of Reuben, where we have,

1. The reason why this tribe is thus postponed. It is confessed that Reuben was the first-born of Israel, and, upon that account, might challenge the precedency; but he forfeited his birthright by defiling his father's concubine, and was, for that, sentenced *not to excel*, Gen. 49:4. Sin lessens men, thrusts them down from their excellency. Seventh-commandment sins especially leave an indelible stain upon men's names and families, a reproach which time will not wipe away. Reuben's seed, to the last, bear the disgrace of Reuben's sin. Yet, though that tribe was degraded, it was not discarded or disinherited. The sullying of the honour of an Israelite is not the losing of his happiness. Reuben loses his birthright, yet it does not devolve upon Simeon the next in order; for it was typical, and therefore must attend, not the course of nature, but the choice of grace. The advantages of the birthright were dominion and a double portion. Reuben having forfeited these, it was thought too much that both should be transferred to any one, and therefore they were divided. (1.) Joseph had the double portion; for two tribes descended from him, Ephraim and Manasseh, each of whom had a child's part (for so Jacob by faith blessed them, Heb. 11:21; Gen. 48:15, 22), and each of those tribes was as considerable, and made as good a figure, as any one of the twelve, except Judah. But, (2.) Judah had the dominion; on him the dying patriarch entailed the sceptre, Gen. 49:10 Of him came the chief ruler, David first, and, in the fulness of time, Messiah the Prince, Mic. 5:2. This honour was secured to Judah, though the birthright was Joseph's; and, having this, he needed not envy Joseph the double portion.

2. The genealogy of the princes of this tribe, the chief family of it (many, no doubt, being omitted), to Beerah, who was head of this clan when the king of Assyria carried them captive, v. 4-6. Perhaps he is mentioned as prince of the Reubenites at that time because he did not do his part to prevent the captivity.

3. The enlargement of the coasts of this tribe. They increasing, and their cattle being multiplied, they crowded out their neighbours the Hagarites, and extended their conquests, though not to the river Euphrates, yet to the wilderness which abutted upon that river, v. 9, 10. Thus God did for his people as he promised them: he cast out the enemy from before them by little and little, and gave them their land as they had occasion for it, Ex. 23:30.

II. Of the tribe of Gad. Some great families of that tribe are here named (v. 12), seven that were the children of Abihail, whose pedigree is carried upwards from the son to the father (v. 14, 15), as that v. 4, 5, is brought downwards from father to son. These genealogies were perfected in the days of Jotham king of Judah, but were begun some years before, in the reign of

Jeroboam II, king of Israel. What particular reason there was for taking these accounts then does not appear; but it was just before they were carried away captive by the Assyrians, as appears 2 Ki. 15:29, 31. When the judgments of God were ready to break out against them for their wretched degeneracy and apostasy then were they priding themselves in their genealogies, that they were the children of the covenant; as the Jews, in our Saviour's time, who, when they were ripe for ruin, boasted, *We have Abraham to our father*. Or there might be a special providence in it, and a favourable intimation that though they were, for the present, cast out, they were not cast off for ever. What we design to call for hereafter we keep an inventory of.

Verses 18-26

The heads of the half-tribe of Manasseh, that were seated on the other side Jordan, are named here, v. 23, 24. Their lot, at first, was Bashan only; but afterwards they increased so much in wealth and power that they spread far north, even unto Hermon. Two things only are here recorded concerning these tribes on the other side Jordan, in which they were all concerned. They all shared,

I. In a glorious victory over the Hagarites, so the Ishmaelites were now called, to remind them that they were *the sons of the bond-woman*, that was *cast out*. We are not told when this victory was obtained: whether it be the same with that of the Reubenites (which is said v. 10 to be *in the days of Saul*), or whether that success of one of these tribes animated and excited the other two to join with them in another expedition, is not certain. It seems, though in Saul's time the common interests of the kingdom were weak and low, some of the tribes that acted separately did well for themselves. We are here told,

1. What a brave army these frontier-tribes brought into the field against the Hagarites, 44,000 men and upwards, all strong, and brave, and skilful in war, so many effective men, that knew how to manage their weapons, v. 18. How much more considerable might Israel have been than they were in the time of the judges if all the tribes had acted in conjunction!

2. What course they took to engage God for them: They *cried to God*, and *put their trust in him*, v. 20. Now they acted as Israelites indeed. (1.) As the seed of believing Abraham, they *put their trust in God*. Though they had a powerful army, they relied not on that, but on the divine power. They depended on the commission they had from God to wage war with their neighbours for the enlarging of their coasts, if there was occasion, even with those that were very far off, besides the devoted nations. See Deu. 20:15. They depended on God's providence to give them success. (2.) As the seed of praying Jacob, *they cried unto God*, especially *in the battle*, when perhaps, at first, they were in danger of being overpowered. See the like done, 2 Chr. 13:14. In distress, God expects we should cry to him; he distains upon us for this tribute, this rent. In our spiritual conflicts, we must look up to heaven for strength; and it is the believing prayer that will be the prevailing prayer.

3. We are told what success they had: *God was entreated of them*, though need drove them to him; so ready is he to hear and answer prayer. They were helped against their enemies; for God never yet failed any that trusted in him. And then they routed the enemy's army, though far superior in number to theirs, slew many (v. 22), took 100,000 prisoners, enriched themselves greatly with the spoil, and settled themselves in their country (v. 21, 22), and all this *because the war was of God*, undertaken in his fear and carried on in a dependence upon him. If the battle be the Lord's, there is reason to hope it will be successful. Then we may expect to prosper in any enterprise, and then only, when we take God along with us.

II. They shared, at length, in an inglorious captivity. Had they kept close to God and their duty, they would have continued to enjoy both their ancient lot and their new conquests; but they *transgressed against the God of their fathers*, v. 25. They lay upon the borders, and conversed most with the neighbouring nations, by which means they learned their idolatrous usages and transmitted the infection to the other tribes; for this God had a controversy with them. He was *a husband to them*, and no marvel that his jealousy burnt like fire when they *went a whoring after other gods*. Justly is a bill of divorce given to the adulteress. *God stirred up the spirit of the kings of Assyria*, first one and then another, against them, served his own purposes by the designs of those ambitious monarchs, employed them to chastise these revolters first, and, when that humbled them not, then wholly to *root them out*, v. 26. These tribes were first placed, and they were first displaced. They would have the best land, not considering that it lay most exposed. But those who are governed more by sense than by reason or faith in their choices may expect to fare accordingly.

Chapter 6

Though Joseph and Judah shared between them the forfeited honours of the birthright, yet Levi was first of all the tribes, dignified and distinguished with an honour more valuable than either the precedency or the double portion, and that was the priesthood. That tribe God set apart for himself; it was Moses's tribe, and perhaps for his sake was thus favoured. Of that tribe we have an account in this chapter. I. Their pedigree, the first fathers of the tribe (v. 1-3), the line of the priests, from Aaron to the captivity (v. 4-15), and of some other of their families (v. 16-30). II. Their work, the work of the Levites (v. 31-48), of the priests (v. 49-53). III. The cities appointed them in the land of Canaan (v. 54-81).

Verses 1-30

The priests and Levites were more concerned than any other Israelites to preserve their pedigree clear and to be able to prove it, because all the honours and privileges of their office depended upon their descent. And we read of those who, though perhaps they really were children of the priests, yet, because they could not find the register of their genealogies, nor make out their descent by any authentic record, were, *as polluted, put from the priesthood*, and forbidden to eat of the holy things, Ezra 2:62, 63. It is but very little that is here recorded of the genealogies of this sacred tribe. I. The first fathers of it are here named twice, v. 1, 16. Gershom, Kohath, and Merari, are three names which we were very conversant with in the book of Numbers, when the families of the Levites were marshalled and had their work assigned to them. Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam, we have known much more of than their names, and cannot pass them over here without remembering that this was that Moses and Aaron whom God honoured in making them instruments of Israel's deliverance and settlement and *figures of him that was to come*, Moses as a prophet and Aaron as a priest. And the mention of Nadab and Abihu (though, having no children, there was no occasion to bring them into the genealogy) cannot but remind us of the terrors of that divine justice which they were made monuments of for offering strange fire, that we may always fear before him. 2. The line of Eleazar, the successor of Aaron, is here drawn down to the time of the captivity, v. 4-15. It begins with Eleazar, who came out of the house of bondage in Egypt, and ends with Jehozadak, who went into the house of bondage in Babylon. Thus, for their sins, they were left as they were found, which might also intimate that the Levitical priesthood did not make anything perfect, but this was to be done by the *bringing in of a better hope*. All these here named were not high priests; for, in the time of the judges, that dignity was, upon some occasion or other, brought into the family of Ithamar, of which Eli was; but in Zadok it returned again to the right line. Of Azariah it is here said (v. 10), *He it is that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built*. It is supposed that this was that Azariah who bravely opposed the presumption of king Uzziah when he invaded the priest's office (2 Chr. 26:17, 18), though he ventured his neck by so doing. This was done like a priest, like one that was truly zealous for his God. He that thus boldly maintained and defended the priest's office, and made good its barriers against such a daring insult, might well be said to *execute it*; and this honour is put upon him for it; while Urijah, one of his successors, for a base compliance with King Ahaz, in building him an idolatrous altar, has the disgrace put upon him of being left out of this genealogy, as perhaps some others are. But some think that this remark upon this Azariah should have been added to his grandfather of the

same name (v. 9), who was the son of Ahimaaz, and that he was the priest who first officiated in Solomon's temple. 3. Some other of the families of the Levites are here accounted for. One of the families of Gershom (that of Libni) is here drawn down as far as Samuel, who had the honour of a prophet added to that of a Levite. One of the families of Merari (that of Mahli) is likewise drawn down for several descents, v. 29, 30.

Verses 31-53

When the Levites were first ordained in the wilderness much of the work then appointed them lay in carrying and taking care of the tabernacle and the utensils of it, while they were in their march through the wilderness. In David's time their number was increased; and, though the greater part of them was dispersed all the nation over, to teach the people the good knowledge of the Lord, yet those that attended the house of God were so numerous that there was not constant work for them all; and therefore David, by special commission and direction from God, new-modelled the Levites, as we shall find in the latter part of this book. Here we are told what the work was which he assigned them.

I. Singing-work, v. 31. David was raised up on high to be the sweet psalmist of Israel (2 Sa. 23:1), not only to pen psalms, but to appoint the singing of them in the house of the Lord (not so much because he was musical as because he was devout), and this he did *after that the ark had rest*. While that was in captivity, obscure, and unsettled, the harps were hung upon the willow-trees: singing was then thought unseasonable (when the bridegroom is taken away they shall fast); but the harps being resumed, and the songs revived, at the bringing up of the ark, they were continued afterwards. For we should rejoice as much in the prolonging of our spiritual privileges as in the restoring of them. When the service of the ark was much superseded by its rest they had other work cut out for them (for Levites should never be idle) and were employed in the service of song. Thus when the people of God come to the rest which remains for them above they shall take leave of all their burdens and be employed in everlasting songs. These singers kept up that service in the tabernacle till the temple was built, and then they *waited on their office* there, v. 32. When they came to that stately magnificent house they kept as close both to their office and to their order as they had done in the tabernacle. It is a pity that the preferment of the Levites should ever make them remiss in their business. We have here an account of the three great masters who were employed in the service of the sacred song, with their respective families; for they *waited with their children*, that is, such as descended from them or were allied to them, v. 33. Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were the three that were appointed to this service, one of each of the three houses of the Levites, that there might be an equality in the distribution of this work and honour, and that every one might know his post, such an admirable order was there in this choir service. 1. Of the house of Kohath was Heman with his family (v. 33), a man of a sorrowful spirit, if it be the same Heman that penned the 88th psalm, and yet a singer. He was the grandson of Samuel the prophet, the son of Joel, of whom it is said that *he walked not in the ways of Samuel* (1 Sa. 8:2, 3); but it seems, though the son did not, the grandson did. Thus does the blessing entailed on the seed of the upright sometimes pass over one generation and fasten upon the next. And this Heman, though the grandson of that mighty prince, did not think it below him to be a precentor in the house of God. David himself was willing to be a door-keeper. Rather we may look upon this preferment of the grandson in the church as a recompense for the humble modest resignation which the grandfather made of his authority in the state.

Many such ways God has of making up his people's losses and balancing their disgraces. Perhaps David, in making Heman the chief, had some respect to his old friend Samuel. 2. Of the house of Gershon was Asaph, called *his brother*, because in the same office and of the same tribe, though of another family. He was posted on Heman's right hand in the choir, v. 39. Several of the psalms bear his name, being either penned by him or tuned by him as the chief musician. It is plain that he was the penman of some psalms; for we read of those that praised the Lord in the words of David and of Asaph. He was a seer as well as a singer, 2 Chr. 29:30. His pedigree is traced up here, through names utterly unknown, as high as Levi, v. 39–43. 3. Of the house of Merari was Ethan (v. 44), who was appointed to Heman's left hand. His pedigree is also traced up to Levi, v. 47. If these were the Heman and Ethan that penned the 88th and 89th psalms, there appears no reason here why they should be called *Ezrahites* (see the titles of those psalms), as there does why those should be called so who are mentioned ch. 2:6, and who were the sons of Zerah.

II. There was serving-work, abundance of service to be done *in the tabernacle of the house of God* (v. 48), to provide water and fuel,—to wash and sweep, and carry out ashes,—to kill, and flay, and boil the sacrifices; and to all such services there were Levites appointed, those of other families, or perhaps those that were not fit to be singers, that had either no good voice or no good ear. *As every one has received the gift, so let him minister*. Those that could not sing must not therefore be laid aside as good for nothing; though they were not fit for that service, there was other service they might be useful in.

III. There was sacrificing-work, and that was to be done by the priests only, v. 49. They only were to sprinkle the blood and burn the incense; as for *the work of the most holy place*, that was to be done by the high priest only. Each had his work, and they both needed one another and both helped one another in it. Concerning the work of the priests we are here told, 1. What was the end they were to have in their eye. They were to *make an atonement for Israel*, to mediate between the people and God; not to magnify and enrich themselves, but to serve the public. They were *ordained for men*. 2. What was the rule they were to have in their eye. They presided in God's house, yet must do as they were bidden, according to all that God commanded. That law the highest are subject to.

Verses 54–81

We have here an account of the Levites' cities. They are here called their *castles* (v. 54), not only because walled and fortified, and well guarded by the country (for it is the interest of every nation to protect its ministers), but because they and their possessions were, in a particular manner, the care of the divine providence: as God was their portion, so God was their protection; and a cottage will be a castle to those that abide under the shadow of the Almighty. This account is much the same with that which we had, Jos. 21. We need not be critical in comparing them (what good will it do us?) nor will it do any hurt to the credit of the holy scripture if the names of some of the places be not spelt just the same here as they were there. We know it is common for cities to have several names. *Sarum* and *Salisbury*, *Salop* and *Shrewsbury*, are more unlike than *Hilen* (v. 58) and *Holon* (Jos. 21:15), *Ashan* (v. 59) and *Ain* (Jos. 21:16), *Alemeth* (v. 60) and *Almon* (Jos. 21:18); and time changes names. We are only to observe that in this appointment of cities for the Levites God took care, 1. For the accomplishment of dying Jacob's prediction concerning this tribe, that it should be *scattered in Israel*, Gen. 49:7. 2. For the diffusing of the knowledge

of himself and his law to all parts of the land of Israel. Every tribe had Levites' cities in it; and so every room was furnished with a candle, so that none could be ignorant of his duty but it was either his own fault or the Levites'. 3. For a comfortable maintenance for those that ministered in holy things. Besides their tithes and offerings, they had glebe-lands and cities of their own to dwell in. Some of the most considerable cities of Israel fell to the Levites' lot. Every tribe had benefit by the Levites, and therefore every tribe must contribute to their support. *Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth, and do it cheerfully.*

Chapter 7

In this chapter we have some account of the genealogies, I. Of Issachar (v. 1-5). II. Of Benjamin (v. 6–12). III. Of Naphtali (v. 13). IV. Of Manasseh (v. 14–19). V. Of Ephraim (v. 20–29). VI. Of Asher (v. 30–40). Here is no account either of Zebulun or Dan. Why they only should be omitted we can assign no reason; only it is the disgrace of the tribe of Dan that idolatry began in that colony of the Danites which fixed in Laish, and called Dan, and there one of the golden calves was set up by Jeroboam. Dan is omitted, Rev. 7.

Verses 1-19

We have here a short view given us,

I. Of the tribe of Issachar, whom Jacob had compared to a *strong ass, couching between two burdens* (Gen. 49:14), an industrious tribe, that minded their country business very closely and *rejoiced in their tents*, Deu. 33:18. And here it appears, 1. That they were a numerous tribe; for they had many wives. So fruitful their country was that they saw no danger of overstocking the pasture, and so ingenious the people were that they could find work for all hands. Let no people complain of their numbers, provided they suffer none to be idle. 2. That they were a valiant tribe, *men of might* (v. 2, 5), *chief men*, v. 3. Those that were inured to labour and business were of all men the fittest to serve their country when there was occasion, The number of the respective families, as taken in the days of David, is here set down, amounting in the whole to above 145,000 men fit for war. The account, some think, was taken when Joab numbered the people, 2 Sa. 24. But I rather think it refers to some other computation that was made, perhaps among themselves, because it is said (1 Chr. 27:24) that that account was not inserted in the chronicles of king David, it having offended God.

II. Of the tribe of Benjamin. Some account is here given of this tribe, but much larger in the next chapter. The militia of this tribe scarcely reached to 60,000; but they are said to be *mighty men of valour*, v. 7, 9, 11. *Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf*, Gen. 49:27. It was the honour of this tribe that it produced Saul the first king, and more its honour that it adhered to the rightful kings of the house of David when the other tribes revolted. Here is mention (v. 12) of Hushim the sons of Aher. The sons of Dan are said to be *Hushim* (Gen. 46:23), and therefore some read Aher appellatively, *Hushim*—the *sons of another* (that is, another of Jacob's sons) or the sons of a stranger, which Israelites should not be, but such the Danites were when they set up Micah's graven and molten image among them.

III. Of the tribe of Naphtali, v. 13. The first fathers only of that tribe are named, the very same that we shall find, Gen. 46:24, only that *Shillem* there is *Shallum* here. None of their descendents are named, perhaps because their genealogies were lost.

IV. Of the tribe of Manasseh, that part of it which was seated within Jordan; for of the other part we had some account before, ch. 5:23, etc. Of this tribe observe, 1. That one of them married an Aramitess, that is, a Syrian, v. 14. This was during their bondage in Egypt, so early did they begin to mingle with the nations. 2. That, though the father married a Syrian, Machir, the son of that marriage, perhaps seeing the inconvenience of it in his father's house, took to wife a daughter of Benjamin, v. 15. It is good for the children to take warning by their father's mistakes and not stumble at the same stone. 3. Here is mention of

Bedan (v, 17), who perhaps is the same with that Bedan who is mentioned as one of Israel's deliverers, 1 Sa. 12:11. Jair perhaps, who was of Manasseh (Jdg. 10:3), was the man.

Verses 20-40

We have here an account,

I. Of the tribe of Ephraim. Great things we read of that tribe when it came to maturity. Here we have an account of the disasters of its infancy, while it was in Egypt as it should seem; for Ephraim himself was alive when those things were done, which yet is hard to imagine if it were, as is here computed, seven generations off. Therefore I am apt to think that either it was another Ephraim or that those who were slain were the immediate sons of that Ephraim that was the son of Joseph. In this passage, which is related here only, we have, 1. The great breach that was made upon the family of Ephraim. The men of Gath, Philistines, giants, slew many of the sons of that family, *because they came down to take away their cattle*, v. 21. It is uncertain who were the aggressors here. Some make the men of Gath the aggressors, men *born in the land of Egypt*, but now resident in Gath, supposing that they came down into the land of Goshen, to drive away the Ephraimites' cattle, and slew the owners, because they stood up in the defence of them. Many a man's life has been exposed and betrayed by his wealth; so far is it from being a strong city. Others think that the Ephraimites made a descent upon the men of Gath to plunder them, presuming that the time had come when they should be put in possession of Canaan; but they paid dearly for their rashness and precipitation. Those that will not wait God's time cannot expect God's blessing. I rather think that the men of Gath came down upon the Ephraimites, because the Israelites in Egypt were shepherds, not soldiers, abounded in cattle of their own, and therefore were not likely to venture their lives for their neighbours' cattle: and the words may be read, *The men of Gath slew them, for they came down to take away their cattle*. Zabad the son of Ephraim, and Shuthelah, and Ezer, and Elead (his grandchildren), were, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, the men that were slain. Jacob had foretold that the seed of Ephraim should become a *multitude of nations* (Gen. 48:19), and yet that plant is thus nipped in the bud. God's providences often seem to contradict his promises; but, when they do so, they really magnify the promise, and make the performance of it, notwithstanding, so much more illustrious. The Ephraimites were the posterity of Joseph, and yet his power could not protect them, though some think he was yet living. The sword devours one as well as another. 2. The great grief which oppressed the father of the family hereupon: *Ephraim mourned many days*. Nothing brings the aged to the grave with more sorrow than their following the young that descend from them to the grave first, especially if in blood. It is often the burden of those that live to be old that they see those go before them of whom they said, *These same shall comfort us*. It was a brotherly friendly office which his brethren did, when *they came to comfort him* under this great affliction, to express their sympathy with him and concern for him, and to suggest that to him which would support and quiet him under this sad providence. Probably they reminded him of the promise of increase which Jacob had blessed him when he laid his right hand upon his head. Although his house was not so with God as he hoped, but a house of mourning, a shattered family, yet that promise was sure, 2 Sa. 23:5. 3. The repair of this breach, in some measure, by addition of another son to his family in his old age (v. 23), like Seth, *another seed instead of that of Abel whom Cain slew*, Gen. 4:25. When God thus restores comfort to his mourners, *makes glad according to the days wherein he afflicted*,

setting the mercies over against the crosses, we ought therein to take notice of the kindness and tenderness of divine Providence; it is as if *it repented God concerning his servants*, Ps. 90:13, 15. Yet joy that a man was born into his family could not make him forget his grief; for he gives a melancholy name to his son, *Beriah—in trouble*, for he was born when the family was in mourning, when *it went evil with his house*. It is good to have in remembrance the affliction and the misery, the wormwood and the gall, that our souls may be *humbled within us*, Lam. 3:19, 20. What name more proper for *man that is born of a woman* than *Beriah*, because born into a troublesome world? It is added, as a further honour to the house of Ephraim, (1.) That a daughter of that tribe, *Sherah* by name, at the time of Israel's setting in Canaan, built some cities, either at her own charge or by her own care; one of them bore her name, *Uzzen-sherah*, v. 24. A virtuous woman may be as great an honour and blessing to a family as a mighty man. (2.) That a son of that tribe was employed in the conquest of Canaan, *Joshua the son of Nun*, v. 27. In this also the breach made on Ephraim's family was further repaired; and perhaps the resentment of this injury formerly done by the Canaanites to the Ephraimites might make him more vigorous in the war.

II. Of the tribe of Asher. Some men of note of that tribe are here named. Their militia was not numerous in comparison with some other tribes, only 26,000 men in all; but their princes were *choice and mighty men of valour, chief of the princes* (v. 40), and perhaps it was their wisdom that they coveted not to make their trained bands numerous, but rather to have a few, and those apt to the war and serviceable men.

Chapter 8

We had some account given us of Benjamin in the foregoing chapter; here we have a larger catalogue of the great men of that tribe. 1. Because of that tribe Saul came, the first king of Israel, to the story of whom the sacred writer is hastening, 10:1. 2. Because that tribe clave to Judah, inhabited much of Jerusalem, was one of the two tribes that went into captivity, and returned back; and that story also he has an eye to, 9:1. Here is, I. Some of the heads of that tribe named (v. 1–32). II. A more particular account of the family of Saul (v. 33–40).

Verses 1-32

There is little or nothing of history in all these verses; we have not therefore much to observe. 1. As to the difficulties that occur in this and the foregoing genealogies we need not perplex ourselves. I presume Ezra took them as he found them *in the books of the kings of Israel and Judah* (ch. 9:1), according as they were given in by the several tribes, each observing what method they thought fit. Hence some *ascend*, others *deseend*; some have *numbers* affixed, others *places*; some have historical remarks intermixed, others have not; some are shorter, others longer; some agree with other records, others differ; some, it is likely, were torn, erased, and blotted, others more legible. Those of Dan and Reuben were entirely lost. This holy man wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost; but there was no necessity for the making up of the defects, no, nor for the rectifying of the mistakes, of these genealogies by inspiration. It was sufficient that he copied them out as they came into his hand, or so much of them as was requisite to the present purpose, which was the directing of the returned captives to settle as nearly as they could with those of their own family, and in the places of their former residence. We may suppose that many things in these genealogies which to us seem intricate, abrupt, and perplexed, were plain and easy to them then (who knew how to fill up the deficiencies) and abundantly answered the intention of the publishing of them. 2. Many great and mighty nations there were now in being upon earth, and many illustrious men in them, whose names are buried in perpetual oblivion, while the names of multitudes of the Israel of God are here carefully preserved in everlasting remembrance. They are *Jasher*, *Jeshurun—just ones*, and *the memory of the just is blessed*. Many of these we have reason to fear, came short of everlasting honour (for even the wicked kings of Judah come into the genealogy), yet the perpetuating of their names here was a figure of the writing of the names of all God's spiritual Israel in the Lamb's book of life. 3. This tribe of Benjamin was once brought to a very low ebb, in the time of the judges, upon the occasion of the iniquity of Gibeah, when only 600 men escaped the sword of justice; and yet, in these genealogies, it makes as good a figure as almost any of the tribes: for it is the honour of God to help the weakest and raise up those that are most diminished and abased. 4. Here is mention of one Ehud (v. 6), in the preceding verse of one Gera (v. 5) and (v. 8) of one that descended from him, that *begat children in the country of Moab*, which inclines me to think it was that Ehud who was the second of the judges of Israel; for he is said to be *the son of Gera and a Benjamite* (Jdg. 3:15), and he delivered Israel from the oppression of the Moabites by killing the king of Moab, which might give him a greater sway in the country of Moab than we find evidence of in his history and might occasion some of his posterity to settle there. 5. Here is mention of some of the Benjamites that *drove away the inhabitants of Gath* (v. 13), perhaps those that had slain the

Ephraimites (ch. 7:21) or their posterity, by way of reprisal: and one of those that did this piece of justice was named *Beriah* too, that name in which the memorial of that injury was preserved. 6. Particular notice is taken of those that *dwelt in Jerusalem* (v. 28 and again v. 32), that those whose ancestors had had their residence there might thereby be induced, at their return from captivity, to settle there too, which, for aught that appears, few were willing to do, because it was the post of danger: and therefore we find (Neh. 11:2) *the people blessed those that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem*, the greater part being inclined to prefer the cities of Judah. Those whose godly parents had their conversation in the new Jerusalem should thereby be engaged to set their faces thitherward and pursue the way thither, whatever it cost them.

Verses 33-40

It is observable that among all the genealogies of the tribes there is no mention of any of the kings of Israel after the defection from the house of David, much less of their families; not a word of Jeroboam's house or Baasha's, of Umri's or Jehu's; for they were all idolaters. But of the family of Saul, which was the royal family before the elevation of David, we have here a particular account. 1. Before Saul, Kish and Ner only are named, his father and grandfather, v. 33. His pedigree is carried higher 1 Sa. 9:1, only there Kish is said to be *the son of Abiel*, here *of Ner*. He was in truth the son of Ner but the grandson of Abiel, as appears by 1 Sa. 14:51, where it is said that *Ner was the son of Abiel*, and that Abner, who was the son of Ner, was Saul's uncle (that is, his father's brother); therefore his father was also the son of Ner. It is common in all languages to put sons for grandsons and other descendents, much more in the scanty language of the Hebrews. 2. After Saul, divers of his sons are named, but the posterity of none of them, save Jonathan only, who was blessed with numerous issue and those honoured with a place in the sacred genealogies for the sake of his sincere kindness to David. The line of Jonathan is drawn down here for about ten generations. Perhaps David was, in a particular manner, careful to preserve that, and assigned it a page by itself, because of the covenant made between his seed and Jonathan's seed forever, 1 Sa. 20:15, 23, 42. This genealogy ends in Ulam, whose family became famous in the tribe of Benjamin for the number of its valiant men. Of that one man's posterity there were, as it should seem, at one time, 150 archers brought into the field of battle, that were *mighty men of valour*, v. 40. That is taken notice of concerning them which is more a man's praise than his pomp or wealth is, that they were qualified to serve their country.

Chapter 9

This chapter intimates to us that one end of recording all these genealogies was to direct the Jews, now that they had returned out of captivity, with whom to incorporate and where to reside; for here we have an account of those who first took possession of Jerusalem after their return from Babylon, and began the rebuilding of it upon the old foundation. I. The Israelites (v. 2-9). II. The priests (v. 10-13). III. The Levites and other Nethinim (v. 14-26). IV. Here is the particular charge of some of the priests and Levites (v. 27-34). V. A repetition of the genealogy of king Saul (v. 35-44).

Verses 1-13

The first verse looks back upon the foregoing genealogies, and tells us they were gathered out of *the books of the kings of Israel and Judah*, not that which we have in the canon of scripture, but another civil record, which was authentic, as the king's books with us. Mentioning Israel and Judah, the historian takes notice of their being *carried away to Babylon for their transgression*. Let that judgment never be forgotten, but ever be remembered, for warning to posterity to take heed of those sins that brought it upon them. Whenever we speak of any calamity that has befallen us, it is good to add this, "it was for my transgression," that God may be justified and clear when he judges. Then follows an account of the first inhabitants, after their return from captivity, that dwelt in their cities, especially in Jerusalem. 1. The Israelites. That general name is used (v. 2) because with those of Judah and Benjamin there were many of Ephraim and Manasseh, and the other ten tribes (v. 3), such as had escaped to Judah when the body of the ten tribes were carried captive or returned to Judah upon the revolutions in Assyria, and so went into captivity with them, or met them when they were in Babylon, associated with them, and so shared in the benefit of their enlargement. It was foretold that the *children of Judah and of Israel* should be *gathered together and come up out of the land* (Hos. 1:11), and that they should be one nation again, Eze. 37:22. Trouble drives those together that have been at variance; and the pieces of metal that had been separated will run together again when melted in the same crucible. Many both of Judah and Israel staid behind in captivity; but some of both, whose spirit God stirred up, enquired the way to Zion again. Divers are here named, and many more numbered, who were *chief of the fathers* (v. 9), who ought to be remembered with honour, as Israelites indeed. 2. The priests, v. 10. It was their praise that they came with the first. Who should lead in a good work if the priests, the Lord's ministers, do not? It was the people's praise that they would not come without them; for who but the priests should keep knowledge? Who but the priests should bless them in the name of the Lord? (1.) It is said of one of them that he was *the ruler of the house of God* (v. 11) not the chief ruler, for Joshua was then the high priest, but the sagan, and the next under him, his deputy, who perhaps applied more diligently to the business than the high priest himself. In the house of God it is requisite that there be rulers, not to make new laws, but to take care that the laws of God be duly observed by priests as well as people. (2.) It is said of many of them that they were *very able men for the service of the house of God*, v. 13. In the house of God there is service to be done, constant service; and it is well for the church when those are employed in that service who are qualified for it, *able ministers of the New Testament*, 2 Co. 3:6. The service of the temple was such as required at all times, especially in this critical juncture, when they had newly come out of Babylon, great courage and

vigour of mind, as well as strength of body; and therefore they are praised as *mighty men of valour*.

Verses 14-34

We have here a further account of the good posture which the affairs of religion were put into immediately upon the return of the people out of Babylon. They had smarted for their former neglect of ordinances and under the late want of ordinances. Both these considerations made them very zealous and forward in setting up the worship of God among them; so they began their worship of God at the right end. Instances hereof we have here.

I. Before the house of the Lord was built they had the house of the tabernacle, a plain and movable tent, which they made use of in the mean time. Those that cannot yet reach to have a temple must not be without a tabernacle, but be thankful for that and make the best of it. Never let God's work be left undone for want of a place to do it in.

II. In allotting to the priests and Levites their respective employments, they had an eye to the model that was drawn up by David, and Samuel the seer, v. 22. Samuel, in his time, had drawn the scheme of it, and laid the foundation, though the ark was then in obscurity, and David afterwards finished it, and both acted by immediate direction from God. Or David, as soon as he was anointed had this matter in his mind and consulted Samuel about it, though he was then in his troubles, and the plan was formed in concert between them. This perhaps had been little regarded for many ages; but now, after a long interruption, it was revived. In dividing the work, they observed these ancient land-marks.

III. The most of them dwelt at Jerusalem (v. 34), yet there were some that dwelt in the villages (v. 16, 22), because, it may be, there was not yet room for them in Jerusalem. However they were employed in the service of the tabernacle (v. 25): *They were to come after seven days from time to time*. They had their week's attendance in their turns.

IV. Many of the Levites were employed as porters at the gates of the house of God, four chief porters (v. 26), and, under them, others, to the number of 212, v. 22. They had the oversight of the gates (v. 23), were keepers of the *thresholds*, as in the margin (v. 19), and keepers of the entry. This seemed a mean office; and yet David would rather have it than *dwell in the tents of wickedness*, Ps. 84:10. Their office was, 1. To open the doors of God's house every morning (v. 27) and shut them at night. 2. To keep off the unclean, and hinder those from thrusting in that were forbidden by the law. 3. To direct and introduce into the courts of the Lord those that came thither to worship, and to show them where to go and what to do, that they might not incur punishment. This required care, and diligence, and constant attendance. Ministers have work to do of this kind.

V. Here is one Phinehas, a son of Eleazar, that is said to be a *ruler over them in time past* (v. 20), not the famous high priest of that name, but (as is supposed) an eminent Levite, of whom it is here said that *the Lord was with him*, or (as the Chaldee reads it) *the Word of the Lord was his helper*—the eternal Word, who is *Jehovah, the mighty one on whom help is laid*.

VI. It is said of some of them that, because the charge was upon them, *they lodged round about the house of God*, v. 27. It is good for ministers to be near their work, that they may give themselves wholly to it. The Levites pitched about the tabernacle when they marched through the wilderness. Then they were porters in one sense, bearing the burdens of the sanctuary, now porters in another sense, attending the gates and the doors—in both instances keeping the charge of the sanctuary.

VII. Every one knew his charge. Some were entrusted with the plate, the ministering vessels, to bring them in and out by tale,

v. 28. Others were appointed to prepare the fine flour, wine, oil, etc., v. 29. Others, that were priests, made up the holy anointing oil, v. 30. Others took care of the meat-offerings, v. 31. Others of the show-bread, v. 32. As in other great houses, so in God's house, the work is likely to be done well when every one knows the duty of his place and makes a business of it. God is the God of order: but that which is every body's work will be nobody's work.

VIII. The singers *were employed in that work day and night*, v. 33. They were the *chief fathers of the Levites* that made a business of it, not mean singing-men, that made a trade of it. They remained in the chambers of the temple, that they might closely and constantly attend it, and were therefore excused from all other services. It should seem, some companies were continually singing, at least at stated hours, both day and night. Thus was God continually praised, as it is fit he should be who is continually doing good. Thus devout people might, at any hour, have assistance in their devotion. Thus was the temple a figure of the heavenly one, where they *rest not day nor night* from praising God, Rev. 4:8. *Blessed are those that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee.*

Verses 35-44

These verses are the very same with ch. 8:29-38, giving an account of the ancestors of Saul and the posterity of Jonathan.

There it is the conclusion of the genealogy of Benjamin; *here* it is an introduction to the story of Saul. We take the repetition as we find it; but if we admit that there are in the originals, especially in these books, some errors of the transcribers, I should be tempted to think this repetition arose from a blunder. Some one, in copying out these genealogies, having written those words, v. 34 (*These dwelt in Jerusalem*), cast his eye on the same words, ch. 8:28 (*These dwelt in Jerusalem*), and so went on with what followed there, instead of going on with what followed here; and, when he perceived his mistake, was loth to make a blot in his book, and so let it stand. We have a rule in our law, *Redundans non nocet—Redundancies do no harm.*

Chapter 10

The design of Ezra, in these books of the Chronicles, was to preserve the records of the house of David, which, though much sunk and lessened in a common eye by the captivity, yet grew more and more illustrious in the eyes of those that lived by faith by the nearer approach of the Son of David. And therefore he repeats, not the history of Saul's reign, but only of his death, by which way was made for David to the throne. In this chapter we have, I. The fatal rout which the Philistines gave to Saul's army, and the fatal stroke which he gave himself (v. 1-7). II. The Philistines' triumph therein (v. 8-10). III. The respect which the men of Jabesh-Gilead showed the royal corpse (v. 11, 12). IV. The reason of Saul's rejection (v. 13, 14).

Verses 1-7

This account of Saul's death is the same with that which we had, 1 Sa. 31:1, etc. We need not repeat the exposition of it. Only let us observe, 1. Princes sin and the people suffer for it. It was a bad time with Israel when they *fled before the Philistines and fell down slain* (v. 1), when they quitted their cities, and *the Philistines came and dwelt in them*, v. 7. We do not find that they were at this time guilty of idolatry, as they had been before, in the days of the judges, and were afterwards, in the days of the kings. Samuel had reformed them, and they were reformed: and yet they are thus *given to the spoil and to the robbers*. No doubt there was enough in them to deserve this judgment; but that which divine Justice had chiefly an eye to was the sin of Saul. Note, Princes and great men should in a special manner take heed of provoking God's wrath; for, if they kindle that fire, they know not how many may be consumed by it for their sakes. 2. Parents sin and the children suffer for it. When the measure of Saul's iniquity was full, and his day came to fall (which David foresaw, 1 Sa. 26:10), he not only descended into battle and perished himself, but his sons (all but Ishbosheth) perished with him, and Jonathan among the rest, that gracious, generous man; for *all things come alike to all*. Thus was the iniquity of the fathers visited upon the children, and they fell as parts of the condemned father. Note, Those that love their seed must leave their sins, lest they perish not alone in their iniquity, but bring ruin on their families with themselves, or entail a curse upon them when they are gone. 3. Sinners sin and at length suffer for it themselves, though they be long reprieved; for, although sentence be not executed speedily, it will be executed. It was so upon Saul; and the manner of his fall was such as, in various particulars, answered to his sin. (1.) He had thrown a javelin more than once at David, and missed him; but the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers. (2.) He had commanded Doeg to slay the priests of the Lord; and now, in despair, he commands his armour-bearer to *draw his sword and thrust him through*. (3.) He had disobeyed the command of God in not destroying the Amalekites, and his armour-bearer disobeys him in not destroying him. (4.) He that was the murderer of the priests is justly left to himself to be his own murderer; and his family is cut off who cut off the city of the priests. See, and say, *The Lord is righteous*.

Verses 8-14

Here, I. From the triumph of the Philistines over the body of Saul we may learn, 1. That the greater dignity men are advanced to the greater disgrace they are in danger of falling into. Saul's dead body, because he was king, was abused more than any other of the slain. Advancement makes men a mark for malice. 2. That, if we give not to God the glory of our successes, even

the Philistines will rise up in judgment against us and condemn us; for, when they had obtained a victory over Saul, they *sent tidings to their idols*—poor idols, that knew not what was done a few miles off till the tidings were brought to them, nor then either! They also put Saul's armour *in the house of their gods*, v. 10. Shall Dagon have so honourable a share in their triumphs and the true and living God be forgotten in ours?

II. From the triumph of the men of Jabesh-Gilead in the rescue of the bodies of Saul and his sons we learn that there is a respect due to the remains of the deceased, especially of deceased princes. We are not to enquire concerning the eternal state; that must be left to God: but we must treat the dead body as those who remember it has been united to an immortal soul and must be so again.

III. From the triumphs of divine Justice in the ruin of Saul we may learn, 1. That the sin of sinners will certainly find them out, sooner or later: *Saul died for his transgression*. 2. That no man's greatness can exempt him from the judgments of God. 3. Disobedience is a killing thing. Saul died for *not keeping the word of the Lord*, by which he was ordered to destroy the Amalekites. 4. Consulting with witches is a sin that fills the measure of iniquity as soon as any thing. Saul enquired of one that *had a familiar spirit*, and *enquired not of the Lord, therefore he slew him*, v. 13, 14. Saul slew himself, and yet it is said, *God slew him*. What is done by wicked hands is yet done *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*. Those that abandon themselves to the devil shall be abandoned to him; so shall their doom be. It is said (1 Sa. 28:6) that Saul did *enquire of the Lord* and he *answered him not*: but here it is said, *Saul did not enquire of God*; for he did not till he was brought to the last extremity, and then it was too late.

Chapter 11

In this chapter is repeated, I. The elevation of David to the throne, immediately upon the death of Saul, by common consent (v. 1-3). II. His gaining the castle of Zion out of the hands of the Jebusites (v. 4-9). III. The catalogue of the worthies and great men of his kingdom (v. 10-47).

Verses 1-9

David is here brought to the possession.

I. Of the throne of Israel, after he had reigned seven years in Hebron, over Judah only. In consideration of his relation to them (v. 1), his former good services, and especially the divine designation (v. 2), they anointed him their king: he covenanted to protect them, and they to bear faith and true allegiance to him, v. 3. Observe, 1. God's counsels will be fulfilled at last, whatever difficulties lie in the way. If God had said, *David shall rule*, it is in vain to oppose it. 2. Men that have long stood in their own light, when they have long wearied themselves with their lying vanities, it is to be hoped, will understand the things that belong to their peace and return to *their own mercies*. 3. Between prince and people there is an original contract, which both ought religiously to observe. If ever any prince might have claimed an absolute despotic power, David might, and might as safely as any have been entrusted with it; and yet he made a covenant with the people, took the coronation-oath, to rule by law.

II. Of the strong-hold of Zion, which was held by the Jebusites till David's time. Whether David had a particular eye upon it as a place fit to make a royal city, or whether he had a promise of it from God, it seems that one of his first exploits was to make himself master of that fort; and, when he had it, he called it the *city of David*, v. 7. To this reference is had, Ps. 2:6. *I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion*. See here what quickens and engages resolution in great undertakings. 1. Opposition. When the Jebusites set David at defiance, and said, *Thou shalt not come hither*. he resolved to force it, whatever it cost him. 2. Prospect of preferment. When David proposed to give the general's place to him that would lead the attack upon the castle of Zion, Joab was fired with the proposal, and he *went up first, and was chief*. It has been said, "Take away honour out of the soldier's eye and you cut off the spurs from his heels."

Verses 10-47

We have here an account of David's worthies, the great men of his time that served him and were preferred by him. The first edition of this catalogue we had, 2 Sa. 23:8, etc. This is much the same, only that those named here from v. 41 to the end are added. Observe,

I. The connexion of this catalogue with that which is said concerning David, v. 9. 1. *David waxed greater and greater*, and these were his mighty men. Much of the strength and honour of great men is borrowed from their servants and depends upon them, which cannot but somewhat diminish pomp and power in the opinion of those that are wise. David is great because he has great men about him; take these away, and he is where he was. 2. *The Lord of hosts was with him, and these were the mighty men which he had*. God was with him and wrought for him, but by men and means and the use of second causes. By

this it appeared that God was with him, that he inclined the hearts of those to come over to him that were able to serve his interest. As, if God be for us none can be against us, so, if God be for us, all shall be for us that we have occasion for. Yet David ascribed his success and increase, not to the hosts he had, but to the *Lord of hosts*, not to the mighty men that were with him, but to the mighty God whose presence with us is all in all.

II. The title of this catalogue (v. 10): *These are the men who strengthened themselves with him*. In strengthening him they strengthened themselves and their own interest; for his advancement was theirs. What we do in our places for the support of the kingdom of the Son of David we shall be gainers by. In strengthening it we strengthen ourselves. It may be read, *They held strongly with him and with all Israel*. Note, When God has work to do he will not want fit instruments to do it with. If it be work that requires mighty men, mighty men shall either be found or made to effect it, *according to the word of the Lord*.

III. That which made all these men honourable was the good service that they did to their king and country; they helped to make David king (v. 10)—a good work. They slew the Philistines, and other public enemies, and were instrumental to save Israel. Note, The way to be great is to do good. Nor did they gain this honour without labour and the hazard of their lives. The honours of Christ's kingdom are prepared for those that *fight the good fight of faith*, that labour and suffer, and are willing to venture all, even life itself, for Christ and a good conscience. It is by a patient continuance in well-doing that we must seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; and those that are faithful to the Son of David shall find their names registered and enrolled much more to their honour than these are in the records of fame.

IV. Among all the great exploits of David's mighty men, here is nothing great mentioned concerning David himself but his *pouring out water before the Lord* which he had *longed for*, v. 18, 19. Four very honourable dispositions of David appeared in that action, which, for aught I know, made it as great as any of the achievements of those worthies. 1. Repentance for his own weakness. It is really an honour to a man, when he is made sensible that he has said or done any thing unadvisedly, to unsay it and undo it again by repentance, as it is a shame to a man when he has said or done amiss to stand to it. 2. Denial of his own appetite. He longed for the water of the well of Bethlehem; but, when he had it, he would not drink it, because he would not so far humour himself and gratify a foolish fancy. He that has such a rule as this *over his own spirit is better than the mighty*. It is an honour to a man to have the command of himself; but he that will command himself must sometimes cross himself. 3. Devotion towards God. That water which he thought too good, too precious, for his own drinking, he *poured out to the Lord* for a *drink offering*. If we have any thing better than another, let God be honoured with it, who is the best, and should have the best. 4. Tenderness of his servants. It put him into the greatest confusion imaginable to think that three brave men should hazard their lives to fetch water for him. In his account it turns the water into blood. It is the honour of great men not to be prodigal of the blood of those they employ, but, in all the commands they give them, to put their own souls into their souls' stead.

V. In the wonderful achievements of these heroes the power of God must be acknowledged. How could one slay 300 and another the same number (v. 11, 20), another two lion-like men (v. 22), and another an Egyptian giant (v. 23), if they had not had the extraordinary presence of God with them, according to that promise, Jos. 23:10, *One man of you shall chase a*

thousand, for the Lord your God fighteth for you?

VI. One of these worthies is said to be *an Ammonite* (v. 39), another *a Moabite* (v. 46), and yet the law was that an *Ammonite* and *a Moabite should not enter into the congregation of the Lord*, Deu. 23:3. These, it is likely, had approved themselves so hearty for the interest of Israel that in their case it was thought fit to dispense with that law, and the rather because it was an indication that the Son of David would have worthies among the Gentiles: with him there is neither Greek nor Jew.

Chapter 12

What the mighty men did towards making David king we read in the foregoing chapter. Here we are told what the many did towards it. It was not all at once, but gradually, that David ascended the throne. His kingdom was to last; and therefore, like fruits that keep longest, it ripened slowly. After he had long waited for the vacancy of the throne, it was at two steps and those above seven years distant, that he ascended it. Now we are here told, I. What help came in to him to Ziklag, to make him king of Judah (v. 1–22). II. What help came in to him in Hebron, to make him king over all Israel, above seven years after (v. 23–40).

Verses 1-22

We have here an account of those that appeared and acted as David's friends, upon the death of Saul, to bring about the revolution. All the forces he had, while he was persecuted, was but 600 men, who served for his guards; but, when the time had come that he must begin to act offensively, Providence brought in more to his assistance. Even while he *kept himself close, because of Saul* (v. 1), while he did not appear, to invite or encourage his friends and well-wishers to come in to him (not foreseeing that the death of Saul was so near), God was inclining and preparing them to come over to him with seasonable succours. Those that trust God to do his work for them in his own way and time shall find his providence outdoing all their forecast and contrivance. The war was God's, and he found out helpers of the war, whose forwardness to act for the man God designed for the government is here recorded to their honour.

I. Some, even of Saul's brethren, of the tribe of Benjamin, and a-kin to him, came over to David, v. 2. What moved them to it we are not told. Probably a generous indignation at the base treatment which Saul, one of their tribe, gave him, animated them to appear the more vigorously for him, that the guilt and reproach of it might not lie upon them. These Benjamites are described to be men of great dexterity, that were trained up in shooting and slinging, and used both hands alike—ingenious active men; a few of these might do David a great deal of service. Several of the leading men of them are here named. See Jdg. 20:16.

II. Some of the tribe of Gad, though seated on the other side Jordan, had such a conviction of David's title to the government, and fitness for it, that they *separated themselves from their brethren* (a laudable separation it was) to go to David, though he was *in the hold in the wilderness* (v. 8), probably some of his strong holds in the wilderness of Engedi. They were but few, eleven in all, here named, but they added much to David's strength. Those that had hitherto come in to his assistance were most of them men of broken fortunes, distressed, discontented, and soldiers of fortune, that came to him rather for protection than to do him any service, 1 Sa. 22:2. But these Gadites were brave men, *men of war, and fit for the battle*, v. 8. For, 1. They were *able-bodied men*, men of incredible swiftness, not to fly from, but to fly upon, the enemy, and to pursue the scattered forces. In this they were *as swift as the roes upon the mountains*, so that no man could escape from them; and yet they had *faces like the faces of lions*, so that no man could out-fight them. 2. They were disciplined men, trained up to military exercises; they could handle shield and buckler, use both offensive and defensive weapons. 3. They were officers of the militia in their own tribe (v.

14), so that though they did not bring soldiers with them they had them at command, hundreds, thousands. 4. They were daring men, that could break through the greatest difficulties. Upon some expedition or other, perhaps this to David, they swam over the Jordan, when it *overflowed all its banks*, v. 15. Those are fit to be employed in the cause of God that can venture thus in a dependence upon the divine protection. 5. They were men that would go through with the business they engaged in. What enemies those were that they met with in the valleys, when they had passed Jordan, does not appear; but they put them to flight with their lion-like faces, and pursued them with matchless fury, both *towards the east and towards the west*; which way soever they turned, they followed their blow, and did not do their work by halves.

III. Some of Judah and Benjamin came to him, v. 16. Their leader was Amasai, whether the same with that Amasa that afterwards sided with Absalom (2 Sa. 17:25) or no does not appear. Now here we have,

1. David's prudent treaty with them, v. 17. He was surprised to see them, and could not but conceive some jealousy of the intentions of their coming, having been so often in danger by the treachery of the men of Ziph and the men of Keilah, who yet were all men of Judah. He might well be timorous whose life was so much struck at; he might well be suspicious who had been deceived in so many that he said, in his haste, *All men are liars*. No marvel that he meets these men of Judah with caution.

Observe,

(1.) How he puts the matter to themselves, how fairly he deals with them. As they are, they shall find him; so shall all that deal with the Son of David. [1.] If they be faithful and honourable, he will be their rewarder: "*If you have come peaceably unto me, to help me*, though you have come late and have left me exposed a great while, though you bring no great strength with you to turn the scale for me, yet I will thankfully accept your good-will, and *my heart shall be knit unto you*; I will love you and honour you, and do you all the kindness I can." Affection, respect, and service, that are cordial and sincere, will find favour with a good man, as they do with a good God, though clogged with infirmities, and turning to no great account. But, [2.] If they be false, and come to betray him into the hands of Saul, under colour of friendship, he leaves them to God to be their avenger, as he is, and will be, of every thing that is treacherous and perfidious. Never was man more violently run upon, and run down, than David was (except the Son of David himself), and yet he had the testimony of his conscience that there was no wrong in his hands. He meant no harm to any man, which was his rejoicing in the day of evil, and enabled him, when he feared treachery, to commit his cause to him that judges righteously. He will not be judge in his own cause, though a wise man, nor avenge himself, though a man of valour; but let the righteous God, who hath said, *Vengeance is mine*, do both. *The God of our fathers look thereon and rebuke it*.

(2.) In this appeal observe, [1.] He calls God the *God of our fathers*, both his fathers and theirs. Thus he reminded them not to deal ill with him; for they were both descendants from the same patriarchs, and both dependents on the same God. Thus he encouraged himself to believe that God would right him if he should be abused; for he was the *God of his fathers* and therefore a blessing was entailed on him, and a God to all Israel and therefore not only a Judge to all the earth, but particularly concerned in determining controversies between contesting Israelites. [2.] He does not imprecate any fearful judgement upon them, though they should deal treacherously, but very modestly refers his cause to the divine wisdom and justice: The Lord *look*

thereon, and judge as he sees (for he sees men's hearts), and *rebuke it*. It becomes those that appeal to God to express themselves with great temper and moderation; for the wrath of man *works not the righteousness of God*.

2. Their hearty closure with him, v. 18. Amasai was their spokesman, on whom the *Spirit of the Lord came*, not a spirit of prophecy, but a spirit of wisdom and resolution, according to the occasion, putting words into his mouth, unpremeditated, which were proper both to give David satisfaction and to animate those that accompanied him. Nothing could be said finer, more lively, or more pertinent to the occasion. For himself and all his associates, (1.) He professed a very cordial adherence to David, and his interest, against all that opposed him, and a resolution to stand by him with the hazard of all that was dear to him: *Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse*. In calling him *son of Jesse* they reminded themselves that he was lineally descended from Nahshon and Salmon, who in their days were princes of the tribe of Judah. Saul called him so in disdain (1 Sa. 20:27; 22:7), but they looked upon it as his honour. They were convinced that God was on his side; and therefore, *Thine are we, David, and on thy side*. It is good, if we must side, to side with those that side with God and have God with them. (2.) He wished prosperity to David and his cause, not drinking a health, but praying for peace to him and all his friends and well-wishers: *"Peace, peace, be unto thee, all the good thy heart desires, and peace be to thy helpers, among whom we desire to be reckoned, that peace may be on us."* (3.) He assured him of help from heaven: *"For thy God helpeth thee; therefore we wish peace may be, and therefore we doubt not but peace shall be, to thee and thy helpers. God is thy God, and those that have him for their God no doubt have him for their helper in every time of need and danger."* From these expressions of Amasai we may take instruction how to testify our affection and allegiance to the Lord Jesus. His we must be without reservation or power of revocation. On his side we must be forward to appear and act. To his interest we must be hearty well-wishers: "Hosanna! prosperity to his gospel and kingdom;" for his God helpeth him, and will till he shall have put down all opposing rule, principality, and power.

3. David's cheerful acceptance of them into his interest and friendship. Charity and honour teach us to let fall our jealousies as soon as satisfaction is given us: *David received them*, and preferred them to be *captains of the band*.

IV. Some of Manasseh likewise joined with him, v. 19. Providence gave them a fair opportunity to do so when he and his men marched through their country upon this occasion. Achish took David with him when he went out to fight with Saul; but the lords of the Philistines obliged him to withdraw. We have the story, 1 Sa. 29:4, etc. In his return some great men of Manasseh, who had no heart to join with Saul against the Philistines struck in with David, and very seasonably, to help him *against the band of Amelekites* who plundered Ziklag; they were not many, but they were all mighty men and did David good service upon that occasion, 1 Sa. 30. See how Providence provides. David's interest grew strangely just when he had occasion to make use of it, v. 22. Auxiliary forces flocked in daily, *till he had a great host*. When the promise comes to the birth, leave it to God to find strength to bring forth.

Verses 23-40

We have here an account of those who were active in perfecting the settlement of David upon the throne, after the death of Ishbosheth. We read (ch. 11:1, and before 2 Sa. 5:1) that *all the tribes of Israel came*, either themselves or by their

representatives, to Hebron, to make David king; now here we have an account of the quota which every tribe brought in *ready armed to the war*, in case there should be any opposition, v. 23. We may observe here,

I. That those tribes that lived nearest brought the fewest—Judah but 6800 (v. 24), Simeon but 7100 (v. 25); whereas Zebulun, that lay remote, brought 50,000, Asher 40,000, and the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan 120,000. Not as if the next adjacent tribes were cold in the cause; but they showed as much of their prudence in bringing few, since all the rest lay so near within call, as the others did of their zeal in bringing so many. The men of Judah had enough to do to entertain those that came from afar.

II. The Levites themselves, and the priests (called here the *Aaronites*), appeared very hearty in this cause, and were ready, if there were occasion, to fight for David, as well as pray for him, because they knew he was called of God to the government, v. 26–28.

III. Even some of the kindred of Saul came over to David (v. 29), not so many as of the other tribes, because a foolish affection for their own tribe, and a jealousy for the honour of it, kept many of them long in the sinking interest of Saul's family. Kindred should never over-rule conscience. Call no man *Father* to this extent, but God only.

IV. It is said of most of these that they were *mighty men of valour* (v. 25, 28, 30), of others that they were *expert in war* (v. 35, 36), and of them all that they *could keep rank*, v. 38. They had a great deal of martial fire, and yet were governable and subject to the rules of order—warm hearts but cool heads.

V. Some were so considerate as to bring with them arms, and all instruments for war (v. 24, 33, 37), for how could they think that David should be able to furnish them?

VI. The men of Issachar were the fewest of all, only 200, and yet as serviceable to David's interest as those that brought in the greatest numbers, these few being in effect the whole tribe. For, 1. They were men of great skill above any of their neighbours, men that *had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do*. They understood the natural times, could *discern the face of the sky*, were weather-wise, could advise their neighbours in the proper times for ploughing, sowing reaping, etc. Or the ceremonial times, the times appointed for the solemn feasts; therefore they are said to *call the people to the mountain* (Deu. 33:19), for almanacs were not then so common as now. Or, rather, the political times; they understood public affairs, the temper of the nation, and the tendencies of the present events. It is the periphrasis of statesmen that they *know the times*, Esth.

1. 13. Those of that tribe were greatly intent on public affairs, had good intelligence from abroad and made a good use of it. They knew *what Israel ought to do*: from their observation and experience they learned both their own and others' duty and interest. In this critical juncture they knew Israel ought to make David king. It was not only expedient, but necessary; the present posture of affairs called for it. The men of Issachar dealt mostly in country business, and did not much intermeddle in public affairs, which gave them an opportunity of observing others and conversing with themselves. A stander-by sees sometimes more than a gamester. 2. They were men of great interests; for *all their brethren were at their commandment*. The commonality of that tribe having *bowed their shoulder to bear* (Gen. 49:15), the great men had them at their beck. Hence we read of *the princes of Issachar*, Jdg. 5:15. They knew how to rule, and the rest knew how to obey. It is happy indeed when

those that should lead are intelligent and judicious, and those who are to follow are modest and obsequious.

VII. It is said of them all that they engaged in this enterprise *with a perfect heart* (v. 38), and particularly of the men of Zebulun that they were *not of double heart*, v. 33. They were, in this matter, *Israelites indeed, in whom was no guile*. And this was their perfection, that they were of one heart, v. 38. None had any separate interests, but all for the public good.

VIII. The men of Judah, and others of the adjacent tribes, prepared for the victualling of their respective camps when they came to Hebron, v. 39, 40. Those that were at the least pains in travelling to this convention, or congress of states, thought themselves obliged to be at so much the more charge in entertaining the rest, that there might be something of an equality. A noble feast was made (was *made for laughter*, Eccl. 10:19) upon this occasion, for there was *joy in Israel*, v. 40. And good reason; for *when the righteous bear rule the city rejoices*. Thus, when the throne of Christ is set up in a soul, there is, or ought to be, great joy in that soul: and provision is made for the feasting of it, not as here for two or three days, but for the whole life, nay, for eternity.

Chapter 13

In the foregoing chapter we have David made king, by which the civil government was happily settled. In this chapter care is taken about religion. I. David consults with the representatives of the people about bringing up the ark out of its obscurity into a public place; and it is resolved on (v. 1-4). II. With a great deal of solemnity and joy, it is carried from Kirjathjearim (v. 5-8). III. Uzza is struck dead for touching it, which, for the present, spoils the solemnity and stops the proceedings (v. 9-14).

Verses 1-8

Here is, I. David's pious proposal to bring up the ark of God to Jerusalem, that the royal city might be the holy city, v. 1-3. This part of the story we had not in Samuel. We may observe in this proposal,

1. That as soon as David was well seated on his throne he had thoughts concerning the ark of God: *Let us bring the ark to us*, v. 3. Two things he aimed at herein:—(1.) To do honour to God, by showing respect to his ark, the token of his presence. As soon as he had power in his hand he would use it for the advancement and encouragement of religion. Note, It ought to be the first and great care of those that are enriched and preferred to honour God with their honours, and to serve him, and the interests of his kingdom among men, with their wealth and power. David said not, "What pompous thing shall I do now?" or, "What pleasant thing?" but, "What pious thing?" (2.) To have the comfort and benefit of that sacred oracle. "Let us bring it to us, not only that we may be a credit to it, but that it may be a blessing to us." Those that honour God profit themselves. Note, It is the wisdom of those who are setting out in the world to take God's ark with them, to make his oracles their counsellors and his laws their rule. Those are likely to proceed in the favour of God who thus begin in the fear of God.

2. That he consulted with the leaders of the people about it, v. 1. Though it was without doubt a very good work, and being king, he had the authority to command the doing of it, yet he chose rather to do it by consultation, (1.) That he might show respect to the great men of the kingdom and put honour upon them. Though they made him king, yet he would not rule with a high hand. He did not say, "We will and command, and it is our royal pleasure, that you do so and so; and we will be obeyed," but, "*If it seem good to you*, and you think that the motion comes from the Lord our God, let us send out orders for this purpose." No prince that is wise will covet to be absolute. The people's allegiance is best secured by taking their concurrence in their representatives. Happy then art thou, O Britain! (2.) That he might be advised by them in the manner of doing it, whether just now, whether publicly. David was a very intelligent man himself, and yet consulted with his captains; *for in the multitude of counsellors there is safety*. It is wisdom to make use of the wisdom of others. (3.) That, they joining in it, it might pass the better for a national act and so might procure a national blessing.

3. That he would have all the people summoned to attend on this occasion, both for the honour of the ark and for the people's satisfaction and edification, v. 2. Observe, (1.) He calls the common people *brethren*, which bespeaks his humility and condescension (notwithstanding his advancement), and the tender concern he had for them. Thus our Lord Jesus is not ashamed to call his people brethren, Heb. 2:11. (2.) He speaks of the people as a remnant that had escaped: *Our brethren that are left in all the land of Israel*. They had been under scattering providences. Their wars with the Philistines, and with the

house of Saul, had wasted the country and cut off many. We now hope to see an end of these troubles. Let those that are left be quickened by late judgments, and present mercies, to seek unto God. (3.) He takes care that the priests and Levites especially should be summoned to attend the ark; for it was their province in a particular manner. Thus Christian magistrates should stir up ministers to do their duty when they see them remiss.

4. That all this is upon supposition that it is *of the Lord their God*. "Though it should *seem good to you* and me, yet if it be not *of the Lord our God*, we will not do it." What ever we undertake, this must be our enquiry, "Is it of the Lord? Is it agreeable to his mind? Can we approve ourselves to him in it? May we expect that he will own us?"

5. That thus it was requisite they should amend what has been amiss in the last reign, and, as it were, atone for their neglect: "For *we enquired not at it in the days of Saul*, and this was the reason why things went so ill with us: let that original error be amended, and then we may hope to see our affairs in a better posture." Observe, David makes no peevish reflections upon Saul. He does not say, "Saul never cared for the ark, at least in the latter end of this reign;" but, in general, *We enquired not at it*, making himself with others guilty of this neglect. It better becomes us to judge ourselves than others. Humble good men lament their own share in national guilt, and take shame to themselves, Dan. 9:5, etc.

II. The people's ready agreement to this proposal (v. 4): *The thing was right in the eyes of all the people*. Nobody could say to the contrary, but that it was a very good work and very seasonable; so that it was resolved, *nemine contradicente—unanimously*, that they would do so. Those that prudently proposed a good work, and lead in it, will perhaps find a more ready concurrence in it than they expected. Great men know not what a great deal of good they are capable of doing by their influence on others.

III. The solemnity of bringing up the ark, v. 5, etc., which we read before, 2 Sa. 6:1, etc. Here therefore we shall only observe, 1. That it is worth while to travel far to attend the ark of God. They came out of all parts of the country, from the *river of Egypt*, the utmost part south, to the entering of Hemath, which lay furthest north, (v. 5), to grace this solemnity. 2. That we have reason greatly to rejoice in the revival of neglected ordinances and the return of the tokens of God's presence. When the light of religion shines out of obscurity, when it is openly and freely professed, is brought into reputation, and countenanced by princes and great ones, it is such a happy omen to a people as is worthy to be welcomed with all possible expressions of joy. 3. When, after long disuse, ordinances come to be revived, it is too common for even wise and good men to make some mistakes. Who would have thought that David would commit such an error as this, to carry the ark upon a cart? v. 7. because the Philistines so carried it, and a special providence drove the cart (1 Sa. 6:12), he thought they might do so too. But we must walk by rule, not by example when it varies from the rule, no, not even by those examples which Providence has owned.

Verses 9-14

This breach upon Uzza, which caused all the joy to cease, we had an account of, 2 Sa. 6:6, etc. 1. Let the sin of Uzza warn us all to take heed of presumption, rashness, and irreverence, in dealing about holy things (v. 9), and not to think that a good intention will justify a bad action. In our communion with God we must carefully watch over our own hearts, lest familiarity breed contempt, and we think God is in any way beholden to us. 2. Let the punishment of Uzza convince us that the God with

whom we have to do is a jealous God. His death, like that of Nadab and Abihu, proclaims aloud that God will be *sanctified in those that come nigh unto him* (Lev. 10:3), and that the nearer any are to him the more displeased he is with their presumptions. Let us not dare to trifle with God in our approaches to him; and yet let us, through Christ, *come boldly to the throne of grace*; for we are under the dispensation of liberty and grace, not of bondage and terror. 3. Let the damp this gave to the joy of Israel be a memorandum to us always to rejoice with trembling, and to *serve the Lord with fear*, even when we *serve him with gladness*. 4. Let David's displeasure upon this occasion caution us to take heed to our spirits when we are under divine rebukes, lest, instead of submitting to God, we quarrel with him. If God be angry with us, shall we dare to be angry with him? 5. Let the stop thus put to the solemnity caution us not to be driven off from our duty by those providences which are only intended to drive us from our sins. David should have gone on with the work notwithstanding the breach made upon Uzza; so might the breach have been made up. 6. Let the blessing which the ark brought with it to the house of Obed-edom encourage us to welcome God's ordinances into our houses, as those that believe the ark is a guest that nobody shall lose by; not let it be less precious to us for its being to some a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. If the gospel be to some a savour of death unto death, as the ark was to Uzza, yet let us receive it in the love of it and it will be to us a saviour of life unto life.

Chapter 14

In this chapter we have, I. David's kingdom established (v. 1, 2). II. His family built up (v. 3-7). III. His enemies, the Philistines, routed in two campaigns (v. 8-17). This is repeated here from 2 Sa. 5:11, etc.

Verses 1-7

We may observe here, 1. There is no man that has such a sufficiency in himself but he has need of his neighbours and has reason to be thankful for their help: David had a very large kingdom, Hiram a very little one; yet David could not build himself a house to his mind unless Hiram furnished him with both workmen and materials, v. 1. This is a reason why we should despise none, but, as we have opportunity, be obliging to all. 2. It is a great satisfaction to a wise man to be settled, and to a good man to see the special providences of God in his settlement. The people had made David king; but he could not be easy, nor think himself happy, till he perceived that *the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel*, v. 2. "Who shall unfix me if God hath fixed me?" 3. We must look upon all our advancements as designed for our usefulness. *David's kingdom was lifted up on high*, not for his own sake, that he might look great, but *because of his people Israel*, that he might be a guide and protector to them. We are blessed in order that we may be blessings. See Gen. 12:2. We are not born, nor do we live, for ourselves. 4. It is difficult to thrive without growing secure and indulgent to the flesh. It was David's infirmity that when he settled in his kingdom *he took more wives* (v. 3), yet the numerous issue he had added to his honour and strength. Lo, *children are a heritage of the Lord*. We had an account of David's children, not only in Samuel, but in this book (ch. 3:1, etc.) and now here again; for it was their honour to have such a father.

Verses 8-17

This narrative of David's triumph over the Philistines is much the same with that, 2 Sa. 5:17, etc. 1. Let the attack which the Philistines made upon David forbid us to be secure in any settlement or advancement, and engage us to expect molestation in this world. When we are most easy something or other may come to be a terror or vexation to us. Christ's kingdom will thus be insulted by the serpent's seed, especially when it makes any advances. 2. Let David's enquiry of God, once and again, upon occasion of the Philistines' invading him, direct us in all our ways to acknowledge God—in distress to fly to him, when we are wronged to appeal to him, and, when we know not what to do, to ask counsel at his oracles, to put ourselves under his direction, and to beg of him to show us the right way. 3. Let David's success encourage us to resist our spiritual enemies, in observance of divine directions and dependence on divine strength. Resist the devil, and he shall flee as the Philistines did before David. 4. Let the sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees direct us to attend God's motions both in his providence and in the influences of his Spirit. When we perceive God to go before us let us gird up our loins, gird on our armour, and follow him. 5. Let David's burning the gods of the Philistines, when they fell into his hands, teach us a holy indignation against idolatry and all the remains of it. 6. Let David's thankful acknowledgment of the hand of God in his successes direct us to bring all our sacrifices of praise to God's altar. *Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but to thy name give glory*. 7. Let the reputation which David obtained, not only in his kingdom, but among his neighbours, be looked upon as a

type and figure of the exalted honour of the Son of David (v. 17): *The fame of David went out into all lands*; he was generally talked of, and admired by all people, and *the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations*. All looked upon him as a formidable enemy and a desirable ally. Thus has God highly exalted our Redeemer, and given him a name above every name.

Chapter 15

The bringing in of the ark to the city of David was a very good work; it was resolved upon (13:4), and attempted, but not perfected; it lay by the way in the house of Obed-edom. Now this chapter gives us an account of the completing of that good work. I. How it was done more regularly than before. 1. A place was prepared for it (v. 1). 2. The priests were ordered to carry it (v. 2–15). 3. The Levites had their offices assigned them in attending on it (v. 16–24). II. How it was done more successfully than before (v. 25). 1. The Levites made no mistake in their work (v. 26). 2. David and the people met with no damp upon their joy (v. 27, 28). As for Michal's despising David, it was nothing (v. 29).

Verses 1-24

Preparation is here made for the bringing of the ark home to the city of David from the house of Obed-edom. It is here owned that in the former attempt, though it was a very good work and in it they *sought God*, yet they *sought him, not after the due order*, v. 13. "We did not go about our work considerately; and therefore we sped so ill." Note, It is not enough that we do that which is good, but we must do it well—not enough that we seek God in a due ordinance, but we must seek after him, in a due order. Note, also, When we have suffered for our irregularities we must learn thereby to be more regular; then we answer the end of chastisement. Let us see how the matter was mended. 1. David now prepared a place for the reception of the ark, before he brought it to him; and thus he sought in the due order. He had not time to *build a house*, but he *pitched a tent* for it (v. 1), probably according to the pattern shown to Moses in the mount, or as near it as might be, of curtains and boards. Observe, When he made houses for himself in the city of David he prepared a place for the ark. Note, Wherever we build for ourselves, we must be sure to make room for God's ark, for a church in the house. 2. David now ordered that the Levites or priests should carry the ark upon their shoulders. Now he bethought himself of that which he could not but know before, that, *none ought to carry the ark but the Levites*, v. 2. The Kohathites carried it in their ordinary marches, and therefore had no wagons allotted them, because their work was to *bear upon their shoulders*, Num. 7:9. But upon extraordinary occasions, as when they passed Jordan and compassed Jericho, the priests carried it. This rule was express, and yet David himself forgot it, and put the ark upon a cart. Note, Even those that are very knowing in the word of God, yet have it not always so ready to them as were to be wished when they have occasion to use it. Wise and good men may be guilty of an oversight, which, as soon as they are aware of, they will correct. David did not go about to justify what had been done amiss, nor to lay the blame on others, but owned himself guilty, with others, of not seeking God in a due order, and now took care not only to summon the Levites to the solemnity, as he did all Israel (v. 3), and had done before (ch. 13:2), but to see that they assembled (v. 4), especially the sons of Aaron, v. 11. To them he gives the solemn charge (v. 12): *You are the chief of the fathers of the Levites*, therefore do you *bring up the ark of the Lord*. It is expected that those who are advanced above others in dignity should go before others in duty. "You are the chief, and therefore more is expected from you than from others, both by way of service yourselves and influence on the rest. You did it not at first, neither did your duty yourselves nor took care to instruct us, and we smarted for it: *The Lord made a breach upon us*; we have all smarted for your neglect; *this has been by your means* (see Mal. 1:9): therefore *sanctify*

yourselves, and mind your business." When those that have suffered for doing ill thus learn to do better the correction is well bestowed. 3. The Levites and priests sanctified themselves (v. 14) and were ready to carry the ark on their shoulders, according to the law, v. 15. Note, Many that are very remiss in their duty, if they were but faithfully told of it, would reform and do better. The breach upon Uzza made the priests more careful to sanctify themselves, that is, to cleanse themselves from all ceremonial pollution and to compose themselves for the solemn service of God, so as to strike a reverence upon the people. Some are made examples, that others may be made exemplary and very cautious. 4. Officers were appointed to be ready to bid the ark welcome, with every possible expression of joy, v. 16. David ordered the chief of the Levites to nominate those that they knew to be proficient for this service. Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were now first appointed, v. 17. They undertook to sound with symbols (v. 19), others with psalteries (v. 20), others with harps, on the *Sheminith*, or *eighth*, eight notes higher or lower than the rest, according to the rules of the concert, v. 21. Some that were priests blew with the trumpet (v. 24), as was usual at the removal of the ark (Num. 10:8) and at solemn feasts, Ps. 81:3. And one was appointed for song (v. 22), for he was skilful in it, could sing well himself and instruct others. Note, As every man has *received the gift*, so he ought to *minister the same*, 1 Pt. 4:10. And those that excel in any endowment should not only use it for the common good themselves, but teach others also, and not grudge to make others as wise as themselves. This way of praising God by musical instruments had not hitherto been in use. But David, being a prophet, instituted it by divine direction, and added it to the other *carnal ordinances* of that dispensation, as the apostle calls them, Heb. 9:10. The New Testament keeps up singing of psalms, but has not appointed church-music. Some were appointed to be porters (v. 18), others door-keepers for the ark (v. 23, 24), and one of these was Obed-edom, who reckoned it no doubt a place of honour, and accepted it as recompence for the entertainment he had given to the ark. He had been for three months housekeeper to the ark, and indeed its landlord. But, when he might not be so any longer, such an affection had he for it that he was glad to be its door-keeper.

Verses 25-29

All things being got ready for the carrying of the ark to the city of David, and its reception there, we have here an account of the solemnity of this conveyance thither from the house of Obed-edom.

I. God helped the Levites that carried it. The ark was no very great burden, that those who carried it needed any extraordinary help. But, 1. It is good to take notice of the assistance of the divine providence even in those things that fall within the compass of our natural powers: if God did not help us, we could not stir a step. 2. In all our religious exercises we must particularly derive help from heaven. See Acts 26:22. All our sufficiency for holy duties is from God. 3. The Levites, remembering the breach upon Uzza, were probably ready to tremble when they took up the ark; but God helped them, that is, he encouraged them to it, silenced their fears, and strengthened their faith. 4. God helped them to do it decently and well, and without making any mistake. If we perform any religious duties so as to escape a breach, and come off with our lives, we must own it is God that helps us; for, if left to ourselves, we should be guilty of some fatal miscarriages. God's ministers that bear the vessels of the Lord have special need of divine help in their ministrations, that God in them may be glorified and his church edified. And, if God help the Levites, the people have the benefit of it.

II. When they experienced the tokens of God's presence with them they offered sacrifices of praise to him, v. 26. This also he helped them to do. They offered these bullocks and rams perhaps by way of atonement for the former error, that it might not now be remembered against them, as well as by way of acknowledgment for the help now received.

III. There were great expressions of rejoicing used: the sacred music was played, David danced, the singers sang, and the common people shouted, v. 27, 28. This we had before, 2 Sa. 6:14, 15. Learn hence, 1. That we serve a good master, who delights to have his servants sing at their work. 2. That times of public reformation are, and should be, times of public rejoicing. Those are unworthy of the ark that are not glad of it. 3. It is not any disparagement to the greatest of men to show themselves zealous in the acts of devotion. Michal indeed despised David (v. 29); but *her* despising him did not make him at all despicable; he did not regard it himself, nor did any that were wise and good (and why should we covet the esteem of any but such?) think the worse of him.

Chapter 16

This chapter concludes that great affair of the settlement of the ark in the royal city, and with it the settlement of the public worship of God during the reign of David. Here is, I. The solemnity with which the ark was fixed (v. 1-6). II. The psalm David gave to be sung on this occasion (v. 7-36). III. The settling of the stated public worship of God in order thenceforward (v. 37-43).

Verses 1-6

It was a glorious day when the ark of God was safely lodged in the tent David had pitched for it. That good man had his heart much upon it, could not sleep contentedly till it was done, Ps. 132:4, 5.

I. The circumstances of the ark were now, 1. Better than what they had been. It had been obscure in a country town, in the fields of the wood; now it was removed to a public place, to the royal city, where all might resort to it. It had been neglected, as a despised broken vessel; now it was attended with veneration, and God was enquired of by it. It had borrowed a room in a private house, which it enjoyed by courtesy; now it had a habitation of its own entirely to itself, was set in the midst of it, and not crowded into a corner. Note, Though God's word and ordinances may be clouded and eclipsed for a time, they shall at length shine out of obscurity. Yet, 2. They were much short of what was intended in the next reign, when the temple was to be built. This was but a tent, a poor mean dwelling; yet this was the tabernacle, the temple which David in his psalms often speaks of with so much affection. David, who pitched a tent for the ark and continued steadfast to it, did far better than Solomon, who built a temple for it and yet in his latter end turned his back upon it. The church's poorest times were its purest.

II. Now David was easy in his mind, the ark was fixed, and fixed near him. Now see how he takes care, 1. That God shall have the glory of it. Two ways he gives him honour upon this occasion:—(1.) By sacrifices (v. 1), burnt-offerings in adoration of his perfections, peace-offerings in acknowledgment of his favours. (2.) By songs: he appointed Levites to record this story in a song for the benefit of others, or to celebrate it themselves by *thanking and praising the God of Israel*, v. 4. All our rejoicings must express themselves in thanksgivings to him from whom all our comforts are received. 2. That the people shall have the joy of it. They shall fare the better for this day's solemnity; for he gives them all what is worth coming for, not only a royal treat in honour of the day (v. 3), in which David showed himself generous to his subjects, as he had found God gracious to him (those whose hearts are enlarged with holy joy should show it by being open-handed); but (which is far better) he gives them also a *blessing in the name of the Lord*, as a father, as a prophet, v. 2. He prayed to God for them, and commended them to his grace. *In the name of the Word of the Lord* (so the Targum), the essential eternal Word, who is Jehovah, and through whom all blessings come to us.

Verses 7-36

We have here the thanksgiving psalm which David, by the Spirit, composed, and delivered to the chief musician, to be sung upon occasion of the public entry the ark made into the tent prepared for it. Some think he appointed this hymn to be daily used in the temple service, as duly as the day came; whatever other psalms they sung, they must not omit this. David had

penned many psalms before this, some in the time of his trouble by Saul. This was composed before, but was now first delivered into the hand of Asaph, for the use of the church. It is gathered out of several psalms (from the beginning to v. 23 is taken from Ps. 105:1, etc.; and then v. 23 to v. 34 is the whole 96th psalm, with little variation; v. 34 is taken from Ps. 136:1 and divers others; and then the last two verses are taken from the close of Ps. 106), which some think warrants us to do likewise, and make up hymns out of David's psalms, a part of one and a part of another put together so as may be most proper to express and excite the devotion of Christians. These psalms will be best expounded in their proper places (if the Lord will); here we take them as they are put together, with a design to *thank the Lord* (v. 7), a great duty, to which we need to be excited and in which we need to be assisted. 1. Let God be glorified in our praises; let his honour be the centre in which all the lines meet. Let us glorify him by our thanksgivings (*Give thanks to the Lord*), by our prayers (*Call on his name*, v. 8), by our songs (*Sing psalms unto him*), by our discourse—*Talk of all his wondrous works*, v. 9. Let us glorify him as *a great God, and greatly to be praised* (v. 25), as supreme God (above all gods), as sole God, for all others are idols, v. 26. Let us glorify him as most bright and blessed in himself (*Glory and honour are in his presence*, v. 27), as creator (*The Lord made the heavens*), as the ruler of the whole creation (*His judgments are in all the earth*, v. 14), and as ours—*He is the Lord our God*. Thus must we *give unto the Lord the glory due to his name* (v. 28, 29), and own it, and much more, his due. 2. Let other be edified and instructed: *Make known his deeds among the people* (v. 8), *declare his glory among the heathen* (v. 24), that those who are strangers to him may be led into acquaintance with him, allegiance to him, and the adoration of him. Thus must we serve the interests of his kingdom among men, that all the earth may *fear before him*, v. 30. 3. Let us be ourselves encouraged to triumph and trust in God. Those that give glory to God's name are allowed to *glory in it* (v. 10), to value themselves upon their relation to God and venture themselves upon his promise to them. *Let the heart of those rejoice that seek the Lord*, much more of those that have found him. *Seek him, and his strength, and his face*: that is, seek him by the ark of his strength, in which he manifests himself. 4. Let the everlasting covenant be the great matter of our joy and praise (v. 15): *Be mindful of his covenant*. In the parallel place it is, *He will be ever mindful of it*, Ps. 105:8. Seeing God never will forget it, we never must. The covenant is said to be *commanded*, because God has obliged us to obey the conditions of it, and because he has both authority to make the promise and ability to make it good. This covenant was ancient, yet never to be forgotten. It was made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were long since dead (v. 16–18), yet still sure to the spiritual seed, and the promises of it pleadable. 5. Let God's former mercies to his people of old, to our ancestors and our predecessors in profession, be commemorated by us now with thankfulness to his praise. Let it be remembered how God protected the patriarchs in their unsettled condition. When they came strangers to Canaan and were sojourners in it, when they were few and might easily have been swallowed up, when they were continually upon the remove and so exposed, when there were many that bore them ill-will and sought to do them mischief, yet no man was suffered to do them wrong—not the Canaanites, Philistines, Egyptians. Kings were reprov'd and plagued for their sakes. Pharaoh was so, and Abimelech. They were the *anointed of the Lord*, sanctified by his grace, sanctified by his glory, and had received the unction of the Spirit. They were his prophets, instructed in the things of God themselves and commissioned to instruct others (and prophets are said to be *anointed*, 1 Ki. 19:16; Isa. 61:1); therefore, if any touch them, they

touch the apple of God's eye; if any harm them, it is at their peril, v. 19–22. 6. Let the great salvation of the Lord be especially the subject of our praises (v. 23): *Show forth from day to day his salvation*, that is (says bishop Patrick), his promised salvation by Christ. We have reason to celebrate that from day to day; for we daily receive the benefits of it, and it is a subject that can never be exhausted. 7. Let God be praised by a due and constant attendance upon him in the ordinances he has appointed: *Bring an offering*, then the fruit of the *ground*, now the fruit of the *lips*, of the *heart* (Heb. 13:15), and *worship him in the beauty of holiness*, in the holy places and in a holy manner, v. 29. Holiness is the beauty of the Lord, the beauty of all sanctified souls and all religious performances. 8. Let God's universal monarchy be the fear and joy of all people. Let us reverence it: *Fear before him, all the earth*. And let us rejoice in it: *Let the heavens be glad and rejoice*, because *the Lord reigns*, and by his providence establishes the world, so that, though it be moved, it cannot be removed, nor the measures broken which Infinite Wisdom has taken in the government of it, v. 30, 31. 9. Let the prospect of the judgment to come inspire us with an awful pleasure, Let earth and sea, fields and woods, though in the great day of the Lord they will all be consumed, yet rejoice that he will come, doth come, to *judge the earth*, v. 32, 33. 10. In the midst of our praises we must not forget to pray for the succour and relief of those saints and servants of God that are in distress (v. 35): *Save us, gather us, deliver us from the heathen*, those of us that are scattered and oppressed. When we are rejoicing in God's favours to us we must remember our afflicted brethren, and pray for their salvation and deliverance as our own. We are members one of another; and therefore when we mean, "Lord, save *them*," it is not improper to say, "Lord, save *us*." Lastly, Let us make God the Alpha and Omega of our praises. David begins with (v. 8), *Give thanks to the Lord*; he concludes (v. 36), *Blessed be the Lord*. And whereas in the place whence this doxology is taken (Ps. 106:48) it is added, *Let all the people say, Amen, Hallelujah*, here we find they did according to that directory: *All the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord*. When the Levites had finished this psalm or prayer and praise, then, and not till then, the people that attended signified their consent and concurrence by saying, *Amen*, And so they praised the Lord, much affected no doubt with this newly instituted way of devotion, which had been hitherto used in the schools of the prophets only, 1 Sa. 10:5. And, if this way of praising God *please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock that has horns and hoofs, the humble shall see it and be glad*, Ps. 69:31, 32.

Verses 37-43

The worship of God is not only to be the work of a solemn day now and then, brought in to grace a triumph; but it ought to be the work of every day. David therefore settles it here for a constancy, puts it into a method, which he obliged those that officiated to observe in their respective posts. In the tabernacle of Moses, and afterwards in the temple of Solomon, the ark and the altar were together; but, ever since Eli's time, they had been separated, and still continued so till the temple was built. I cannot conceive what reason there was why David, who knew the law and was zealous for it, did not either bring the ark to Gibeon, where the tabernacle and the altar were, or bring them to Mount Zion, where the ark was. Perhaps the curtains and hangings of Moses's tabernacle were so worn with time and weather that they were not fit to be removed, nor fit to be a shelter for the ark; and yet he would not make all new, but only a tent for the ark, because the time was at hand when the temple should be built. Whatever was the reason, all David's time they were asunder, but he took care that neither of them should be

neglected. 1. At Jerusalem, where the ark was, Asaph and his brethren were appointed to attend, to *minister before the ark continually*, with songs of praise, *as every day's work required*, v. 37. No sacrifices were offered there, nor incense burnt, because the altars were not there: but David's prayers were *directed as incense, and the lifting up of his hands as the evening sacrifice* (Ps. 141:2), so early did spiritual worship take place of ceremonial. 2. Yet the ceremonial worship, being of divine institution, must by no means be omitted; and therefore at Gibeon were the altars where the priests attended, for their work was to sacrifice and burn incense, which they did *continually, morning and evening, according to the law of Moses*, v. 39, 40. These must be kept up because, however in their own nature they were inferior to the moral services of prayer and praise, yet, as they were types of the mediation of Christ, they had a great deal of honour put upon them, and the observance of them was of great consequence. Here Zadok attended, to preside in the service of the altar; as (it is probable) Abiathar settled at Jerusalem, to attend the ark, because he had the breast-plate of judgment, which must be consulted before the ark: this is the reason why we read in David's time both Zadok and Abiathar were the priests (2 Sa. 8:17; 20:25), one where the altar was and the other where the ark was. At Gibeon, where the altars were, David also appointed *singers to give thanks to the Lord*, and the burden of all their songs must be, *For his mercy endureth for ever*, v. 41. They did it *with musical instruments of God*, such instruments as were appointed and appropriated to this service, not such as they used on other occasions. Between common mirth and holy joy there is a vast difference, and the limits and distances between them must be carefully observed and kept up. Matters being thus settled, and the affairs of religion put into a happy channel, (1.) The people were satisfied, and went home pleased. (2.) David returned to bless his house, resolving to keep up family worship still, which public worship must not supersede.

Chapter 17

This excellent chapter is the same with 2 Sa. 7. It will be worth while to look back upon what was there said upon it. Two things in general we have in it:—I. God's gracious acceptance of David's purpose to build him a house, and the promise he made thereupon (v. 1–15). II. David's gracious acceptance of God's good promise to build him a house, and the prayer he made thereupon (v. 16–27).

Verses 1-15

Let us observe here,

I. How desirous and solicitous good people should be to serve the interests of God's kingdom in the world, to the utmost of their capacity. David could not be easy in a house of cedar while the ark was lodged within curtains, v. 1. The concerns of the public should always be near our hearts. What pleasure can we take in our own prosperity if we see not the good of Jerusalem? When David is advanced to wealth and power see what his cares and projects are. Not, "What shall I do for my children to get portions for them? What shall I do to fill my coffers and enlarge my dominions?" But, "What shall I do for God, to serve and honour him?" Those that are contriving where to bestow their fruits and their good would do well to enquire what condition the ark is in, and whether some may not be well bestowed upon it.

II. How ready God's prophets should be to encourage every good purpose. Nathan was no sooner aware of David's good design than he bade him *go and do all that was within his heart* (v. 2), for he had no reason to doubt but that God was with him in it. Ministers should stir up the gifts and graces that are in others as well as in themselves.

III. How little God affects external pomp and splendour in his service. His ark was content with a tabernacle (v. 5) and he never so much as mentioned the building of a house for it; no, not when he had fixed his people in great and goodly cities which they builded not, Deu. 6:10. He commanded the judges to *feed his people*, but never bade them *build him a house*, v. 6. We may well be content awhile with mean accommodations; God's ark was so.

IV. How graciously God accepts his people's good purposes, yea, though he himself prevents the performance of them. David must not *build this house*, v. 4. He must prepare for it, but not do it; as Moses must bring Israel within sight of Canaan, but must them leave it to Joshua to put them in possession of it. It is the prerogative of Christ to be both the author and finisher of his work. Yet David must not think that, because he was not permitted to build the temple, 1. His preferment was in vain; no, "*I took thee from the sheep-cote*, though not to be a builder of the temple, yet to be *ruler over my people Israel*; that is honour enough for thee; leave the other to one that shall come after thee," v. 7. Why should one man think to engross all the business and to bring every good work to perfection? Let something be left for those that succeed. God had given him victories, and made him a name (v. 8), and, further, intended by him to establish his people Israel and secure them against their enemies, v. 9. That must be *his* work, who is a man of war and fit for it, and he must let the building of churches be left to one that was never cut out for a soldier. Nor, 2. Must he think that his good purpose was in vain, and that he should lose the reward of it; no, it being God's act to prevent the execution of it, he shall be as fully recompensed as if he had done it; "*The Lord will build thee a*

house, and annex the crown of Israel to it," v. 10. If there be a willing mind, it shall not only be accepted, but thus rewarded. Nor, 3. Must he think that because *he* might not do this good work therefore it would never be done, and that it was in vain to think of it; no, *I will raise up thy seed, and he shall build me a house*, v. 11, 12. God's temple shall be built in the time appointed, though we may not have the honour of helping to build it or the satisfaction of seeing it built. Nor, 4. Must he confine his thoughts to the temporal prosperity of his family, but must entertain himself with the prospect of the kingdom of the Messiah, who should descend from his loins, and whose throne should be *established for evermore*, v. 14. Solomon was not himself so settled in God's house as he should have been, nor was his family settled in the kingdom: "But there shall one descend from thee whom I will settle in my house and in my kingdom," which intimates that he should be both a high priest over the house of God and should have the sole administration of the affairs of God's kingdom among men, all power both in heaven and in earth, in the house and in the kingdom, in the church and in the world. He shall be *a priest upon his throne*, and *the counsel of peace shall be between them both*, and *he shall build the temple of the Lord*, Zec. 6:12, 13.

Verses 16-27

We have here David's solemn address to God, in answer to the gracious message he had now received from him. By faith he receives the promises, embraces them, and is persuaded of them, as the patriarchs, Heb, 11:13. How humbly does he here abase himself, and acknowledge his own unworthiness! How highly does he advance the name of God and admire his condescending grace and favour! With what devout affections does he magnify the God of Israel and what a value has he for the Israel of God! With what assurance does he build upon the promise, and with what a lively faith does he put it in suit! What an example is this to us of humble, believing, fervent prayer! The Lord enable us all thus to seek him! These things were largely observed, 2 Sa. 7. We shall therefore here observe only those few expressions in which the prayer, as we find it here, differs from the record of it there, and has something added to it.

I. That which is there expressed by way of question (*Is this the manner of men, O Lord God?*) is here an acknowledgment: "*Thou hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree*. Thou hast made me a great man, and then treated me accordingly." God, by the covenant-relations into which he admits believers, the titles he gives them, the favours he bestows on them, and the preparations he has made for them, regards them according to the estate of men of high degree, though they are mean and vile. Having himself distinguished them, he treats them as persons of distinction, according to the quality he has been pleased to put upon them. Some give these words here another reading: "*Thou hast looked upon me in the form of a man who art in the highest, the Lord God; or, Thou hast made me to see according to the form of a man the majesty of the Lord God.*" And so it points at the Messiah; for, as Abraham, so David, saw his day and was glad, saw it by faith, saw it in *fashion as a man, the Word made flesh*, and yet saw his *glory as that of the only-begotten of the Father*. And this was that which God spoke concerning his house for a great while to come, the foresight of which affected him more than any thing. And let it not be thought strange that David should speak so plainly of the two natures of Christ who in spirit called him *Lord*, though he knew he was to be his *Son* (Ps. 110:1), and foresaw him *lower than the angels* for a little while, but afterwards *crowned with glory and honour*, Heb. 2:6, 7.

II. After the words *What can David say more unto thee*, it is here added, *for the honour of thy servant?* v. 18. Note, The honour God puts upon his servants, by taking them into covenant and communion with himself, is so great that they need not, they cannot, desire to be more highly honoured. Were they to sit down and wish, they could not speak more for their own honour than the word of God has spoken.

III. It is very observable that what in Samuel is said to be *for thy word's sake* is here said to be *for thy servant's sake*, v. 19. Jesus Christ is both *the Word of God* (Rev. 19:13) and *the servant of God* (Isa. 42:1), and it is for his sake, upon the score of his meditation, that the promises are both made and made good to all believers; it is in him that they are *yea and amen*. For his sake is all kindness done, for his sake it is made known; to him we owe all this greatness and from him we are to expect all these great things; they are *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, which, if by faith we see in themselves and see in the hand of the Lord Jesus, we cannot but magnify as great things, the only true greatness, and speak honourably of accordingly.

IV. In Samuel, the Lord of hosts is said to be the *God over Israel*; here he is said to be *the God of Israel, even a God to Israel*, v. 24. His being the *God of Israel* bespeaks his having the name of *their God* and so calling himself; his being a *God to Israel* bespeaks his answering to the name, his filling up the relation, and doing all that to them which might be expected from him. There were those that were called *gods* of such and such nations, gods of Assyria and Egypt, gods of Hamad and Arpad; but they were no gods to them, for they stood them in no stead at all, were mere ciphers, nothing but a name. But *the God of Israel* is a *God to Israel*; all his attributes and perfections redound to their real benefit and advantage. *Happy therefore, thrice happy, is the people whose God is Jehovah*; for he will be a God to them, a God all-sufficient.

V. The closing words in Samuel are, *With thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever*. That is the language of a holy desire. But the closing words here are the language of a most holy faith: *For thou blessest, O Lord! and it shall be blessed for ever*, v. 27. 1. He was encouraged to beg a blessing because God had intimated to him that he had blessings in store for him and his family: *"Thou blessest, O Lord! and therefore unto thee shall all flesh come for a blessing; unto thee do I come for the blessing promised to me."* Promises are intended to direct and excite prayer. Has God said, *I will bless?* Let our hearts answer, *Lord, bless me*, 2. He was earnest for the blessing because he believed that those whom God blesses are truly and eternally blessed: *Thou blessest, and it shall be blessed*. Men can but *beg* the blessing; it is God that *commands* it. What he designs he effects; what he promises he performs; saying and doing are not two things with him. Nay, *it shall be blessed for ever*. His blessings shall not be revoked, cannot be opposed, and the benefits conferred by them are such as will survive time and days. David's prayer concludes as God's promise did (v. 14) with that which is *for ever*. God's word looks at things eternal, and so should our desires and hopes.

Chapter 18

David's piety and his prayer we had an account of in the foregoing chapter; here follows immediately that which one might reasonably expect, an account of his prosperity; for those that seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, as David did, shall have other things added to them as far as God sees good for them. Here is, I. His prosperity abroad. He conquered the Philistines (v. 1), the Moabites (v. 2), the king of Zobah (v. 3, 4), the Syrians (v. 5-8), made the king of Hamath his tributary (v. 9-11), and the Edomites (v. 12, 13). II. His prosperity at home. His court and kingdom flourished (v. 14-17). All this we had an account of before, 2 Sa. 8.

Verses 1-8

After this, it is said (v. 1), David did those great exploits. After the sweet communion he had had with God by the word and prayer, as mentioned in the foregoing chapter, he went on his work with extraordinary vigour and courage, *conquering and to conquer*. Thus Jacob, after his vision, lifted up his feet, Gen. 29:1.

We have taken a view of these victories before, and shall now only observe, 1. Those that have been long enemies to the Israel of God will be brought down at last. The Philistines had, for several generations, been vexatious to Israel, but now *David subdued them*, v. 1. Thus shall all opposing *rule, principality, and power*, be, at the end of time, put down by the Son of David, and the most inveterate enemies shall fall before him. 2. Such is the uncertainty of this world that frequently men lose their wealth and power when they think to confirm it. Hadarezer was smitten *as he went to establish his dominion*, v. 3. 3. *A horse is a vain thing for safety*, so David said (Ps. 33:17), and it seems he believed what he said, for he *houghed the chariot-horses*, v. 4. Being resolved not to trust to them (Ps. 20:7), he would not use them. 4. The enemies of God's church are often made to ruin themselves by helping one another, v. 5. The Syrians of Damascus were smitten when they came to help Hadarezer. When hand thus joins in hand they shall not only not go unpunished, but thereby they shall be gathered *as the sheaves into the floor*, Mic. 4:11, 12. 5. The *wealth of the sinner* sometimes proves to have been *laid up for the just*. The *Syrians brought gifts*, v. 6. Their shields of gold and their brass were brought to Jerusalem, v. 7, 8. As the tabernacle was built of the spoils of the Egyptians, so the temple of the spoils of other Gentile nations, a happy presage of the interest the Gentiles should have in the gospel church.

Verses 9-17

Here let us learn, 1. That it is our interest to make those our friends who have the presence of God with them. The king of Hamath, hearing of David's great success, sent to congratulate him and to court his favour with a noble present, v. 9, 10. It is in vain to contend with the Son of David. *Kiss the Son*, therefore, *lest he be angry*; let the kings and judges of the earth, and all inferior people too, be thus wise, thus instructed. The presents we are to bring him are not *vessels of gold and silver*, as here (those shall be welcomed to him who have no such presents to bring), but our hearts and sincere affections, our whole selves, we must present to him as living sacrifices. 2. That what God blesses us with we must honour him with. The presents of his friends, as well as the spoils of his enemies, *David dedicated unto the Lord* (v. 11), that is, he laid them up towards the

building and enriching of the temple. That is most truly and most comfortably our own which we have consecrated unto the Lord, and which we use for his glory. Let our *merchandise and our hire be holiness to the Lord*, Isa. 23:18. 3. That those who take God along with them whithersoever they go may expect to prosper, and be preserved, whithersoever they go. It was said before (v. 6) and here it is repeated (v. 13) that *the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went*. Those are always under the eye of God that have God always in their eye. 4. God gives men power, not that they may look great with it, but that they may do good with it. When David reigned over all Israel he *executed judgment and justice among all his people*, and so answered the end of his elevation. He was not so intent on his conquests abroad as to neglect the administration of justice at home. Herein he served the purposes of the kingdom of providence, and of that God who *sits in the throne judging right*; and he was an eminent type of the Messiah, the *sceptre of whose kingdom is a right sceptre*.

Chapter 19

The story is here repeated of David's war with the Ammonites and the Syrians their allies, and the victories he obtained over them, which we read just as it is here related, 2 Sa. 10. Here is, I. David's civility to the king of Ammon, in sending an embassy of condolence to him on occasion of his father's death (v. 1, 2). II. His great incivility to David, in the base usage he gave to his ambassadors (v. 3, 4). III. David's just resentment of it, and the war which broke out thereupon, in which the Ammonites acted with policy in bringing the Syrians to their assistance (v. 6, 7), Joab did bravely (v. 8–13), and Israel was once and again victorious (v. 14–19).

Verses 1-5

Let us here observe, 1. That it becomes good people to be neighbourly, and especially to be grateful. David will pay respect to Hanun because he is his neighbour; and religion teaches us to be civil and obliging to all, to honour all men, and to be ready to do all offices of kindness to those we live among; nor must difference in religion be any obstruction to this. But, besides this, David remembered the kindness which his father showed to him. Those that have received kindness must return it as they have ability and opportunity: those that have received it from the parents must return it to the children when they are gone. 2. That, as saith the proverb of the ancients, *Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked*, 1 Sa. 24:13. The vile person will speak villany, and the instruments of the churl will be evil, to *destroy those with lying words that speak right*, Isa. 32:6, 7. Those that are base, and design ill themselves, are apt to be jealous and to suspect ill of others without cause. Hanun's servant suggested that David's ambassadors came as spies, as if so great and mighty a man as David needed to do so mean a thing (if he had any design upon the Ammonites, he could effect it by open force, and had no occasion for any fraudulent practices), or as if a man of such virtue and honour would do so base a thing. Yet Hanun hearkened to the suggestion, and, against the law of nations, treated David's ambassadors villainously. 3. Masters ought to protect their servants, and with the greatest tenderness to concern themselves for them if they come by any loss or damage in their service. David did so for his ambassadors, v. 5. Christ will do so for his ministers; and let all masters thus *give unto their servants that which is just and equal*.

Verses 6-19

We may see here, 1. How the hearts of sinners that are marked for ruin are hardened to their destruction. The children of Ammon saw that *they had made themselves odious to David* (v. 6), and then it would have been their wisdom to desire conditions of peace, to humble themselves and offer any satisfaction for the injury they had done him, the rather because they had made themselves not only odious to David, but obnoxious to the justice of God, who is *King of nations*, and will assert the injured rights and maintain the violated laws of nations. But, instead of this, they prepared for war, and so brought upon themselves, by David's hand, those desolations which he never intended them. 2. How the courage of brave men is heightened and invigorated by difficulties. When Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind (v. 10), instead of meditating a retreat, he doubled his resolution; and, though he could not double, he divided his army, and not only spoke, but acted, like a gallant man, that had great presence of mind when he saw himself surrounded. He engaged with his brother for

mutual assistance (v. 12), excited himself and the rest of the officers to act vigorously in their respective posts, with an eye to God's glory and their country's good, not to any honour and advantage of their own, and then left the issue to God: *Let the Lord do that which is right in his sight.* 3. How vain the greatest art and strength are against justice and equity. The Ammonites did their utmost to make the best of their position: they brought as good a force into the field, and disposed it with as much policy as possible; yet, having a bad cause, and acting in defence of wrong, it would not do; they were put to the worst. Right will prevail and triumph at last. 4. To how little purpose it is for those to rally again, and reinforce themselves, that have not God on their side. The Syrians, though in no way concerned in the merits of the cause, but serving only as mercenaries to the Ammonites, when they were beaten, thought themselves concerned to retrieve their honour, and therefore called in the assistance of the Syrians on the other side Euphrates; but to no purpose, for still they *fled before Israel* (v. 18); they lost 7000 men, who are said to be the men of 700 chariots, 2 Sa. 10:18. For, as now in a man of war for sea-service they allot ten men to a gun, so then, in land-service, ten men to a chariot. 5. those who have *meddled with strife that belongs not to them*, and have found that they *meddled to their own heart*, do well to learn wit at length and meddle no further. The Syrians, finding that Israel was the conquering side, not only broke off their alliance with the Ammonites and would help them no more (v. 19), *but made peace with David and became his servants.* Let those who have in vain stood it out against God be thus wise for themselves, and *agree with him quickly, while they are in the way.* Let them become his servants; for they cannot but see themselves undone if they be his enemies.

Chapter 20

Here is a repetition of the story of David's wars, I. With the Ammonites, and the taking of Rabbah (v. 1-3). II. With the giants of the Philistines (v. 4-8).

Verses 1-3

How the army of the Ammonites and their allies was routed in the field we read in the foregoing chapters. Here we have the destruction of Rabbah, the metropolis of their kingdom (v. 1), the putting of their king's crown upon David's head (v. 2), and the great severity that was used towards the people, v. 3. Of this we had a more full account in 2 Sa. 11, 12, and cannot but remember it by this sad token, that while Joab was besieging Rabbah David fell into that great sin in the matter of Uriah. But it is observable that, though the rest of the story is repeated, that is not: a hint only is given of it, in those words which lie here in a parenthesis—*But David tarried at Jerusalem*. If he had been abroad with his army, he would have been out of the way of that temptation; but, indulging his ease, he fell into uncleanness. Now, as the relating of the sin David fell into is an instance of the impartiality and fidelity of the sacred writers, so the avoiding of the repetition of it here, when there was a fair occasion given to speak of it again, is designed to teach us that, though there may be a just occasion to speak of the faults and miscarriages of others, yet we should not take delight in the repetition of them. That should always be looked upon as an unpleasing subject which, though sometimes one cannot help falling upon, yet one would not choose to dwell upon, any more than we should love to rake in a dunghill. The persons, or actions, we can say no good of, we had best say nothing of.

Verses 4-8

The Philistines were nearly subdued (ch. 18:1); but, as in the destruction of the Canaanites by Joshua the sons of Anak were last subdued (Jos. 11:21), so here in the conquest of the Philistines the giants of Gath were last brought down. In the conflicts between grace and corruption there are some sins which, like these giants, keep their ground a great while and are not mastered without much difficulty and a long struggle: but judgment will be brought forth unto victory at last. Observe, 1. We never read of giants among the Israelites as we do of the giants among the Philistines-giants of Gath, but not giants of Jerusalem. The growth of God's plants is in usefulness, not in bulk. Those who covet to have *cubits added to their stature* do not consider that it will but make them more unwieldy. In the balance of the sanctuary David far outweighs Goliath. 2. The servants of David, though men of ordinary stature, were too hard for the giants of Gath in every encounter, because they had God on their side, who takes pleasure in abasing lofty looks, and mortifying the giants that are in the earth, as he did of old by the deluge, though they were men of renown. Never let the church's friends be disheartened by the power and pride of the church's enemies. We need not fear great men against us while we have the great God for us. What will a finger more on each hand do, or a toe more on each foot, in contest with Omnipotence? 3. These giants *defied Israel* (v. 7) and were thus made to pay for their insolence. None are more visibly marked for ruin than those who reproach God and his Israel. God will do great things rather than suffer the enemy to *behave themselves proudly*, Deu. 32:27. The victories of the Son of David, like those of David himself, are gradual. *We see not yet all things put under him*; but it will be seen shortly: and death itself, the last enemy, like these giants,

will be triumphed over.

Chapter 21

As this rehearsal makes no mention of David's sin in the matter of Uriah, so neither of the troubles of his family that followed upon it; not a word of Absalom's rebellion, or Sheba's. But David's sin, in numbering the people, is here related, because, in the atonement made for that sin, an intimation was given of the spot of ground on which the temple should be built. Here is, I. David's sin, in forcing Joab to number the people (v. 1-6). II. David's sorrow for what he had done, as soon as he perceived the sinfulness of it (v. 7, 8). III. The sad dilemma (or trilemma rather) he was brought to, when it was put to him to choose how he would be punished for this sin, and what rod he would be beaten with (v. 9-13). IV. The woeful havoc which was made by the pestilence in the country, and the narrow escape which Jerusalem had from being laid waste by it (v. 14-17). V. David's repentance, and sacrifice, upon this occasion, and the staying of the plague thereupon (v. 18-30). This awful story we met with, and meditated upon, 2 Sa. 24.

Verses 1-6

Numbering the people, one would think, was no bad thing. Why should not the shepherd know the number of his flock? But God sees not as man sees. It is plain it was wrong in David to do it, and a great provocation to God, because he did it in the pride of his heart; and there is no sin that has in it more of contradiction and therefore more of offence to God than pride. The sin was David's; he alone must bear the blame of it. But here we are told,

I. How active the tempter was in it (v. 1): *Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David* to do it. It is said (2 Sa. 24:1) that *the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David* to do it. The righteous judgments of God are to be observed and acknowledged even in the sins and unrighteousness of men. We are sure that God is not the author of sin—he *tempts no man*; and therefore, when it is said that he moved David to do it, it must be explained by what is intimated here, that, for wise and holy ends, he permitted the devil to do it. Here we trace this foul stream to its foundation. That Satan, the enemy of God and all good, should *stand up against Israel*, is not strange; it is what he aims at, to weaken the strength, diminish the numbers, and eclipse the glory of God's Israel, to whom he is *Satan*, a sworn *adversary*. But that he should influence David, the man of God's own heart to do a wrong thing, may well be wondered at. One would think him one of those whom the wicked one touches not. No, even the best saints, till they come to heaven, must never think themselves out of the reach of Satan's temptations. Now, when Satan meant to do Israel a mischief, what course did he take? He did not *move God against them to destroy them* (as Job, ch 2:3), but he provoked David, the best friend they had, to number them, and so to offend God, and set him against them. Note, 1. The devil does us more mischief by tempting us to sin against our God than he does by accusing us before our God. He destroys none but by their own hands, 2. The greatest spite he can do to the church of God is to tempt the rulers of the church to pride; for none can conceive the fatal consequences of that sin in all, especially in church-rulers. *You shall not be so*, Lu. 22:26.

II. How passive the instrument was. Joab, the person whom David employed, was an active man in public business; but to this he was perfectly forced, and did it with the greatest reluctance imaginable.

1. He put in a remonstrance against it before he began it. No man more forward than he in any thing that really tended to the honour of the king or the welfare of the kingdom; but in this matter he would gladly be excused. For, (1.) It was a needless thing. there was not occasion at all for it. God had promised to multiply them, and he needed not question the accomplishment of that promise. They were all his servants, and he needed not doubt of their loyalty and affection to him. Their number was as much his strength as he could desire. (2.) It was a dangerous thing. In doing it he might be a cause of trespass to Israel, and might provoke God against them. This Joab apprehended, and yet David himself did not. The most learned in the laws of God are not always the most quick-sighted in the application of those laws.

2. He was quite weary of it before he had done it; for *the king's word was abominable to Joab*, v. 6. Time was when whatever king David did *pleased all the people*, 2 Sa. 3:36. But now there was a general disgust at these orders, which confirmed Joab in his dislike of them. so that, though the produce of this muster was really very great, yet he had no heart to perfect it, but left two tribes unnumbered (v. 5, 6), two considerable ones, Levi and Benjamin, and perhaps was not very exact in numbering the rest, because he did not do it with any pleasure, which might be one occasion of the difference between the sums here and 2 Sa. 24:9.

Verses 7-17

David is here under the rod for numbering the people, that rod of correction which drives out the foolishness that is bound up in the heart, the foolishness of pride. Let us briefly observe,

I. How he was corrected. If God's dearest children do amiss, they must expect to smart for it. 1. He is given to understand that God is displeased; and that it is no small uneasiness to so good a man as David, v. 7. God takes notice of, and is displeased with, the sins of his people; and no sin is more displeasing to him than pride of heart: nor is anything more humbling, and grieving, and mortifying to a gracious soul, than to see itself under God's displeasure. 2. He is put to his choice whether he will be punished by war, famine, or pestilence; for punished he must be, and by one of these. Thus, for his further humiliation, he is put into a strait, a great strait, and has the terror of all the three judgments impressed upon his mind, no doubt to his great amazement, while he is considering which he shall choose. 3. He hears of 70,000 of his subjects who in a few hours were struck dead by the pestilence, v. 14. He was proud of the multitude of his people, but divine Justice took a course to make them fewer. Justly is that taken from us, weakened, or embittered to us, which we are proud of. David must have the people numbered: *Bring me the number of them*, says he, *that I may know it*. But now God numbers them after another manner, *numbers to the sword*, Isa. 65:12. And David had another number of them brought, more to his confusion than was to his satisfaction, namely, the number of the slain—a black bill of mortality, which is a drawback to his muster-roll. 4. He sees the destroying angel, with his sword drawn against Jerusalem, v. 16. This could not but be very terrible to him, as it was a visible indication of the anger of Heaven, and threatened the utter destruction of that beloved city. Pestilences make the greatest devastations in the most populous places. The sight of an angel, though coming peaceably and on a friendly errand, has made even mighty men to tremble; how dreadful then must this sight be of an angel with a drawn sword in his hand, a flaming sword, like that of the cherubim, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life! While we lie under the wrath of

God the holy angels are armed against us, though we see them not as David did.

II. How he bore the correction. 1. He made a very penitent confession of his sin, and prayed earnestly for the pardon of it, v. 8. Now he owned that he had sinned, had sinned greatly, had done foolishly, very foolishly; and he entreated that, however he might be corrected for it, the iniquity of it might be done away. 2. He accepted the punishment of his iniquity: "Let thy hand be *on me, and on my father's house*, v. 17. I submit to the rod, only let me be the sufferer, for I am the sinner; mine is the guilty head at which the sword should be pointed." 3. He cast himself upon the mercy of God (though he knew he was angry with him) and did not entertain any hard thoughts of him. However it be, *Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great*, v. 13. Good men, even when God frowns upon them, think well of him. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*. 4. He expressed a very tender concern for the people, and it went to his heart to see them plagued for his transgression: *These sheep, what have they done?*

Verses 18-30

We have here the controversy concluded, and, upon David's repentance, his peace made with God. *Though thou wast angry with me, thy anger is turned away*. 1. A stop was put to the progress of the execution, v. 15. When David repented of the sin God repented of the judgment, and ordered the destroying angel to *stay his hand and sheath his sword*, v. 27. 2. Direction was given to David to rear an altar in the threshing-floor of Ornan, v. 18. The angel commanded the prophet Gad to bring David this direction. The same angel that had, in God's name, carried on the war, is here forward to set on foot the treaty of peace; for angels do not desire the woeful day. The angel could have given this order to David himself; but he chose to do it by his seer, that he might put an honour upon the prophetic office. Thus the revelation of Jesus Christ was notified by the angel to John, and by him to the churches. The commanding of David to build an altar was a blessed token of reconciliation; for, if God had been pleased to kill him, he would not have appointed, because he would not have accepted, a sacrifice at his hands. 3. David immediately made a bargain with Ornan for the threshing-floor; for he would not serve God at other people's charge. Ornan generously offered it to him gratis, not only in complaisance to the king, but because he had himself *seen the angel* (v. 20), which so terrified him that he and his four sons hid themselves, as unable to bear the brightness of his glory and afraid of his drawn sword. Under these apprehensions he was willing to do anything towards making the atonement. Those that are duly sensible of the terrors of the Lord will do all they can, in their places, to promote religion, and encourage all the methods of reconciliation for the turning away of God's wrath. 4. God testified his acceptance of David's offerings on this altar; He *answered him from heaven by fire*, v. 26. To signify that God's anger was turned away from him, the fire that might justly have fastened upon the sinner fastened upon the sacrifice and consumed that; and, upon this, the destroying sword was returned into its sheath. Thus Christ was made sin and a curse for us, and it pleased the Lord to bruise him, that through him God might be to us, not a consuming fire, but a reconciled Father. 5. He continued to offer his sacrifices upon this altar. The brazen altar which Moses made was at Gibeon (v. 29), and there all the sacrifices of Israel were offered; but David was so terrified at the sight of the sword of the angel that he *could not go thither*, v. 30. The business required haste, when the plague was begun. Aaron must go quickly, nay, he must *run*, to make atonement, Num. 16:46, 47. And the case here was no less urgent; so that

David had not time to go to Gibeon: nor durst he leave the angel with his sword drawn over Jerusalem, lest the fatal stroke should be given before he came back. And therefore God, in tenderness to him, bade him build an altar in that place, dispensing with his own law concerning one altar because of the present distress, and accepting the sacrifices offered on this new altar, which was not set up in opposition to that, but in concurrence with it. The symbols of unity were not so much insisted on as unity itself. Nay, when the present distress was over (as it should seem), David, as long as he lived, sacrificed there, though the altar at Gibeon was still kept up; for God had owned the sacrifices that were here offered and had testified his acceptance of them, v. 28. On those administrations in which we have experienced the tokens of God's presence, and have found that he is with us of a truth, it is good to continue our attendance. "Here God had graciously met me, and therefore I will still expect to meet with him."

Chapter 22

"Out of the eater comes forth meat." It was upon occasion of the terrible judgment inflicted on Israel for the sin of David that God gave intimation of the setting up of another altar, and of the place where he would have the temple to be built, upon which David was excited with great vigour to make preparation for that great work, wherein, though he had long since designed it, it should seem, he had, of late, grown remiss, till awakened by the alarm of that judgment. The tokens of God's favour he received after those of his displeasure, I. Directed him to the place (v. 1). II. Encouraged and quickened him to the work. 1. He set himself to prepare for the building (v. 2-5). 2. He instructed Solomon, and gave him a charge concerning this work (v. 6-16). 3. He commanded the princes to assist him in it (v. 17-19). There is a great deal of difference between the frame of David's spirit in the beginning of the former chapter and in the beginning of this. There, in the pride of his heart, he was numbering the people; here, in his humility, preparing for the service of God. There corruption was uppermost (but the well of living water in the soul, though it may be muddied, will work itself clear again); grace here has recovered the upper hand.

Verses 1-5

Here is, I. The place fixed for the building of the temple (v. 1): *Then David said*, by inspiration of God, and as a declaration of his mind, *This is the house of the Lord God*. If a temple must be built for God, it is fit that it be left to him to choose the ground, for all the earth is his; and this is the ground he makes choice of—ground that pertained to a Jebusite, and perhaps there was not a spot of ground besides, in or about Jerusalem, that did so—a happy presage of the setting up of the gospel temple among the Gentiles. See Acts 15:16, 17. The ground was a threshing-floor; for the church of the living God is his floor, his threshing, and *the corn of his floor*, Isa. 21:10. Christ's fan is in his hand, thoroughly to purge his floor. This is to be the house because this is the altar. The temple was built for the sake of the altar. There were altars long before there were temples.

II. Preparation made for that building. David must not build it, but he would do all he could towards it: He *prepared abundantly before his death*, v. 5. This intimates that the consideration of his age and growing infirmities, which showed him his death approaching, quickened him, towards his latter end, to be very diligent in making this preparation. What our hands find to do for God, and our souls, and our generation, let us do it with all our might before our death, because, after death, there is no device nor working. Now we are here told,

1. What induced him to make such preparation. Two things he considered:—(1.) That Solomon was young and tender, and not likely to apply with any great vigour to this business at first; so that, unless he found the wheels set a-going, he would be in danger of losing a great deal of time at first, the rather because, being young, he would be tempted to put it off; whereas, if he found the materials got ready to his hand, the most difficult part of the work would be over, and this would excite and encourage him to go about it in the beginnings of his reign. Note, Those that are aged and experienced should consider those that are young and tender, and provide them what help they can, that they may make the work of God as easy to them as possible. (2.) That the house must be exceedingly magnificent, very stately and sumptuous, strong and beautiful, every thing about it the best in its kind, and for a good reason, since it was intended for the honour of the great God, the Lord of the whole

earth, and was to be a type of Christ, in whom all fulness dwells and in whom are hid all treasures. Men were then to be taught by sensible methods. The grandeur of the house would help to affect the worshippers with a holy awe and reverence of God, and would invite strangers to come to see it, and the wonder of the world, who thereby would be brought acquainted with the true God. Therefore it is here designed to be of fame and glory throughout all countries. David foretold this good effect of its being magnificent, Ps. 68:29 *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.*

2. What preparation he made. In general, he prepared abundantly, as we shall find afterwards; cedar and stones, iron and brass, are here specified, v. 2-4. Cedar he had from the Tyrians and the Zidonians. *The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift*, Ps. 45:12. He also got workmen together, *the strangers that were in the land of Israel*. Some think that he employed them because they were generally better artists, and more ingenious in manual operations, than the Israelites; or, rather, because he would not employ the free-born Israelites in any thing that looked mean and servile. They were delivered from the bondage of making bricks in Egypt, and must not return to hew stone. These strangers were proselytes to the Jewish religion, but, though not enslaved, they were not of equal dignity with Israelites.

Verses 6-16

Though Solomon was young and tender, he was capable of receiving instructions, which his father accordingly gave him, concerning the work for which he was designed. When David came to the throne he had many things to do, for the foundations were all out of course; but Solomon had only one thing in charge, and that was *to build a house for the Lord God of Israel*, v. 6. Now,

I. David tells him why he did not do it himself. It was in his mind to do it (v. 7), but God forbade him, because *he had shed much blood*, v. 8. Some think this refers to the blood of Uriah, which fastened such a reproach upon him as rendered him unworthy the honour of building the temple: but that honour was forbidden him before he had shed that blood; therefore it must be meant, as it is here explained, of the blood he shed in his wars (for he had been a man of war from his youth), which, though shed very justly and honourably in the service of God and Israel, yet made him unfit to be employed in this service, or rather less fit than another that had never been called to such bloody work. God, by assigning this as the reason of laying David aside from this work, showed how precious human life is to him, and intended a type of him who should build the gospel temple, not by *destroying men's lives*, but by *saving them*, Lu. 9:56.

II. He gives him the reason why he imposed this task upon him. 1. Because God had designed him for it, nominated him as the man that should do it: *A son shall be born to thee, that shall be called Solomon, and he shall build a house for my name*, v. 9, 10. Nothing is more powerful to engage us to any service for God, and encourage us in it, than to know that hereunto we are appointed. 2. Because he would have leisure and opportunity to do it. He should be a man of rest, and therefore should not have his time, or thoughts, or wealth, diverted from this business. He should have rest from his enemies abroad (none of them should invade or threaten him, or give him provocation), and he should have peace and quietness at home; and therefore let him build the house. Note, Where God gives rest he expects work. 3. Because God had promised to establish his kingdom. Let this encourage him to honour God, that God had honour in store for him; let him build up God's house, and God will build up

his throne. Note, God's gracious promises should quicken and invigorate our religious service.

III. He delivers him an account of the vast preparations he had made for this building (v. 14), not in a way of pride and vain glory (he speaks of it as a poor thing—*I have, in my poverty, prepared*, margin), but as an encouragement to Solomon to engage cheerfully in the work, for which so solid a foundation was laid. The treasure here mentioned of the 100,000 talents of gold, and 1,000,000 talents of silver, amounts to such an incredible sum that most interpreters either allow an error in the copy or think the talent here signifies no more than a plate or piece: *ingots* we call them. I am inclined to suppose that a certain number is here put for an uncertain, because it is said (v. 16) that of the gold and silver, as well as of the brass and iron, there was no number, and that David here includes all the dedicated things (ch. 18:11) which he designed *for the house of the Lord*, that is, not only for the building of it, but for the treasure of it; and putting all together, it might come pretty near what is here spoken of. Hundreds and thousands are numbers which we often use to express that which is very much, when yet we would not be understood strictly.

IV. He charges them to keep God's commandments and to take heed to his duty in every thing, v. 13. He must not think by building the temple to purchase a dispensation to sin; no, on the contrary, his doing that would not be accepted, nor accounted of, if he did not *take heed to fulfil the statutes which the Lord charged Moses with*, v. 13. Though he was to be king of Israel, he must always remember that he was a subject to the God of Israel.

V. He encourages him to go about this great work, and to go on in it (v. 13): *"Be strong, and of good courage, Though it is a vast undertaking, thou needest not fear coming under the reproach of the foolish builder, who began to build and was not able to finish it; it is God's work, and it shall come to perfection. Dread not, nor be dismayed."* In our spiritual work, as well as in our spiritual warfare, we have need of courage and resolution.

VI. He quickens him not to rest in the preparations he had made, but to add thereto, v. 14. Those that enter into the labours of others, and build upon their advantages, must still be improving.

VII. He prays for him: *The Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel*, v. 12. Whatever charge we have, if we see God giving us the charge and calling us to it, we may hope he will give us wisdom for the discharge of it. Perhaps Solomon had an eye to this prayer of his father for him, in the prayer he offered for himself: *Lord, give me a wise and understanding heart*. He concludes (v. 16), *Up, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee*. Hope of God's presence must not slacken our endeavours. Though the Lord be with us, we must *rise and be doing*, and, if we do this, we have reason to believe he is and will be with us. Work out your salvation, and God will work in you.

Verses 17-19

David here engages the princes of Israel to assist Solomon in the great work he had to do, and every one to lend him a hand towards the carrying of it on. Those that are in the throne cannot do the good they would, unless those about the throne set in with them. David would therefore have the princes to advise Solomon and quicken him, and make the work as easy to him as they could, by promoting it every one in his place. 1. He shows them what obligations they lay under to be zealous in this matter, in gratitude to God for the great things he had done for them. He had given them victory, and rest, and a good land for

an inheritance, v. 18. The more God has done for us the more we should study to do for him. 2. He presses that upon them which should make them zealous in it (v. 19): "*Set your heart and soul to seek God*, place your happiness in his favour, and keep your eye upon his glory. Seek him as your chief good and highest end, and this *with your heart and soul*. Make religion your choice and business; and then you will grudge no pains nor cost to promote the building of his sanctuary." Let but the heart be sincerely engaged for God, and the head and hand, the estate and interest, and all will be cheerfully employed for him.

Chapter 23

David, having given charge concerning the building of the temple, in this and the following chapters settles the method of the temple-service and puts into order the offices and officers of it. In the late irregular times, and during the wars in the beginning of his reign, we may suppose that, though the Levitical ordinances were kept up, yet it was not in the order, nor with the beauty and exactness, that were desirable. Now David, being a prophet, as well as a prince, by divine warrant and direction, "set in order the things that were wanting." In this chapter we are informed, I. He declared Solomon to be his successor, (v. 1). II. He numbered the Levites, and appointed them to their respective offices (v. 2-5). III. He took an account of the several families of the Levites (v. 6-23). IV. He made a new reckoning of them from twenty years old, and appointed them their work (v. 24-32). And in this he prepared for the temple as truly as when he laid up gold and silver for it; for the place is of small account in comparison with the work.

Verses 1-23

Here we have, I. The crown entailed, according to the divine appointment, v. 1. David made Solomon king, not to reign with him, or reign under him, but only to reign after him. This he did, 1. When he was old and full of days. He was but seventy years old when he died, and yet he was full of days, *satur dierum*—*satisfied with living* in this world. When he found himself going off, he made provision for the welfare of the kingdom after his decease, and pleased himself with the hopeful prospect of a happy settlement both in church and state. 2. He did it in parliament, in a solemn assembly of all the princes of Israel, which made Adonijah's attempt to break in upon Solomon's title and set it aside, notwithstanding this public recognition and establishment of it, the more impudent, impious, and ridiculous. Note, The settling or securing of the crown in the interests of the temple is a great blessing to the people and a great satisfaction to those who are themselves leaving the world.

II. The Levites numbered, according to the rule in Moses's time, from thirty years old to fifty, Num. 4:2, 3. Their number in Moses's time, by this rule, was 8580 (Num. 4:47, 48), but now it had increased above four-fold, much more in proportion than the rest of the tribes; for the serviceable men of Levi's tribe were now 38,000, unless we suppose that here those were reckoned who were above fifty, which was not the case there. Joab had not numbered the Levites (ch. 21:6), but David now did, not in pride, but for a good purpose, and then he needed not fear wrath for it.

III. The Levites distributed to their respective posts (v. 4, 5), that every hand might be employed (for, of all men, an idle Levite makes the worst figure), and that every part of the work might be carefully done. Now it was for the honour of God that so great a number of servants attended his house and the business of it. Much of the state of great men consists in the greatness of their retinue. When God kept house in Israel see what a great household he had, and all well fed and well taught. But what were these to the attendants of his throne above, and the innumerable company of angels? It was the happiness of Israel that they had among them such a considerable body of men who were obliged by their office to promote and keep up religion among them. If the worship of God go to decay in Israel, let it not be said that it was for want of due provision for the support of it, but that those who should have done it were careless and false. The work assigned the Levites was four-fold:-1. Some,

and indeed far the greater number, were to set forward the work of the house of the Lord: 24,000, almost two-thirds, were appointed for this service, to attend the priests in killing the sacrifices, flaying them, washing them, cutting them up, burning them, to have the meat-offerings and drink-offerings ready, to carry out dirt, and keep all the vessels and utensils of the temple clean, and every thing in its place, that the service might be performed both with expedition and with exactness. These served 1000 a-week, and so went round in twenty-four courses. Perhaps while the temple was in building some of these were employed to set forward that work, to assist the builders, at least to quicken them, and keep good order among them, and the decorum which became temple-work. 2. Others were officers and judges, not in the affairs of the temple, and in the controversies that arose there (for there, we may suppose, the priests presided), but in the country. They were magistrates, to give the laws of God in charge, to resolve difficulties, and to determine controversies that arose upon them. Of these there were 6000, in the several parts of the kingdom, that assisted the princes and elders of every tribe in the administration of justice. 3. Others were porters, to guard all the avenues of the house of God, to examine those that desired entrance, and to resist those that would force an entrance. These were the life-guards of the temple, and probably were armed accordingly. 4. Others were singers and players on instruments, whose business it was to keep up that part of the service; this was a new-erected office.

IV. The Levites mustered, and disposed of into their respective families and kindreds, that an account of them might the better be kept, and those that neglected their duty might be the more easily discovered, by calling over the roll, and obliging them to answer to their names, which each family might do for itself. When those of the same family were employed together it would engage them to love and assist one another. When Christ sent forth his disciples two and two he put together those that were brethren. Two families were here joined in one (v. 11) because they had not many sons. Those that are weak and little, separately, may be put together and appear considerable. That which is most observable in this account of the families of the Levites is that the posterity of Moses (that great man) stood upon the level with common Levites, and had no dignities or privileges at all peculiar to them; whilst the posterity of Aaron were advanced to the priest's office, to *sanctify the most holy things*, v. 13. It is said indeed of the grandson of Moses, Rehabiah, that *his sons were highly multiplied*, v. 17, *margin*. When God proposed to him that, if he would let fall his intercession for Israel, he would make of him a great nation, he generously refused it, in recompence for which his family is here greatly increased, and makes up in number what it wants in figure, in the tribe of Levi. Now, 1. The levelling of Moses' family with the rest is an evidence of his self-denial. Such an interest had he both with God and man that if he had aimed to raise his own family, to dignify and enrich that, he might easily have done so; but he was no self-seeking man, as appears from his leaving to his children no marks of distinction, which was a sign that he had the spirit of God and not the spirit of the world. 2. The elevation of Aaron's family above the rest was a recompence for his self-denial. When Moses (his younger brother) was made a god to Pharaoh, and he only his prophet or spokesman, to observe his orders and do as he was bidden, Aaron never disputed it, nor insisted upon his seniority, but readily took the inferior post God put him in, submitted to Moses, and, upon occasion, called him *his lord*; and because he thus submitted himself, in his own person, to his junior, in compliance with the will of God, God highly exalted his family, even above that of Moses

himself. Those that are content to stoop are in the fairest way to rise. Before honour is humility.

Verses 24-32

Here is, I. An alteration made in the computation of the effective men of the Levites—that whereas, in Moses's time, they were not enlisted, or taken into service, till they were thirty-years old, nor admitted as probationers till twenty-five (Num. 8:24), David ordered, by direction from God, that they should be numbered *for the service of the house of the Lord*, from the age of twenty years and upwards, v. 24. This order he confirmed by his last words, v. 27. When he put his last hand to the draught of this establishment he expressly appointed this to be done for ever after; yet not he; but the Lord. 1. Perhaps the young Levites, having no work appointed them till twenty-five years old, had many of them got a habit of idleness, or grew addicted to their pleasures, which proved both a blemish to their reputation and a hindrance to their usefulness afterwards, to prevent which inconvenience they are set to work, and brought under discipline, at twenty-years old. Those that will be eminent must learn to take care and take care betimes. 2. When the work of the Levites was to carry burdens, heavy burdens, the tabernacle and the furniture of it, God would not call any to it till they had come to their full strength; for he considers our frame, and, in service as well as sufferings, will lay no more upon us than we are able to bear. But now God had given rest to his people, and made Jerusalem his dwelling-place for ever, so that there was no more occasion to carry the tabernacle and the vessels thereof, the service was much easier, and what would not over-work them nor over-load them if they entered upon it at twenty-years old. 3. Now the people of Israel were multiplied, and there was a more general resort to Jerusalem, and would be when the temple was built, than had ever been at Shiloh, or Nob, or Gibeon; it was therefore requisite there should be more hands employed in the temple-service, that every Israelite who brought an offering might find a Levite ready to assist him. When more work is to be done it is a pity but there should be more workmen fetched in for the doing of it. When the harvest is plenteous why should the labourers be few?

II. A further account of the Levites' work. What the work of the priests was we are told (v. 13): *To sanctify the most holy things, to burn incense before the Lord, and to bless in his name*; that work the Levites were not to meddle with, and yet they had work enough, and good work, according to that to which they were appointed, v. 4, 5. 1. Those of them that were to *set forward the work of the house of God* (v. 4) were therein to *wait on the sons of Aaron* (v. 28), were to do the drudgery-work (if any work for God is to be called *drudgery*) of the house of God, to keep the courts and chambers clean, set things in their places, and have them ready when there was occasion to use them. They were to prepare the show-bread which the priests were to set on the table, to provide the flour and cakes for the meat-offerings, that the priests might have every thing ready to their hands. 2. Those of them that were judges and officers had an eye particularly upon all *measure and size*, v. 29. The standards of all weights and measures were kept in the sanctuary; and the Levites had the care of them, to see that they were exact, and to try other weights and measures by them when they were appealed to. 3. The work of the singers was to *thank and praise the Lord* (v. 30), at the offering of the morning and evening sacrifices, and other oblations on the sabbaths, new moons, etc., v. 31. Moses appointed that they should blow with trumpets over their burnt offerings and other sacrifices, and on their solemn days, Num. 10:10. The sound of the trumpet was awful, and might be affecting to the worshippers, but was not

articulate, nor such a reasonable service as this which David appointed, of singing psalms on those occasions. As the Jewish church grew up from its infancy, it grew more and more intelligent in its devotions, till it came at length, in the gospel, to *put away childish things*, 1 Co. 13:11; Gal. 4:3, 9. 4. The work of the porters (v. 5) was to keep *the charge of the tabernacle and of the holy place*, that none might come nigh but such as were allowed, and those no nearer than was allowed them, v. 32. They were likewise to keep the charge of the sons of Aaron, to be at their beck and go on their errands, who are yet called *their brethren*, to be a memorandum to the priests that, though they were advanced to a high station, yet they were *hewn out of the same rock* with common Levites, and therefore must not lord it over them, but in all instances treat them as brethren

Chapter 24

This chapter gives us a more particular account of the distribution of the priests and Levites into their respective classes, for the more regular discharge of the duties of their offices, according to their families. I. Of the priests (v. 1–19). II. Of the Levites (v. 20–31).

Verses 1-19

The particular account of these establishments is of little use to us now; but, when Ezra published it, it was of great use to direct their church affairs after their return from captivity into the old channel again. The title of this record we have v. 1—*These are the divisions of the sons of Aaron*, not by which they divided one from another, or were at variance one with another (it is a pity there should ever be any such divisions among the sons of Israel, but especially among the sons of Aaron), but the distribution of them in order to the dividing of their work among themselves; it was a division which God made, and was made for him. 1. This distribution was made for the more regular discharge of the duties of their office. God was, and still is, the God of order, and not of confusion, particularly in the things of his worship. Number without order is but a clog and an occasion of tumult; but when every one has, and knows, and keeps, his place and work, the more the better. In the mystical body, every member has its use, for the good of the whole, Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Co. 12:12. 2. It was made by lot, that the disposal thereof might be of the Lord, and so all quarrels and contentions might be prevented, and no man could be charged with partiality, nor could any say that they had wrong done them. As God is the God of order, so he is the God of peace. Solomon says of the lot that it *causeth contention to cease*. 3. The lot was cast publicly, and with great solemnity, in the presence of the king, princes, and priests, that there might be no room for any fraudulent practices or the suspicion of them. The lot is an appeal to God, and ought to be managed with corresponding reverence and sincerity. Matthias was chosen to the apostleship by lot, with prayer (Acts 1:24, 26), and I know not but it might be still used in faith in parallel cases, as an instituted ordinance. We have here the name of the public notary that was employed in writing the names, and drawing the lots, (v. 6): *Shemaiah, one of the Levites*. 4. What those priests were chosen to was to preside in the affairs of the sanctuary (v. 5), in their several courses and turns. That which was to be determined by the lot was only the precedency, not who should serve (for they chose all the chief men), but who should serve first, and who next, that every one might know his course, and attend in it. Of the twenty-four chief men of the priests sixteen were of the house of Eleazar and eight of Ithamar; for the house of Ithamar may well be supposed to have dwindled since the sentence passed on the family of Eli, who was of that house. The method of drawing the lots is intimated (v. 6), one chief household being taken for Eleazar, and one for Ithamar. The sixteen chief names of Eleazar were put in one urn, the eight for Ithamar in another, and they drew out of them alternately, as long as those for Ithamar lasted, and then out of those only for Eleazar, or two for Eleazar, and then one for Ithamar, throughout. 5. Among these twenty-four courses the eighth is that of Abijah or Abia (v. 10), which is mentioned (Lu. 1:5) as the course which Zechariah was of, the father of John the Baptist, by which it appears that these courses which David now settled, though interrupted perhaps in the bad reigns and long broken off by the captivity, yet continued in succession till the destruction of the second temple by the Romans. And each

course was called by the name of him in whom it was first founded, as the high priest is here called *Aaron* (v. 19), because succeeding in his dignity and power, though we read not of any of them that bore that name. Whoever was high priest must be revered and observed by the inferior priests as their father, as Aaron their father. Christ is high priest over the house of God, to whom all believers, being made priests, are to be in subjection.

Verses 20-31

Most of the Levites here named were mentioned before, ch. 23:16, etc. They were of those who were to attend the priests in the service of the house of God. But they are here mentioned again as heads of the twenty-four courses of Levites (and about so many are here named), who were to attend the twenty-four courses of the priests: they are therefore said to *cast lots over against their brethren* (so they are called, not their *lords*), *the sons of Aaron*, who were not to lord it over God's *clergy*, as the original word is, 1 Pt. 5:3. And, that the whole disposal of the affair might be of the Lord, the principal fathers cast lots over against their younger brethren; that is, those that were of the elder house came upon the level with those of the younger families, and took their place, not by seniority, but as God by the lot directed. Note, In Christ no difference is made between bond and free, elder and younger. The younger brethren, if they be faithful and sincere, shall be no less acceptable to Christ than the principal fathers.

Chapter 25

David, having settled the courses of these Levites that were to attend the priests in their ministrations, proceeds, in this chapter, to put those into a method that were appointed to be singers and musicians in the temple. Here is, I. The persons that were to be employed, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (v. 1), their sons (v. 2-6), and other skilful persons (v. 7). II. The order in which they were to attend determined by lot (v. 8–31).

Verses 1-7

Observe, I. Singing the praises of God is here called *prophesying* (v. 1-3), not that all those who were employed in this service were honoured with the visions of God, or could foretel things to come. Heman indeed is said to be the *king's seer in the words of God* (v. 5); but the psalms they sang were composed by the prophets, and many of them were prophetic; and the edification of the church was intended in it, as well as the glory of God. In Samuel's time singing the praises of God went by the name of *prophesying* (1 Sa. 10:5; 19:20), and perhaps that is intended in what St. Paul calls *prophesying*, 1 Co. 11:4; 14:24.

II. This is here called a *service*, and the persons employed in it *workmen*, v. 1. Not but that it is the greatest liberty and pleasure to be employed in praising God: what is heaven but that? But it intimates that it is our duty to make a business of it, and stir up all that is within us to it; and that, in our present state of corruption and infirmity, it will not be done as it should be done without labour and struggle. We must take pains with our hearts to bring them, and keep them, to this work, and to engage all that is within us.

III. Here were, in compliance with the temper of that dispensation, a great variety of musical instruments used, *harps*, *psalteries*, *cymbals* (v. 1, 6), and here was one that *lifted up the horn* (v. 5), that is, used wind-music. The bringing of such concerts of music into the worship of God now is what none pretend to. But those who use such concerts for their own entertainment should feel themselves obliged to preserve them always free from any thing that savours of immorality or profaneness, by this consideration, that time was when they were sacred; and then *those* were justly condemned who brought them into common use, Amos 6:5. *They invented to themselves instruments of music like David.*

IV. The glory and honour of God were principally intended in all this temple-music, whether vocal or instrumental. It was *to give thanks, and praise the Lord*, that the singers were employed, v. 3. It was *in the songs of the Lord that they were instructed* (v. 7), that is, *for songs in the house of the Lord*, v. 6. This agrees with the intention of the perpetuating of psalmody in the gospel-church, which is *to make melody with the heart*, in conjunction with the voice, *unto the Lord*, Eph. 5:19.

V. The order of the king is likewise taken notice of, v. 2 and again v. 6. In those matters indeed David acted as a prophet; but his taking care for the due and regular observance of divine institutions, both ancient and modern, is an example to all in authority to use their power for the promoting of religion, and the enforcing of the laws of Christ. Let them thus be *ministers of God for good*.

VI. The fathers presided in this service, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (v. 1), and the children were *under the hands of their father*, v. 2, 3, 6. This gives a good example to parents to train up their children, and indeed to all seniors to instruct their

juniors in the service of God, and particularly in praising him, than which there is no part of our work more necessary or more worthy to be transmitted to the succeeding generations. It gives also an example to the younger to *submit themselves to the elder* (whose experience and observation fit them for direction), and, as far as may be, to do what they do *under their hand*. It is probable that Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun, were bred up under Samuel, and had their education in the schools of the prophets which he was the founder and president of; then they were pupils, now they came to be masters. Those that would be eminent must begin early, and take time to prepare themselves. This good work of singing God's praises Samuel revived, and set on foot, but lived not to see it brought to the perfection it appears in here. Solomon perfects what David began, so David perfects what Samuel began. Let all, in their day, do what they can for God and his church, though they cannot carry it so far as they would; when they are gone God can out of stones raise up others who shall build upon their foundation and bring forth the top-stone.

VII. There were others also, besides the sons of these three great men, who are called their *brethren* (probably because they had been wont to join with them in their private concerts), who were *instructed in the songs of the Lord*, and were cunning or well skilled therein, v. 7. They were all Levites and were in number 288. Now, 1. These were a good number, and a competent number to keep up the service in the house of God; for they were all skilful in the work to which they were called. When David the king was so much addicted to divine poesy and music many others, all that had a genius for it, applied their studies and endeavours that way. Those do religion a great deal of good service that bring the exercises of devotion into reputation. 2. Yet these were but a small number in comparison with the 4000 whom David appointed thus to *praise the Lord*, ch. 23:5. Where were all the rest when only 288, and those but by twelve in a course, were separated to this service? It is probable that all the rest were divided into as many courses, and were to follow as these led. Or, perhaps, these were *for songs in the house of the Lord* (v. 6), with whom any that worshipped in the courts of that house might join; and the rest were disposed of, all the kingdom over, to preside in the country congregations, in this good work: for, though the sacrifices instituted by the hand of Moses might be offered but at one place, the psalms penned by David might be sung every where, 1 Tim. 2:8.

Verses 8-31

Twenty-four persons are named in the beginning of this chapter as sons of those three great men, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. Ethan was the third (ch. 6:44), but probably he was dead before the establishment was perfected and Jeduthun came in his room. [Or perhaps Ethan and Jeduthun were two names for the same person.] Of these three Providence so ordered it that Asaph had four sons, Jeduthun six [only five are mentioned v. 3; Shimei, mentioned v. 17, is supposed to have been the sixth], and Heman fourteen, in all twenty-four (who were named, v. 2-4), who were all qualified for the service and called to it. But the question was, In what order must they serve? This was determined by lot, to prevent strife for precedency, a sin which most easily besets many that otherwise are good people.

I. The lot was thrown impartially. They were placed in twenty-four companies, twelve in a company, in two rows, twelve companies in a row, and so they cast lots, *ward against ward*, putting them all upon a level, small and great, teacher and scholar. They did not go according to their age, or according to their standing, or the degrees they had taken in the music-

schools; but it was referred to God, v. 8. Small and great, teachers and scholars, stand alike before God, who goes not according to our rules of distinction and precedency. See Mt. 20:23.

II. God determined it as he pleased, taking account, it is probable, of the respective merits of the persons, which are of much more importance than seniority of age or priority of birth. Let us compare them with the preceding catalogue and we shall find that, 1. Josephus was the second son of Asaph. 2. Gedaliah the eldest son of Jeduthun. 3. Zaccur the eldest of Asaph. 4. Izri the second of Jeduthun. 5. Nethaniah the third of Asaph. 6. Bukkiah the eldest of Heman. 7. Jesharelah the youngest of Asaph. 8. Jeshaiiah the third of Jeduthun. 9. Mattaniah the second of Heman. 10. Shimei the youngest of Jeduthun. 11. Azareel the third of Heman. 12. Hashabiah the fourth of Jeduthun. 13. Shubael the fourth of Heman. 14. Mattithiah the fifth of Jeduthun. 15. Jeremoth the fifth of Heman. 16. Hananiah the sixth of Heman. 17. Joshbekashah the eleventh of Heman. 18. Hanani the seventh of Heman. 19. Mallothi the twelfth of Heman. 20. Eliathah the eighth of Heman. 21. Hothir the thirteenth of Heman. 22. Giddalti the ninth of Heman. 23. Mehazioth the fourteenth of Heman. And, *lastly*, Romamti-ezer, the tenth of Heman. See how God increased some and preferred the younger before the elder.

III. Each of these had in his chorus the number of twelve, called *their sons and their brethren*, because they observed them as sons, and concurred with them as brethren. Probably twelve, some for the voice and others for the instrument, made up the concert. Let us learn with one mind and one mouth to glorify God, and that will be the best concert.

Chapter 26

We have here an account of the business of the Levites. That tribe had made but a very small figure all the time of the judges, till Eli and Samuel appeared. But when David revived religion the Levites were, of all men, in the greatest reputation. And happy it was that they had Levites who were men of sense, fit to support the honour of their tribe. We have here an account, I. Of the Levites that were appointed to be porters (v. 1–19). II. Of those that were appointed to be treasurers and storekeepers (v. 20–28). III. Of those that were officers and judges in the country, and were entrusted with the administration of public affairs (v. 29–32).

Verses 1-19

Observe, I. There were porters appointed to attend the temple, who guarded all the avenues that led to it, opened and shut all the outer gates and attended at them, not only for the state, but for service, to direct and instruct those who were going to worship in the courts of the sanctuary in the decorum they were to observe, to encourage those that were timorous, to send back the strangers and unclean, and to guard against thieves and others that were enemies to the house of God. In allusion to this office, ministers are said to have *the keys to the kingdom of heaven* committed to them (Mt. 16:19), that they may admit, and exclude, according to the law of Christ.

II. Of several of those that were called to this service, it is taken notice of that they were *mighty men of valour* (v. 6), *strong men* (v. 7), *able men* (v. 8), and one of them that he was a *wise counsellor* (v. 14), who probably, when he had *used this office of a deacon well* and given proofs of more than ordinary wisdom, *purchased to himself a good degree*, and was preferred from the gate to the council-board, 1 Tim. 3:13. As for those that excelled in strength of body, and courage and resolution of mind, they were thereby qualified for the post assigned them; for whatever service God calls men to he either finds them fit or makes them so.

III. The sons of Obed-edom were employed in this office, sixty-two of that family. This was he that entertained the ark with reverence and cheerfulness; and see how he was rewarded for it. 1. He had eight *sons* (v. 5), *for God blessed him*. The increase and building up of families are owing to the divine blessing; and a great blessing it is to a family to have many children, when like these they are able for, and eminent in, the service of God. 2. His sons were preferred to places of trust in the sanctuary. They had faithfully attended the ark in their own house, and now were called to attend it in God's house. He that is trusty in little shall be trusted with more. He that keeps God's ordinances in his own tent is fit to have the custody of them in God's tabernacle, 1 Tim. 3:4, 5. *I have kept thy law*, says David, and *this I had because I kept thy precepts*, Ps. 119:55, 56.

IV. It is said of one here that *though he was not the first-born his father made him the chief* (v. 10), either because he was very excellent, or because the elder son was very weak. He was made chief, perhaps not in inheriting the estate (for that was forbidden by the law, Deu. 21:16, 17), but in this service, which required personal qualifications.

V. The porters, as the singers, had their post assigned them by lot, so many at such a gate, and so many at such a one, that every one might know his post and make it good, v. 13. It is not said that they were cast into twenty-four courses, as before;

but here are the names of about twenty-four (v. 1–11), and the posts assigned are twenty-four, v. 17, 18. We have therefore reason to think they were distributed into as many companies. Happy are those who dwell in God's house: for, as they are well fed, well taught, and well employed, so they are well guarded. Men attended at the gates of the temple, but angels attend at the gates of the New Jerusalem, Rev. 21:12.

Verses 20-28

Observe, 1. There were *treasures of the house of God*. A great house cannot be well kept without stores of all manner of provisions. Much was expended daily upon the altar—flour, wine, oil, salt, fuel, besides the lamps; quantities of these were to be kept beforehand, besides the sacred vestments and utensils. These were the *treasures of the house of God*. And, because money answers all things, doubtless they had an abundance of it, which was received from the people's offerings, wherewith they bought in what they had occasion for. And perhaps much was laid up for an exigence. These treasures typified the plenty there is in our heavenly Father's house, enough and to spare. In Christ, the true temple, are hid *treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, and *unsearchable riches*. 2. There were *treasures of dedicated things*, dedicated mostly *out of the spoils won in battle* (v. 27), as a grateful acknowledgment of the divine protection. Abraham gave Melchisedec the *tenth of the spoils* Heb. 7:4. In Moses's time the officers of the army, when they returned victorious, brought of their spoils an *oblation to the Lord*, Num. 31:50. Of late this pious custom had been revived; and not only Samuel and David, but Saul, and Abner, and Joab, had dedicated of their spoils to the honour and support of the house of God, v. 28. Note, The more God bestows upon us the more he expects from us in works of piety and charity. Great successes call for proportionable returns. When we look over our estates we should consider, "Here are convenient things, rich things, it may be, and fine things; but where are the dedicated things?" Men of war must honour God with their spoils. 3. These treasures had treasurers, those that were over them (v. 20, 26), whose business it was to keep them, that neither *moth nor rust* might *corrupt them*, nor *thieves break through and steal*, to give out as there was occasion and to see that they were not wasted, embezzled, or alienated to the common use; and it is probable that they kept accounts of all that was brought in and how it was laid out.

Verses 29-32

All the offices of the house of God being well provided with Levites, we have here an account of those that were employed as officers and judges in the outward business, which must not be neglected, no, not for the temple itself. The magistracy is an ordinance of God for the good of the church as truly as the ministry is. And here we are told, 1. That the Levites were employed in the administration of justice in concurrence with the princes and elders of the several tribes, who could not be supposed to understand the law so well as the Levites, who made it their business to study it. None of those Levites who were employed in the service of the sanctuary, none of the singers or porters, were concerned in this outward business; either one was enough to engage the whole man or it was presumption to undertake both. 2. Their charge was both *in all business of the Lord*, and *in the service of the kings*, v. 30 and again v. 32. They managed the affairs of the country, as well ecclesiastical as civil, took care both of God's tithes and the king's taxes, punished offences committed immediately against God and his honour and those against the government and the public peace, guarded both against idolatry and against injustice, and took care to put

the laws in execution against both. Some, it is likely, applied themselves to the affairs of religion, others to secular affairs; and so, between both, God and the king were well served. It is happy with a kingdom when its civil and sacred interests are thus interwoven and jointly minded and advanced. 3. There were more Levites employed as judges with the two tribes and a half on the other side of Jordan than with all the rest of the tribes; there were 2700; whereas as the west side of Jordan there were 1700, v. 30, 32. Either those remote tribes were not so well furnished as the rest with judges of their own, or because they, lying furthest from Jerusalem and on the borders of the neighbouring nations, were most in danger of being infected with idolatry, and most needed the help of Levites to prevent it. The frontiers must be well guarded. 4. This is said to be done (as were all the foregoing settlements) in the fortieth year of the reign of David (v. 31), that is, the last year of his reign. We should be so much the more industrious to do good *as we can see the day approaching*. If we live to enjoy the fruit of our labours, grudge it not to those that shall come after us.

Chapter 27

In this chapter we have the civil list, including the military, I. The twelve captains for every separate month of the year (v. 1–15). II. The princes of the several tribes (v. 16–24). III. The officers of the court (v. 25–34).

Verses 1-15

We have here an account of the regulation of the militia of the kingdom. David was himself a man of war, and had done great things with the sword; he had brought into the field great armies. Now here we are told how he marshalled them when God had given him rest from all his enemies. He did not keep them all together, for that would have been a hardship on them and the country; yet he did not disband and disperse them all, for then he would have left his kingdom naked, and his people would have forgotten the arts of war, wherein they had been instructed. He therefore contrived to keep up a constant force, and yet not a standing army. The model is very prudent. 1. He kept up 24,000 constantly in arms, I suppose in a body, and disciplined, in one part or other of the kingdom, the freeholders carrying their own arms and bearing their own charges while they were up. This was a sufficient strength for the securing of the public peace and safety. Those that are Israelites indeed must learn war; for we have enemies to grapple with, whom we are concerned constantly to stand upon our guard against. 2. He changed them every month; so that the whole number of the militia amounted to 288,000, perhaps about a fifth part of the able men of the kingdom. By being thus distributed into twelve courses, they were all instructed in, and accustomed to, military exercises; and yet none were compelled to be in service, and at expenses, above one month in the year (which they might very well afford), unless upon extraordinary occasions, and then they might all be got together quickly. It is the wisdom of governors, and much their praise, while they provide for the public safety, to contrive how to make it effectual and yet easy, and as little as possible burdensome to the people. 3. Every course had a commander in chief over it. Besides the subaltern officers that were rulers over thousands, and hundreds, and fifties, there was one general officer to each course or legion. All these twelve great commanders are mentioned among David's worthies and champions, 2 Sa. 23 and 1 Chr. 11. They had first signalized themselves by their great actions and then they were advanced to those great preferments. It is well with a kingdom when honour thus attends merit. Benaiah is here called *a chief priest*, v. 5. But, *cohen* signifying both a *priest* and a *prince*, it might better be translated here *a chief ruler*, or (as in the margin) *a principal officer*. Dodai had Mikloth (v. 4) either for his substitute when he was absent or infirm, or for his successor when he was dead. Benaiah had his son under him, v. 6. Asahel had his son after him (v. 7), and by this it seems that this plan of the militia was laid in the beginning of David's reign; for Asahel was killed by Abner while David reigned in Hebron. When his wars were over he revived this method, and left the military affairs in this posture, for the peaceable reign of his son Solomon. When we think ourselves most safe, yet, while we are here in the body, we must keep in a readiness for spiritual conflicts. *Let not him that girdeth on the harness boast as he that puts it off.*

Verses 16-34

We have here an account,

I. Of the princes of the tribes. Something of the ancient order instituted by Moses in the wilderness was still kept up, that every

tribe should have its prince or chief. It is probable that it was kept up all along, either by election or by succession, in the same family; and those are here named who were found in that office when this account was taken. Elihu, or Eliab, who was prince of Judah, was the eldest son of Jesse, and descended in a right line from Nahshon and Salmon, the princes of this tribe in Moses's time. Whether these princes were of the nature of lord-lieutenants that guided them in their military affairs, or chief-justices that presided in their courts of judgment, does not appear. Their power, we may suppose, was much less now that all the tribes were united under one king than it had been when, for the most part, they acted separately. Our religion obliges us to be subject, not only to *the king as supreme, but unto governors under him* (1 Pt. 2:13, 14), the princes that decree justice. Of Benjamin was Jaaziel the son of Abner, v. 21. Though Abner was David's enemy, and opposed his coming to the throne, yet David would not oppose the preferment of his son, but perhaps nominated him to this post of honour, which teaches us to render good for evil.

II. Of the numbering of the people, v. 23, 24. It is here said, 1. That when David ordered the people to be numbered he forbade the numbering of those under twenty years old, thinking thereby to save the reflection which what he did might otherwise cast upon the promise that they should be innumerable; yet it was but a poor salvo, for it had never been customary to number those under twenty, and the promise of their numbers chiefly respected the effective men. 2. That the account which David took of the people, in the pride of his heart, turned to no good account; for it was never perfected, nor done with exactness, nor was it ever recorded as an authentic account. Joab was disgusted with it, and did it by halves; David was ashamed of it, and willing it should be forgotten, because there fell wrath for it against Israel. A good man cannot, in the reflection, please himself with that which he knows God is displeased with, cannot make use of that, nor take comfort in that, which is obtained by sin.

III. Of the officers of the court. 1. The *rulers of the king's substance* (as they are called, v. 31), such as had the oversight and charge of the king's tillage, his vineyards, his olive-yards, his herds, his camels, his asses, his flocks. Here are no officers for state, none for sport, no master of the wardrobe, no master of the ceremonies, no master of the horse, no master of the hounds, but all for service, agreeable to the simplicity and plainness of those times. David was a great soldier, a great scholar, and a great prince, and yet a great husband of his estate, kept a great deal of ground in his own hand, and stocked it, not for pleasure, but for profit; for the king himself is *served of the field*, Eccles. 5:9. Those magistrates that would have their subjects industrious must themselves be examples of industry and application to business. We find, however, that afterwards the poor of the land were thought good enough to be vine-dressers and husbandmen, 2 Ki. 25:12. Now David put his great men to preside in these employments. 2. The attendants on the king's person. They were such as were eminent for wisdom, being designed for conversation. His uncle, who was a wise man and a scribe, not only well skilled in politics, but well read in the scriptures, was his counsellor, v. 32. Another, who no doubt excelled in learning and prudence, was tutor to his children. Ahithophel, a very cunning man, was his counsellor: but Hushai, an honest man, was his companion and confidant. It does not appear that he had many counsellors; but those he had were men of great abilities. Much of the wisdom of princes is seen in the choice of their ministry. But David, though he had all these trusty and well-beloved cousins and counsellors about him, preferred his Bible before them all. Ps. 119:24, *Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors.*

Chapter 28

The account we have of David's exit, in the beginning of the first book of Kings, does not make his sun nearly so bright as that given in this and the following chapter, where we have his solemn farewell both to his son and his subjects, and must own that he finished well. In this chapter we have, I. A general convention of the states summoned to meet (v. 1). II. A solemn declaration of the divine entail both of the crown and of the honour of building the temple upon Solomon (v. 2-7). III. An exhortation both to the people and to Solomon to make religion their business (v. 8-10). IV. The model and materials delivered to Solomon for the building of the temple (v. 11-19). V. Encouragement given him to undertake it and proceed in it (v. 20, 21).

Verses 1-10

A great deal of service David had done in his day, had *served his generation according to the will of God*, Acts 13:36. But now the time draws night that he must die, and, as a type of the Son of David, the nearer he comes to his end the more busy he is, and does his work with all his might. He is now a little recovered from the indisposition mentioned 1 Ki. 1:1, when they covered him with clothes, and he got no heat: but was cure is there for old age? He therefore improves his recovery, as giving him an opportunity of doing God and his country a little more service.

I. He summoned all the great men to attend him, that he might take leave of them all together, v. 1. Thus Moses did (Deu. 31:28), and Joshua, ch. 23:2; 24:1. David would not declare the settlement of the crown but in the presence, and to the satisfaction, of those that were the representatives of the people.

II. He addressed them with a great deal of respect and tenderness. He not only exerted himself to rise from his bed, to give them the meeting (the occasion putting new spirits into him), but he rose out of his chair, and *stood up upon his feet* (v. 2), in reverence to God whose will he was to declare, and in reverence to this solemn assembly of the Israel of God, as if he looked upon himself, though *major singulis—greater than any individual among them, yet minor universis—less than the whole of them together*. His age and infirmities, as well as his dignity, might well have allowed him to keep his seat; but he would show that he was indeed humbled for the pride of his heart both in the numbers of his people and his dominion over them. It had been too much his pleasure that they were all his *servants* (ch. 21:3), but now he calls them his *brethren*, whom he loved, his people, whom he took care of, not his servants, whom he had command of: *Hear me, my brethren, and my people*. It becomes superiors thus to speak with affection and condescension even to their inferiors; they will not be the less honoured for it, but the more beloved. Thus he engages their attention to what he was about to say.

III. He declared the purpose he had formed to build a temple for God, and God's disallowing that purpose, v. 2, 3. This he had signified to Solomon before, ch. 22:7, 8. *A house of rest for the ark* is here said to be *a house of rest for the footstool of our God*; for heaven is his throne of glory; the earth, and the most magnificent temples that can be built upon it, are but his footstool: so much difference is there between the manifestations of the divine glory in the upper and lower world. Angels surround his throne, Isa. 6:1. We poor worms do but *worship at his footstool* Ps. 99:5; 132:7. As an evidence of the sincerity of his purpose to build the temple, he tells them that he had made ready for it, but that God would not suffer him to proceed

because he had appointed other work for him to do, which was enough for one man, namely, the managing of the wars of Israel. He must serve the public with the sword; another must do it with the line and plummet. Times of rest are building times, Acts 9:31.

IV. He produced his own title first, and then Solomon's, to the crown; both were undoubtedly *jure divino*—*divine*. They could make out such a title as no monarch on earth can; the Lord God of Israel chose them both immediately, by prophecy, not providence, v. 4, 5. No right of primogeniture is pretended. *Detur digniori, non seniori*—*It went by worth, not by age*. 1. Judah was not the eldest son of Jacob, yet God chose that tribe to be the ruling tribe; Jacob entailed the sceptre upon it, Gen. 49:10. 2. It does not appear that the family of Jesse was the senior house of that tribe; from Judah it is certain that it was not, for Shelah was before Pharez; whether from Nahshon and Salmon is not certain. Ram, the father of Nahshon, had a elder brother, 1 Chr. 2:9. Perhaps so had Boaz, Obed, and Jesse. Yet "*God chose the house of my father.*" 3. David was the youngest son of Jesse, yet God liked him to make him king; so it seemed good unto him. God takes whom he likes, and likes whom he makes like himself, as he did David, a man after his own heart. 4. Solomon was one of the youngest sons of David, and yet God chose him to sit upon the throne, because he was the likeliest of them all to build the temple, the wisest and best inclined.

V. He opened to them God's gracious purposes concerning Solomon (v. 6, 7): *I have chosen him to be my son*. Thus he declares the decree, that the Lord had said to Solomon, as a type of Christ, *Thou art my son* (Ps. 2:7), the son of my love; for he was called *Jedidiah*, because the Lord loved him, and Christ is his beloved Son. Of him God said, as a figure of him that was to come, 1. *He shall build my house*. Christ is both the founder and the foundation of the gospel temple. 2. *I will establish his kingdom for ever*. This must have its accomplishment in the kingdom of the Messiah, which shall continue in his hands through all the ages of time (Isa. 9:7; Lu. 1:33) and shall then be delivered up to God, even the Father, yet perhaps to be delivered back to the Redeemer for ever. As to Solomon, this promise of the establishment of his kingdom is here made conditional: *If he be constant to do my commandments, as at this day*. Solomon was now very towardly and good: "If he continue so, his kingdom shall continue, otherwise not." Note, If we be constant to our duty, then, and not otherwise, we may expect the continuance of God's favour. Let those that are well taught, and begin well, take notice of this—if they be constant, they are happy; perseverance wears the crown, though it wins it not.

VI. He charged them to adhere stedfastly to God and their duty, v. 8. Observe, 1. The matter for this charge: *Keep, and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God*. The Lord was their God; his commandments must be their rule; they must have respect to them all, must make conscience of keeping them, and, in order thereunto, must seek for them, that is, must be inquisitive concerning their duty, search the scriptures, take advice, seek the law at the mouth of those whose lips were to keep this knowledge, and pray to God to teach and direct them. God's commandments will not be kept without great care. 2. The solemnity of it. He charged them in the sight of all Israel, who would all have notice of this public charge, and in the audience of their God. "God is witness, and this congregation is witness, that they have good counsel given them, and fair warning; if they do not take it, it is their fault, and God and man will be witnesses against them." See 1 Tim. 5:21; 2 Tim. 4:1. Those that profess religion, as they tender the favour of God and their reputation with men, must be faithful to their profession. 3. The

motive to observe this charge. It was the way to be happy, to have the peaceable possession of this good land themselves and to preserve the entail of it upon their children.

VII. He concluded with a charge to Solomon himself, v. 9, 10. He was much concerned that Solomon should be religious. He was to be a great man, but he must not think religion below him—a wise man, and this would be his wisdom. Observe,

1. The charge he gives him. He must look upon God and the God of his father, his good father, who had devoted him to God and educated him for God. He was born in God's house and therefore bound in duty to be his, brought up in his house and therefore bound in gratitude. *Thy own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.* He must know God and serve him. We cannot serve God aright if we do not know him; and in vain do we know him if we do not serve him, serve him with heart and mind. We make nothing of religion if we do not mind it, and make heart-work of it. Serve him with a perfect, that is, an upright heart (for sincerity is our gospel perfection), and with a willing mind, from a principle of love, and as a willing people, cheerfully and with pleasure.

2. The arguments to enforce this charge.

(1.) Two arguments of general inducement:—[1.] That the secrets of our souls are open before God; he searches all hearts, even the hearts of kings, which to men are unsearchable, Prov. 25:3. We must *therefore* be sincere, because, if we deal deceitfully, God sees it, and cannot be imposed upon; we must *therefore* employ our thoughts, and engage them in God's service, because he fully understands all the imaginations of them, both good and bad. [2.] That we are happy or miserable here, and for ever, according as we do, or do not, serve God. *If we seek him diligently, he will be found of us*, and that is enough to make us happy, Heb. 11:6. If we forsake him, desert his service and turn from following him, he will cast us off for ever, and that is enough to make us miserable. Note, God never casts any off till they have first cast him off. Here is,

(2.) One argument peculiar to Solomon (v. 10): "*Thou art to build a house for the sanctuary; therefore seek and serve God, that that work may be done from a good principle, in a right manner, and may be accepted.*"

3. The means prescribed in order hereunto, and they are prescribed to us all. (1.) Caution: *Take heed*; beware of every thing that looks like, or leads to, that which is evil. (2.) Courage: *Be strong, and do it.* We cannot do our work as we should unless we put on resolution, and fetch in strength from divine grace.

Verses 11-21

As for the general charge that David gave his son to seek God and serve him, the book of the law was, in that, his only rule, and there needed no other; but, in building the temple, David was now to give him three things:-1. A model of the building, because it was to be such a building as neither he nor his architects ever saw. Moses had a pattern of the tabernacle shown him in the mount (Heb. 8:5), so had David of the temple, by the immediate hand of God upon him, v. 19. It was given him in writing, probably by the ministry of an angel, or as clearly and exactly represented to his mind as if it had been in writing. But it is said (v. 12), *He had this pattern by the Spirit.* The contrivance either of David's devotion or of Solomon's wisdom must not be trusted to in an affair of this nature. The temple must be a sacred thing and a type of Christ; there must be in it not only convenience and decency, but significancy: it was a kind of sacrament, and therefore it must not be left to man's art or

invention to contrive it, but must be framed by divine institution. Christ the true temple, the church the gospel temple, and heaven the everlasting temple, are all framed according to the divine councils, and the plan laid in the divine wisdom, ordained before the world for God's glory and ours. This pattern David gave to Solomon, that he might know what to provide and might go by a certain rule. When Christ left with his disciples a charge to build his gospel church he gave them an exact model of it, ordering them to observe that, and that only, which he commanded. The particular models are here mentioned, of the porch, which was higher than the rest, like a steeple,—then the houses, both the holy place and the most holy, with the rooms adjoining, which were for treasuries, chambers, and parlours,—especially *the place of the mercy-seat* (v. 11),—of the courts likewise, and the chambers about them, in which the dedicated things were laid up. Bishop Patrick supposes that, among other things, the tabernacle which Moses reared and all the utensils of it, which there was now no further occasion for, were laid up here, signifying that in the fulness of time all the Mosaic economy, all the rites and ceremonies of that dispensation, should be respectfully laid aside, and something better come in their room. He gave him a table of the courses of the priests, patterns of the vessels of service (v. 13), and a pattern of the chariot of the cherubim, v. 18. Besides the two cherubim over the mercy-seat, there were two much larger, whose wings reached from wall to wall (1 Ki. 6:23, etc.), and of these David here gave Solomon the pattern, called a *chariot*; for the angels are the chariots of God, Ps. 68:17. 2. Materials for the most costly of the utensils of the temple. That they might not be made any less than the patterns, he weighed out the exact quantity for each vessel both of gold and silver, v. 14. In the tabernacle there was but one golden candlestick; in the temple there were ten (1 Ki. 7:49), besides silver ones, which, it is supposed, were hand-candlesticks, v. 15. In the tabernacle there was but one table; but in the temple, besides that on which the show-bread was set, there were ten others for other uses (2 Chr. 4:8), besides silver tables; for, this house being much larger than that, it would look bare if it had not furniture proportionable. The gold for the altar of incense is particularly said to be *refined gold* (v. 18), purer than any of the rest; for that was typical of the intercession of Christ, than which nothing is more pure and perfect. 3. Directions which way to look for help in this great undertaking. "Fear not opposition; fear not the charge, care, and trouble; fear not miscarrying in it, as in the case of Uzza; fear not the reproach of the foolish builder, that began to build and was not able to finish. Be not dismayed. (1.) God will help thee, and thou must look up to him in the first place (v. 20): *The Lord God, even my God*, whom I have chosen and served, who has all along been present with me and prospered me, and to whom, from my own experience of his power and goodness, I recommend thee, he will be with thee, to direct, strengthen, and prosper thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Note, We may be sure that God, who owned our fathers and carried them through the services of their day, will, in like manner, if we be faithful to him, go along with us in our day, and will never leave us, while he has any work to do in us or by us. The same that was Joshua's encouragement (Jos. 1:5), and Solomon's, is given to all believers, Heb. 13:5. *He will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*. God never leaves any unless they first leave him. (2.) "Good men will help thee, v. 21. The priests and Levites will advise thee, and thou mayest consult them. Thou hast good workmen, who are both willing and skilful;" and these are two very good properties in a workman, especially in those that work at the temple. And, *lastly*, "The princes and the people will be so far from opposing or retarding the work that they will be wholly at thy command, every one in his place ready to further it." Then good

work is likely to go on when all parties concerned are hearty in it, and none secretly clog it, but all drive on heartily in it.

Chapter 29

David has said what he had to say to Solomon. But he had something more to say to the congregation before he parted with them. I. He pressed them to contribute, according to their ability, towards the building and furnishing of the temple (v. 1-5). II. They made their presents accordingly with great generosity (v. 6-9). III. David offered up solemn prayers and praises to God upon that occasion (v. 10–20), with sacrifices (v. 21, 22). IV. Solomon was hereupon enthroned, with great joy and magnificence (v. 23–25). V. David, soon after this finished his course (v. 26–30). And it is hard to say which shines brighter here, the setting sun or the rising sun.

Verses 1-9

We may here observe,

I. How handsomely David spoke to the great men of Israel, to engage them to contribute towards the building of the temple. It is our duty to *provoke one another to love and to good works*, not only to do good ourselves, but to draw in others to do good too as much as we can. There were many very rich men in Israel; they were all to share in the benefit of the temple, and of those peaceable days which were to befriend the building of it; and therefore, though David would not impose on them, as a tax, what they should give towards it, he would recommend the present as a fair occasion for a free-will offering, because what is done in works of piety and charity should be done willingly and not by constraint; for God loves a cheerful giver. 1. He would have them consider that Solomon was young and tender, and needed help; but that he was the person whom God had chosen to do this work, and therefore was well worthy their assistance. It is good service to encourage those in the work of God that are as yet young and tender. 2. That the world was great, and all hands should contribute to the carrying of it on. The palace to be built was not for man, but for the Lord God; and the more was contributed towards the building the more magnificent it would be, and therefore the better would it answer the intention. 3. He tells them what great preparations had been made for this work. He did not intend to throw all the burden upon them, nor that it should be built wholly by contributions, but that they should show their good will, by adding to what was done (v. 2): *I have prepared with all my might*, that is, "I have made it my business." Work for God must be done with all our might, or we shall bring nothing to pass in it. 4. He sets them a good example. Besides what was dedicated to this service out of the spoils and presents of the neighbouring nations, which was for the building of the house (of which before, ch. 22:14), he had, out of his own share, offered largely for the beautifying and enriching of it, 3000 talents of gold and 7000 talents of silver (v. 4, 5), and this because he had set his affection on the house of his God. He gave all this, not as Papists build churches, in commutation of penance, or to make atonement for sin, nor as Pharisees give alms, to be seen of men; but purely because he loved the habitation of God's house; so he professed (Ps. 26:8) and here he proved it. Those who set their affection upon the service of God will think no pains nor cost too much to bestow upon it; and then our offerings are pleasing to God when they come from love. Those that set their affection on things above will set their affection on the house of God, through which our way to heaven lies. Now this he gives them an account of, to stir them up to do likewise. Note, Those who would draw others to do that which is good must

themselves lead. Those especially who are advanced above others in place and dignity should particularly contrive how to make their light shine before men, because the influence of their example is more powerful and extensive than that of other people. 5. He stirs them up to do as he had done (v. 5): *And who then is willing to concentrate his service this day unto the Lord?* (1.) We must each of us, in our several places, serve the Lord, and consecrate our service to him, separate it from other things that are foreign and interfere with it, and direct and design it for the honour and glory of God. (2.) We must make the service of God our business, must *fill our hands to the Lord*, so the Hebrew phrase is. Those who engage themselves in the service of God will have their hands full; there is work enough for the whole man in that service. The filling of our hands with the service of God intimates that we must serve him only, serve him liberally, and serve him in the strength of grace derived from him. (3.) We must be free herein, do it willingly and speedily, do it this day, when we are in a good mind. *Who is willing?* Now let him show it.

II. How handsomely they all contributed towards the building of the temple when they were thus stirred up to it. Though they were persuaded to it, yet it is said, *They offered willingly*, v. 6. So he said who knew their hearts. Nay, they offered *with a perfect heart*, from a good principle and with a sincere respect to the glory of God, v. 9. How generous they were appears by the sum total of the contributions, v. 7, 8. They gave like themselves, like princes, like princes of Israel. And a pleasant day's work it was; for, 1. *The people rejoiced*, which may be meant of the people themselves that offered: they were glad of the opportunity of honouring God thus with their substance, and glad of the prospect of bringing this good work to perfection. Or the common people rejoiced in the generosity of their princes, that they had such rulers over them as were forward to this good work. Every Israelite is glad to see temple work carried on with vigour. 2. *David rejoiced with great joy* to see the good effects of his psalms and the other helps of devotion he had furnished them with, rejoiced that his son and successor would have those about him that were so well affected to the house of God, and that this work, upon which his heart was so much set, was likely to go on. Note, It is a great reviving to good men, when they are leaving the world, to see those they leave behind zealous for religion and likely to keep it up. *Lord, now let thou thy servant depart in peace.*

Verses 10-22

We have here,

I. The solemn address which David made to God upon occasion of the noble subscriptions of the princes towards the building of the temple (v. 10): *Wherefore David blessed the Lord*, not only alone in his closet, but *before all the congregation*. This I expected when we read (v. 9) that *David rejoiced with great joy*; for such a devout man as he would no doubt make that the matter of his thanksgiving which was so much the matter of his rejoicing. He that looked round with comfort would certainly look up with praise. David was now old and looked upon himself as near his end; and it well becomes aged saints, and dying saints, to have their hearts much enlarged in praise and thanksgiving. This will silence their complaints of their bodily infirmities, and help to make the prospect of death itself less gloomy. David's psalms, toward the latter end of the book, are most of them psalms of praise. The nearer we come to the world of everlasting praise the more we should speak the language and do the work of that world. In this address,

1. He adores God, and ascribes glory to him as the God of Israel, *blessed for ever and ever*. Our Lord's prayer ends with a doxology much like this which David here begins with—*for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory*. This is properly praising God—with holy awe and reverence, and agreeable affection, acknowledging, (1.) His infinite perfections; not only that he is great, powerful, glorious, etc., but that his is the greatness, power, and glory, that is, he has them in and of himself, v. 11. He is the fountain and centre of every thing that is bright and blessed. All that we can, in our most exalted praises, attribute to him he has an unquestionable title to. His is the *greatness*; his greatness is immense and incomprehensible; and all others are little, are nothing, in comparison of him. His is the *power*, and it is almighty and irresistible; power belongs to him, and all the power of all the creatures is derived from him and depends upon him. His is the *glory*; for his glory is his own end and the end of the whole creation. All the glory we can give him with our hearts, lips, and lives, comes infinitely short of what is his due. His is the *victory*; he transcends and surpasses all, and is able to conquer and subdue all things to himself; and his victories are incontestable and uncontrollable. And his is the *majesty*, real and personal; with him is terrible majesty, inexpressible and inconceivable. (2.) His sovereign dominion, as rightful owner and possessor of all: "*All that is in the heaven, and in the earth, is thine*, and at thy disposal, by the indisputable right of creation, and as supreme ruler and commander of all: *thine is the kingdom*, and all kings are thy subjects; for thou art head, and art to be exalted and worshipped as head above all." (3.) His universal influence and agency. All that are rich and honourable among the children of men have their riches and honours from God. This acknowledgment he would have the princes take notice of and join in, that they might not think they had merited any thing of God by their generosity; for from God they had their riches and honour, and what they had returned to him was but a small part of what they had received from him. Whoever are great among men, it is God's hand that makes them so; and, whatever strength we have, it is God that gives it to us, as the *God of Israel our father*, v. 10. Ps. 68:35.

2. He acknowledges with thankfulness the grace of God enabling them to contribute so cheerfully towards the building of the temple (v. 13, 14): *Now therefore, our God, we thank thee*. Note, The more we do for God the more we are indebted to him for the honour of being employed in his service, and for grace enabling us, in any measure, to serve him. *Does he therefore thank that servant?* Lu. 17:9. No: but that servant has a great deal of reason to thank him. He thanks God that they were *able to offer so willingly*. Note, (1.) It is a great instance of the power of God's grace in us to be able to do the work of God willingly. He works *both to will and to do*; and it is in the day of his power that his people are made willing, Ps. 110:3. (2.) We must give God all the glory of all the good that is at any time done by ourselves or others. Our own good works must not be the matter of our pride, nor the good works of others the matter of our flattery, but both the matter of our praise; for certainly it is the greatest honour and pleasure in the world faithfully to serve God.

3. He speaks very humbly of himself, and his people, and the offerings they had now presented to God. (1.) For himself, and those that joined with him, though they were princes, he wondered that God should take such notice of them and do so much for them (v. 14): *Who am I, and what is my people?* David was the most honourable person, and Israel the most honourable person, then in the world; yet thus does he speak of himself and them, as unworthy the divine cognizance and favour. David now looks very great, presiding in an august assembly, appointing his successor, and making a noble present to the honour of

God; and yet he is little and low in his own eyes: *Who am I, O Lord?* for (v. 15) *we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, poor despicable creatures.* Angels in heaven are at home there; saints on earth are but strangers here: *Our days on the earth are as a shadow.* David's days had as much of substance in them as most men's; for he was a great man, a good man, a useful man, and now an old man, one that lived long and lived to good purpose: and yet he puts himself not only into the number, but in the front, of those who must acknowledge that their *days on the earth are as a shadow*, which intimates that our life is a vain life, a dark life, a transient life, and a life that will have its periods either in perfect light or perfect darkness. The next words explain it: *There is no abiding*, Heb. *no expectation*. We cannot expect any great matters from it, nor can we expect any long continuance of it. This is mentioned here as that which forbids us to boast of the service we do to God. Alas! it is confined to a scantling of time, it is the service of a frail and short life, and therefore what can we pretend to merit by it? (2.) As to their offerings, *Lord*, says he, *of thy own have we given thee* (v. 14), and again (v. 16), *It cometh of thy hand, and is all thy own*. "We have it from thee as a free gift, and therefore are bound to use it for thee; and what we present to thee is but rent or interest from thy own." "In like manner" (says bishop Patrick) "we ought to acknowledge God in all spiritual things, referring every good thought, good purpose, good work, to his grace, from whom we receive it." *Let him that glories therefore glory in the Lord.*

4. He appeals to God concerning his own sincerity in what he did, v. 17. It is a great satisfaction to a good man to think that God *tries the heart* and *has pleasure in uprightness*, that, whoever may misinterpret or contemn it, he is acquainted with and approves of the *way of the righteous*. It was David's comfort that God knew with what pleasure he both offered his own and saw the people's offering. He was neither proud of his own good work nor envious of the good works of others.

5. He prays to God both for the people and for Solomon, that both might hold on as they began. In this prayer he addresses God as *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, a God in covenant with them and with us for their sakes. *Lord*, give us grace to make good our part of the covenant, that we may not forfeit the benefit of it. Or thus: they were kept in their integrity by the grace of God establishing their way; let the same grace that was sufficient for them be so for us. (1.) For the people he prays (v. 18) that what good God had put into their minds he would always keep there, that they might never be worse than they were now, might never lose the convictions they were now under, nor cool in their affections to the house of God, but always have the same thoughts of things as they now seemed to have. Great consequences depend upon what is innermost, and what uppermost, in the imagination of the thoughts of our heart, what we aim at and what we love to think of. If any good have got possession of our hearts, or the hearts of our friends, it is good by prayer to commit the custody of it to the grace of God: "Lord, keep it there, keep it for ever there. David has prepared materials for the temple; but, Lord, do thou prepare their hearts for such a privilege;" *establish* their hearts, so the *margin*. "Confirm their resolutions. They are in a good mind; keep them so when I am gone, them and theirs for ever." (2.) For Solomon he prays (v. 19), *Give him a perfect heart*. He had charged him (ch. 28:9) to serve God *with a perfect heart*; now here he prays to God to give him such a heart. He does not pray, "Lord, make him a rich man, a great man, a learned man;" but, "Lord, make him an honest man;" for that is better than all. "Lord, *give him a perfect heart*, not only in general *to keep thy commandments*, but in particular *to build the palace*, that he may do that service

with a single eye." Yet his building the house would not prove him to have a perfect heart unless he made conscience of keeping God's commandments. It is not helping to build churches that will save us if we live in disobedience to God's law. II. The cheerful concurrence of this great assembly in this great solemnity. 1. They joined with David in the adoration of God. When he had done his prayer he called to them to testify their concurrence (*Now bless the Lord your God*, v. 20), which accordingly they did, by *bowing down their heads*, a gesture of adoration. Whoever is the mouth of the congregation, those only have the benefit who join with him, not by *bowing down the head* so much as by *lifting up the soul*. 2. They paid their respects to the king, looking upon him as an instrument in God's hand of much good to them; and, in honouring him, they honoured God. 3. The next day they offered abundance of sacrifices to God (v. 21), both burnt-offerings, which were wholly consumed, and peace-offerings, which the offerer had the greatest part of to himself. Hereby they testified a generous gratitude to God for the good posture their public affairs were in, though David was going the way of all the earth. 4. They feasted and rejoiced before God, v. 22. In token of their joy in God, and communion with him, they feasted upon their peace-offerings in a religious manner before the Lord. What had been offered to God they feasted upon, by which was intimated to them that they should be never the poorer for their late liberal contributions to the service of the temple; they themselves should feast upon the comfort of it. 5. They made Solomon king the second time. He having been before anointed in haste, upon occasion of Adonijah's rebellion, it was thought fit to repeat the ceremony, for the greater satisfaction of the people. They *anointed him to the Lord*. Magistrates must look upon themselves as set apart for God, to be his ministers, and must rule accordingly in the fear of God. Zadok also was anointed to be priest in the room of Abiathar, who had lately forfeited his honour. Happy art thou, O Israel! under such a prince and such a pontiff.

Verses 23-30

These verses bring king Solomon to his throne and king David to his grave. Thus the rising generation thrusts out that which went before, and says, "Make room for us." Every one has his day.

I. Here is Solomon rising (v. 23): *Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord*. Not his throne which he prepared in the heavens, but the throne of Israel is called *the throne of the Lord* because not only is he King of all nations, and all kings rule under him, but he was in a peculiar manner King of Israel, 1 Sa. 12:12. He had the founding, he had the filling, of their throne, by immediate direction. The municipal laws of their kingdom were divine. Urim and prophets were the privy counsellors of their princes; therefore is their throne called *the throne of the Lord*. Solomon's kingdom typified the kingdom of the Messiah, and his is indeed *the throne of the Lord*; for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to him; hence he calls him *his King*, Ps. 2:6. Being set on the *throne of the Lord*, the throne to which God called him, he prospered. Those that follow the divine guidance may expect success by the divine blessing. Solomon prospered; for, 1. His people paid honour to him, as one to whom honour is due: *All Israel obeyed him*, that is, were ready to swear allegiance to him (v. 23), the *princes and mighty men*, and even *the sons of David*, though by seniority their title to the crown was prior to his, and they might think themselves wronged by his advancement. God thought fit to make him king, and made him fit to be so, and therefore they all *submitted themselves to him*. God inclined their hearts to do so, that his reign might, from the first, be peaceable. His father was a better

man than he, and yet came to the crown with much difficulty, after long delay, and by many and slow steps. David had more faith, and therefore had it more tried. *They submitted themselves* (Heb. *They gave the hand under Solomon*), that is, bound themselves by oath to be true to him (putting the hand under the thigh was a ceremony anciently used in swearing); or they were so entirely devoted that they would put their hand under his feet to serve him. 2. God put honour upon him; for those that honour him he will honour: *The Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly*, v. 25. His very countenance and presence, I am apt to think, had something in them very great and awful. All he said and all he did commanded respect. None of all the judges or kings of Israel, his predecessors, made such a figure as he did nor lived in such splendour.

II. Here is David's setting, that great man going off the stage. The historian here brings him to the end of his day, leaves him asleep, and draws the curtains about him.

1. He gives a summary account of the years of his reign, v. 26, 27. He reigned forty years, as did Moses, Othniel, Deborah, Gideon, Eli, Samuel, and Saul, who were before him, and Solomon after him.

2. He gives a short account of his death (v. 28), that he died *full of days, riches, and honour*; that is, (1.) Loaded with them. He was very old, and very rich, and very much honoured both of God and man. He had been a man of war from his youth, and, as such, had his soul continually in his hand; yet he was not cut off in the midst of his days, but was preserved through all dangers of a military life, lived to a good old age, and died in peace, died in his bed, and yet in the bed of honour. (2.) Satiated with them. He was *full of days, riches, and honour*; that is, he had enough of this world and of the riches and honours of it, and knew when he had enough, for he was very willing to die and leave it, having said (Ps. 49:15), *God shall receive me*, and (Ps. 23:4), *Thou art with me*. A good man will soon be full of days, riches, and honour, but will never be satisfied with them; no satisfaction but in God's loving kindness.

3. For a fuller account of David's life and reign he refers to the histories or records of those times, which were written by Samuel while he lived, and continued, after his death, by Nathan and Gad, v. 29. *There was related what was observable in his government at home and his wars abroad, the times*, that is, the events of *the times, that went over him*, v. 29, 30. These registers were then in being, but are now lost. Note, Good use may be made of those histories of the church which are authentic though not sacred or of divine inspiration.