

to see his great-grand-children by both his sons, (v. 23.) and, probably, he saw his two sons solemnly owned as heads of distinct tribes, equal to any of his brethren. It contributes much to the comfort of aged parents, if they see their posterity in a flourishing condition, especially if with it they see peace upon Israel, Ps. 128. 6.

3. The last will and testament of Joseph published in the presence of his brethren, when he saw his death approaching: those that were properly his brethren, perhaps were some of them dead before him, as several of them were elder than he; but to those of them who yet survived, and to the sons of those who were gone, who stood up in their fathers' stead, he said this.

(1.) He comforted them with the assurance of their return to Canaan in due time; (v. 24.) *I die, but God will surely visit you*: to this purport Jacob had spoken to him, ch. 48. 21. Thus must we comfort others with the same comforts with which we ourselves have been comforted of God, and encourage them to rest on those promises which have been our support. Joseph was, under God, both the protector and the benefactor of his brethren; and what would become of them, now that he was dying? Why, let this be their comfort, *God will surely visit you*. Note, God's gracious visits will serve to make up the loss of our best friends. They die; but we may live, and live comfortably, if we have the favour and presence of God with us. He bids them be confident; *God will bring you out of this land*, and therefore, [1.] They must not hope to settle there, nor look upon it as their rest for ever; they must set their hearts upon the land of promise, and call that their home. [2.] They must not fear sink-

ing, and being ruined there; probably he foresaw the ill usage they would meet with there after his death, and therefore gives them this word of encouragement; "*God will bring you in triumph out of this land at last.*" Herein he has an eye to the promise, ch. 15. 13, 14. and, in God's name, assures them of the performance of it.

(2.) For a confession of his own faith, and a confirmation of their's, he charges them to keep him unburied till that day, that glorious day should come, when they should be settled in the land of promise, v. 25. He makes them promise him with an oath, that they would bury him in Canaan. In Egypt they buried their great men very honourably, and with abundance of pomp; but Joseph prefers a significant burial in Canaan, and that deferred too almost two hundred years, before a magnificent one in Egypt. Thus Joseph, by faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, and the promise of Canaan, gave *commandment concerning his bones*, Heb. 11. 22. He dies in Egypt; but lays his bones at stake, that God will surely visit Israel, and bring them to Canaan.

4. The death of Joseph, and the reservation of his body for a burial in Canaan, v. 26. He was *put in a coffin in Egypt*, but not buried till his children had received their inheritance in Canaan, Josh. 24. 32. Note, (1.) If the separate soul, at death, do but return to its rest with God, the matter is not great, though the deserted body find not at all, or not quickly, its rest in the grave. (2.) Yet care ought to be taken of the dead bodies of the saints, in the belief of their resurrection; for there is a covenant with the dust, which shall be remembered, and a commandment is given concerning the bones.

AN

EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

OF THE SECOND BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED

EXODUS.

Moses, (the *Servant of the Lord* in writing for him, as well as in *acting* for him—with the *pen* of God, as well as with the *rod* of God, in his hand,) having, in the first book of his history, preserved and transmitted the records of the church, while it existed in private families, comes, in this second book, to give us an account of its growth into a great nation; and as the former furnishes us with the best *Economics*, so this with the best *Politics*. The beginning of the former book shows us how God formed the *world* for himself; the beginning of this shows us how he formed *Israel* for himself, and both to show forth his praise, Isa. 43. 21. There we have the creation of the world in history, here the redemption of the world in type. The Greek translators called this book *Exodus*, (which signifies a *departure*, or *going out*,) because it begins with the story of the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt. Some allude to the names of this and the foregoing book, and observe, that immediately after *Genesis*, which signifies the *beginning*, or *original*, follows *Exodus*, which signifies a *departure*, for a *time to be born* is immediately succeeded by a *time to die*. No sooner have we made our entrance into the world, than we must think of making our exit, and going out of the world. When we begin to live, we begin to die. The forming of Israel into a people, was a new creation. As the earth was in the beginning, first fetched from under water, and then beautified and replenished; so Israel was

first, by an Almighty power, made to emerge out of Egyptian slavery, and then enriched with God's law and tabernacle. This book gives us,

- I. The accomplishment of the promises made before to Abraham; *ch.* 1. to 19. And then,
- II. The establishment of the ordinances which were afterward observed by Israel; *ch.* 20. to 40. Moses, in this book, begins, like Cæsar, to write his own Commentaries; nay a greater, a far greater, than Cæsar is here. But henceforward the penman is himself the hero, and gives us the history of those things of which he was himself an eye and an ear witness, *et quorum pars magna fuit—and in which he bore a conspicuous part.* There are more types of Christ in this book, than perhaps in any other book of the Old Testament; for Moses wrote of him, John 5. 46. The way of man's reconciliation to God, and coming into covenant and communion with him by a Mediator, is here variously represented; and it is of great use to us for the illustration of the New Testament, now that we have that to assist us in the explication of the Old.

EXODUS, I.

CHAP. I.

We have here, I. God's kindness to Israel, in multiplying them exceedingly, *v.* 1. . 7. II. The Egyptians' wickedness to them, I. Oppressing and enslaving them, *v.* 8. . 14. 2. Murdering their children, *v.* 15. . 22. Thus whom the court of heaven blessed, the country of Egypt cursed, and for that reason.

NOW these *are* the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob. 2. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3. Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4. Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. 5. And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob, were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt *already*. 6. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. 7. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

In these verses we have,

1. A recital of the names of the *twelve patriarchs*, as they are called, Acts 7. 8. Their names are often repeated in scripture; that they may not sound uncouth to us, as other hard names, but that, by their occurring so frequently, they may become familiar to us; and to show how precious God's spiritual Israel are to him, and how much he delights in them.

2. The account which was kept of the number of Jacob's family, when they went down into Egypt; they were in all *seventy souls*, (*v.* 5.) according to the computation we had, *ch.* 46. 27. This was just the number of the nations by which the earth was peopled, according to the account given, *ch.* 10. *For when the Most High separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel*, as Moses observes, Deut. 32. 8. Notice is taken of this, here, that their increase in Egypt might appear the more wonderful. Note, It is good for those whose latter end greatly increases, often to remember how small their beginning was, Job 8. 7.

3. The death of Joseph, *v.* 6. *All that generation* by degrees wore off; perhaps all Jacob's sons died much about the same time; for there was not more than seven years difference in age between the eldest and the youngest of them, except Benjamin; and when death comes into a family, sometimes it makes a full end in a little time; when Joseph, the stay of the family, died, the rest went off apace. Note, We must look upon ourselves and

our brethren, and all we converse with, as dying, and hastening out of the world. This generation passeth away, as that did which went before.

4. The strange increase of Israel in Egypt, *v.* 7. Here are four words used to express it; they *were fruitful*, and *increased abundantly*, like fishes or insects, so that they *multiplied*; and, being generally healthful and strong, they *waxed exceeding mighty*, so that they began almost to outnumber the natives, for the land was in all places filled with them, at least, Goshen, their own allotment. Observe, (1.) Though, no doubt, they increased considerably before, yet, it should seem, it was not till after the death of Joseph, that it began to be taken notice of as extraordinary. Thus, when they lost the benefit of his protection, God made their numbers their defence, and they became better able than they had been, to shift for themselves. If God could not our friends and relations to us while we most need them, and remove them when they can be better spared, let us own that he is wise, and not complain that he is hard upon us. After the death of Christ, our Joseph, his Gospel-Israel began most remarkably to increase; his death had an influence upon it, it was like the sowing of a corn of wheat, which, if it die, bringeth forth much fruit, John 12. 24. (2.) This wonderful increase was the fulfilment of the promise long before made unto the fathers from the call of Abraham, when God first told him he would make of him a great nation, to the deliverance of his seed out of Egypt, it was 430 years, during the first 215 of which, they were increased but to 70, but, in the latter half, those 70 multiplied to 600,000 fighting-men. Note, [1.] Sometimes God's providences may seem for a great while to thwart his promises, and to go counter to them, that his people's faith may be tried, and his own power the more magnified. [2.] Though the performance of God's promises is sometimes slow, yet it is always sure; *at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie*, Hab. 2. 3.

8. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. 9. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we: 10. Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and *so* get them up out of the land. 11. Therefore they did set over them task-masters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12. But the more they afflicted them, the more they

multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. 13. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: 14. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, *was* with rigour.

The land of Egypt here, at length, becomes to Israel a house of bondage, though, hitherto, it had been a happy shelter and settlement for them. Note, The place of our satisfaction may soon become the place of our affliction, and that may prove the greatest cross to us, of which we said, *This same shall comfort us.* Those may prove our sworn enemies, whose parents were our faithful friends; nay, the same persons that loved us, may possibly turn to hate us: therefore, Cease from man, and say not concerning any place on this side heaven, *This is my rest for ever.* Observe here,

1. The obligations they lay under to Israel upon Joseph's account were forgotten; (v. 8.) *There arose a new king*, after several successions in Joseph's time, *which knew not Joseph.* All that knew him, loved him, and were kind to his relations for his sake; but, when he was dead, he was soon forgotten, and the remembrance of the good offices he had done, was either not retained, or not regarded, nor had it any influence upon their councils. Note, The best, and the most useful and acceptable services done to men, are seldom remembered, so as to be recompensed to those that did them, in the notice taken either of their memory, or of their posterity, after their death, Eccl. 9. 5, 15. And therefore our great care should be to serve God, and please him, who is not unrighteous, whatever men are, to forget our work and labour of love, Heb. 6. 10. If we work for men only, our works, at furthest, will die with us; if for God, they will follow us, Rev. 14. 13. *This king of Egypt knew not Joseph;* and after him arise one that had the impudence to say, *I know not the Lord*, ch. 5. 2. Note, Those that are unmindful of their other benefactors, it is to be feared, will forget the supreme Benefactor, 1 John 4. 20.

II. Reasons of state were suggested for their dealing hardly with Israel, v. 9, 10. 1. They are represented as *more and mightier* than the Egyptians; certainly they were not so; but the king of Egypt, when he resolved to oppress them, would have them thought so, and looked on as a formidable body. 2. Hence it is inferred, that if care were not taken to keep them under, they would become dangerous to the government, and in time of war would side with their enemies, and revolt from their allegiance to the crown of Egypt. Note, It has been the policy of persecutors to represent God's Israel as a dangerous people, *hurtful unto kings and provinces*, not fit to be trusted, nay, not fit to be tolerated, that they may have some pretence for the barbarous treatment they design them, Ezra 4. 12, &c. Esth. 3. 8. Observe, The thing they feared, was, lest they should *get them up out of the land*; probably, having heard them speak of the promise made to their fathers, that they should settle in Canaan. Note, The policies of the church's enemies aim to defeat the promises of the church's God, but in vain; God's counsels shall stand. 3. It is therefore proposed that a course be taken to prevent their increase; *Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply.* Note, (1.) The growth of Israel is the grief of Egypt, and that against which the powers and policies of hell are levelled. (2.) When men deal wickedly, it is common for them to ima-

gine that they deal wisely; but the folly of sin will, at last, be manifested before all men.

III. The method they took to suppress them, and check their growth, v. 11, 13, 14. The Israelites behaved themselves so peaceably and inoffensively, that they could not find any occasion of making war upon them, and weakening them by that means: and therefore, 1. They took care to keep them poor, by charging them with heavy taxes, which, some think, is included in the *burthens* with which they afflicted them. 2. By this means they took an effectual course to make them slaves; the Israelites, it should seem, were much more industrious laborious people than the Egyptians, and therefore Pharaoh took care to find them work, both in his building, (they made him *treasure-cities*;) and in his husbandry, even *all manner of service in the field*; and this was exacted from them with the utmost rigour and severity. Here are many expressions used, to affect us with the condition of God's people. They had *task-masters* set over them, who were directed, not only to burthen them, but, as much as might be, *to afflict them with their burthens*, and contrive how to make them grievous. They not only made them *serve*, which was sufficient for Pharaoh's profit, but they made them *serve with rigour*, so that their lives became bitter to them; intending thereby, (1.) To break their spirits, and rob them of every thing in them, that was ingenious and generous. (2.) To ruin their health, and shorten their days, and so diminish their numbers. (3.) To discourage them from marrying, since their children would be born to slavery. (4.) To oblige them to desert the Hebrews, and incorporate themselves with the Egyptians. Thus he hoped to cut off the name of Israel, that it might be no more in remembrance. And it is to be feared that the oppression they were under, had this bad effect upon them, that it brought over many of them to join with the Egyptians in their idolatrous worship; for we read, (Josh. 24. 14.) that they served other gods in Egypt; and though it is not mentioned here in this history, yet we find, (Ezek. 20. 8.) that God had threatened to destroy them for it, even while they were in the land of Egypt: however, they were kept a distinct body, unmingled with the Egyptians, and by their other customs separated from them, which was *the Lord's doing, and marvellous*.

IV. The wonderful increase of the Israelites, notwithstanding the oppression they groaned under; (v. 12.) *The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied*, sorely to the grief and vexation of the Egyptians. Note, 1. Times of affliction have often been the church's growing times, *Sub pondere crescit—Being pressed, it grows.* Christianity spread most when it was persecuted: the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. 2. They that take counsel against the Lord and his Israel, do but imagine a vain thing, (Ps. 2. 1.) and create so much the greater vexation to themselves: hell and earth cannot diminish those whom Heaven will increase.

15. And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one *was* Shiprah, and the name of the other Puah: 16. And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see *them* upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. 17. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved

the men-children alive. 18. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive? 19. And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women *are* not as the Egyptian women; for they *are* lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. 20. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. 21. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. 22. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

The Egyptians' indignation at Israel's increase, notwithstanding the many hardships they put upon them, drove them, at length, to the most barbarous and inhuman methods of suppressing them, by the murder of their children. It was strange that they did not rather pick quarrels with the grown men, against whom they might find some occasion perhaps; to be thus bloody toward the infants, whom all must own to be innocent, was a sin which they had no cloak for. Note, 1. There is more cruelty in the corrupt heart of man than one would imagine, Rom. 3. 15, 16. The enmity that is in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman, divests men of humanity itself, and makes them forget all pity. One would not think it possible that ever man should be so barbarous and blood-thirsty as the persecutors of God's people have been, Rev. 17. 6. 2. Even confessed innocence is no defence against the old enmity; what blood so guiltless as that of a child new-born? Yet that is prodigally shed like water, and sucked with delight like milk or honey. Pharaoh and Herod sufficiently proved themselves agents for that *great red dragon, who stood to devour the man-child as soon as it was born*, Rev. 12. 3, 4. Pilate delivered Christ to be crucified, after he had confessed that he found no fault in him. It is well for us, that though man can kill the body, that is all he can do.

Two bloody edicts are here signed for the destruction of all the male-children that were born to the Hebrews.

I. The midwives were commanded to murder them.

Observe, 1. The orders given them, v. 15, 16. It added much to the barbarity of the intended executions, that the *midwives* were appointed to be the executioners; for it was to make them, not only bloody, but perfidious, and to oblige them to betray a trust, and to destroy those whom they undertook to save and help. Could he think that their sex would admit such cruelty, and their employment such base treachery? Note, Those who are themselves barbarous, think to find, or make, others as barbarous. Pharaoh's project was, secretly to engage the midwives to stifle the men-children as soon as they were born, and then to lay it upon the difficulty of the birth, or some mischance common in that case, Job 3. 11. The two midwives he tampered with in order herunto, are here named; and perhaps, at this time, which was above eighty years before their going out of Egypt, those two might suffice for all the Hebrew women, at least so many of them as lay near the court, as is plain, by ch. 2. 5, 6, many of them did, and of them he was most jealous. They are called *Hebrew midwives*, probably, not because they were

themselves Hebrews, (for surely Pharaoh could never expect they should be so barbarous to those of their own nation,) but because they were generally made use of by the Hebrews; and being Egyptians, he hoped to prevail with them.

2. Their pious disobedience to this impious command, v. 17. *They feared God*, regarded his law, and dreaded his wrath more than Pharaoh's, and therefore saved the men-children alive. Note, (1.) If men's commands be any way contrary to the commands of God, we must obey God and not man, Acts 4. 19.—5. 29. No power on earth can warrant us, much less oblige us, to sin against God, our chief Lord. (2.) Where the fear of God rules in the heart, it will preserve it from that snare which the inordinate fear of man brings.

3. Their justifying of themselves in this disobedience, when they were charged with it as a crime, v. 18. They gave a reason for it, which, it seems, God's gracious providence had furnished them with—that they came too late to do it, for, generally, the children were born before they came, v. 19. I see no reason we have to doubt of the truth of this; it is plain that the Hebrews were now under an extraordinary blessing of increase, which may well be supposed to have this effect, that the women had very quick and easy labour, and the mothers and children being both lively, they seldom needed the help of midwives: this, these midwives took notice of, and concluding it to be the finger of God, were thereby emboldened to disobey the king, in favour of those whom Heaven thus favoured, and with this justified themselves before Pharaoh, when he called them to an account for it. Some of the ancient Jews expound it thus, *Ere the midwife comes to them, they pray to their father in heaven, and he answereth them, and they do bring forth*. Note, God is a readier help to his people in distress than any other helpers are, and often prevents them with the blessings of his goodness; such deliverances lay them under peculiarly strong obligations.

4. The recompense God gave them for their tenderness toward his people; *he dealt well with them*, v. 20. Note, God will be behind-hand with none for any kindness done to his people, taking it as done to himself. In particular, *he made them houses*, (v. 21.) built them up into families, blessed their children, and prospered them in all they did. Note, The services done for God's Israel are often repaid in kind. The midwives kept up the Israelites' houses, and, in recompense for it, *God made them houses*. Observe, The recompense has relation to the principle upon which they went; *because they feared God, he made them houses*. Note, Religion and piety are good friends to outward prosperity; the fear of God in a house will help to build it up and establish it. Dr. Lightfoot's notion of it is, That, for their piety, they were married to Israelites, and Hebrew families were built up by them.

II. When this project did not take effect, Pharaoh gave public orders to all his people to drown all the male-children of the Hebrews, v. 22. We may suppose it was made highly penal for any to know of the birth of a son to an Israelite, and not to give information to those who were appointed to throw him into the river. Note, The enemies of the church have been restless in their endeavours to wear out the saints of the Most High, Dan. 7. 25. But *he that sits in heaven shall laugh at them*. See Ps. 2. 4.

CHAP. II.

This Chapter begins the story of Moses, that man of renown, famed for his intimate acquaintance with Heaven, and his eminent usefulness on earth; and the most remarkable Type of Christ, as Prophet, Saviour, Lawgiver

et, and Mediator, in all the Old Testament. The Jews have a book among them, of the life of Moses, which tells a great many stories concerning him, which we have reason to think are mere fictions; what he has recorded concerning himself, is what we may rely upon, for we know that his record is true; and it is what we may be satisfied with, for it is what Infinite Wisdom thought fit to preserve and transmit to us. In this chapter we have, I. The perils of his birth and infancy, v. 1.-4. II. His preservation through those perils, and the preference of his childhood and youth, v. 5.-10. III. The pious choice of his riper years, which was, to own the people of God. 1. He offered them his service at present, if they would have accepted it, v. 11.-14. 2. He retired, that he might reserve himself for further service hereafter, v. 15.-22. IV. The dawning of the day of Israel's deliverance, v. 23.-25.

1. **AND** there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. 2. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. 3. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. 4. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

Moses was a Levite, both by father and mother. Jacob left Levi under marks of disgrace; (Gen. 49. 5.) and yet, soon after, Moses appears a descendant from him, that he might typify Christ, who came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was made a curse for us. This tribe began to be distinguished from the rest by the birth of Moses, as afterward it became remarkable in many other instances. Observe, concerning this new-born infant.

I. How he was hidden. It seems to have been just at the time of his birth, that the cruel law was made for the murder of all the male-children of the Hebrews; and many, no doubt, perished by the execution of it. The parents of Moses had Miriam and Aaron, both elder than he, born to them before that edict came out, and had nursed them, without that peril; but those that begin the world in peace, know not what troubles they may meet with before they have got through it. Probably, the mother of Moses was full of anxiety in the expectation of his birth, now that this edict was in force, and was ready to say, *Blessed are the barren that never bare*, Luke 23. 29. Better so, than bring forth children to the murderer, Hos. 9. 13. Yet this child proves the glory of his father's house. Thus that which is most our fear, often proves, in the issue, most our joy. Observe the beauty of providence: just at the time when Pharaoh's cruelty rose to this height, the deliverer was born, though he did not appear for many years after. Note, When men are projecting the church's ruin, God is preparing for its salvation. And Moses, who was afterward to bring Israel out of this house of bondage, had himself like to have fallen a sacrifice to the fury of the oppressor; God so ordering it, that, being afterward told of this, he might be the more animated with a holy zeal for the deliverance of his brethren out of the hands of such bloody men.

1. His parents observed him to be a *goodly child*, more than ordinarily beautiful; he was *fair to God*, Acts 7. 20. They fancied he had a lustre in his countenance that was something more than human, and was a specimen of the shining of his face afterward, ch. 34. 29. Note, God sometimes gives early earnest of his gifts, and manifests himself betimes in those for whom, and by whom, he designs to do

great things. Thus he put an early strength into Samson, (Judg. 13. 24, 25.) an early forwardness into Samuel, (1 Sam. 2. 18.) wrought an early deliverance for David, (1 Sam. 17. 37.) and began betimes with Timothy, 2 Tim. 3. 15.

2. *Therefore* they were the more solicitous for his preservation, because they looked upon this as an indication of some kind purpose of God concerning him, and a happy omen of something great. Note, A lively active faith can take encouragement from the least intimation of the divine favour; a merciful hint of Providence will encourage those whose spirits make diligent search. *Three months* they hid him in some private apartment of their own house, though, probably, with the hazard of their own lives, had he been discovered. Herein Moses was type of Christ, who, in his infancy, was forced to abscond, and in Egypt too, (Matt. 2. 13.) and was wonderfully preserved, when many innocents were butchered. It is said, (Heb. 11. 23.) that the parents of Moses *hid him by faith*; some think they had a special revelation to them that the Deliverer should spring from their loins; however, they had the general promise of Israel's preservation, which they acted faith upon, and in that faith hid their child, not being afraid of the penalty annexed to the king's commandment. Note, (1) Faith in God's promise is so far from superseding, that it rather excites and quickens to, the use of lawful means for obtaining mercy. Duty is our's, events are God's. (2) Faith in God will set us above the insnaring fear of man.

1. How he was exposed. At three months' end, probably, when the searchers came about to look for concealed children, so that they could not hide him any longer, (their faith perhaps beginning now to fail,) they put him in an ark of bulrushes by the river's brink, (v. 3.) and set his little sister at some distance to watch what would become of him, and into whose hands he would fall, v. 4. God put it into their hearts to do this, to bring about his own purposes; that Moses might by this means be brought into the hands of Pharaoh's daughter, and that by his deliverance from this imminent danger, a specimen might be given of the deliverance of God's church, which now lay thus exposed. Note, 1. God takes special care of the *outcasts of Israel*, (Ps. 147. 2.) they are *his outcasts*, Isa. 16. 4. Moses seemed quite abandoned by his friends, his own mother durst not own him, but now the Lord took him up and protected him, Ps. 27. 10. 2. In times of extreme difficulty, it is good to venture upon the providence of God. Thus to have exposed their child while they might have preserved it, had been to tempt Providence; but when they could not, it was bravely to trust to Providence. "Nothing venture, nothing win;" *If I perish, I perish*.

5. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash *herself* at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. 6. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, *This is one of the Hebrews' children*. 7. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? 8. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother

9. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

Here is,

1. Moses saved from perishing. Come, see the place where that great man lay, when he was a little child; he lay in a bulrush basket by the river's side. Had he been left to lie there, he must have perished in a little time with hunger, if he had not been sooner washed into the river, or devoured by a crocodile. Had he fallen into any other hands than those he did fall into, either they would not, or durst not have done otherwise, than have thrown him straightway into the river; but Providence brings no less a person thither than Pharaoh's daughter, just at that juncture, guides her to the place where this poor forlorn infant lay, and inclines her heart to pity it, which she dares do, when none else durst. Never did poor child cry so seasonably, so happily as this did; *the babe wept*, which moved the compassion of the princess, as, no doubt, his beauty did, v. 5, 6. Note, (1.) Those are hard-hearted indeed, that have not tender compassion for helpless infancy. How pathetically does God represent his compassion for the Israelites in general, considered in this pitiable state! Ezek. 16. 3, 6. (2.) It is very commendable in persons of quality, to take cognizance of the distresses of the meanest, and to be helpful and charitable to them. (3.) God's care of us in our infancy ought to be often made mention of by us to his praise. Though we were not thus exposed, (that we were not, was God's mercy,) yet many were the perils we were surrounded with in our infancy, out of which the Lord delivered us, Ps. 22. 9, 10. (4.) God often raises up friends for his people even among their enemies. Pharaoh cruelly seeks Israel's destruction, but his own daughter charitably compassionates a Hebrew child, and not only so, but, beyond her intention, preserves Israel's deliverer. *O Lord, how wonderful are thy counsels.*

2. Moses well provided with a good nurse, no worse than his own dear mother, v. 7. 9. Pharaoh's daughter thinks it convenient that he should have a Hebrew nurse, (pity that so fair a child should be suckled by a sable Moor,) and the sister of Moses, with art and good management, introduces the mother into the place of a nurse, to the great advantage of the child; for mothers are the best nurses, and those who receive the blessings of the breasts with those of the womb, are not just, if they give them not to those for whose sake they received them: it was also an unspeakable satisfaction to the mother, who received her son as life from the dead, and now could enjoy him without fear. The transport of her joy, upon this happy turn, we may suppose sufficient to betray her to be the true mother (had there been any suspicion of it) to a less discerning eye than that of Solomon, 1 Kings 3. 27.

3. Moses preferred to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter, v. 10. His parents herein perhaps not only yielding to necessity, having nursed him *for her*, but too much pleased with the honour thereby done to their son; for the smiles of the world are stronger temptations than its frowns, and more hardly resisted. The tradition of the Jews is, That Pharaoh's daughter had no child of her own, and

that she was the only child of her father, so that when he was adopted for her son, he stood fair for the crown: however, it is certain he stood fair for the best preferments of the court in due time, and in the mean time had the advantage of the best education and improvements of the court, with the help of which, having a great genius, he became master of all the lawful learning of the Egyptians, Acts 7. 22. Note, (1.) Providence pleases itself sometimes in raising the poor out of the dust, to set them among princes, Ps. 113. 7, 8. Many who, by their birth, seem marked for obscurity and poverty, by surprising events of Providence, are brought to sit at the upper end of the world, to make men know that *the Heavens do rule*. (2.) Those whom God designs for great services, he finds out ways to qualify and prepare beforehand. Moses, by having his education in a court, is the fitter to be a prince and king in *Jeshurun*; by having his education in a learned court, (for such the Egyptian then was,) is the fitter to be an *historian*; and by having his education in the court of Egypt, is the fitter to be employed, in the name of God, as an ambassador to that court.

4. Moses named. The Jews tell us that his father, at his circumcision, called him *Joachim*, but Pharaoh's daughter called him *Moses*, *Drawn out of the water*, so it signifies in the Egyptian language. The calling of a Jewish lawgiver by an Egyptian name, is a happy omen to the Gentile world, and gives hopes of that day when it shall be said, *Blessed be Egypt my people*, Isa. 19. 25. And his tuition at court was an earnest of the performance of that promise, (Isa. 49. 23.) *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing-mothers.*

11. And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was* no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. 13. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? 14. And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. 15. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

Moses had now passed the first forty years of his life in the court of Pharaoh, preparing himself for business; and now it was time for him to enter upon action, and,

1. He boldly owns and espouses the cause of God's people; *when Moses was grown, he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens*, v. 11. The best exposition of these words we have from an inspired pen, Heb. 11. 24. 26. where we are told that this bespeaks, 1. His holy contempt of the honours and pleasures of the Egyptian court; *he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, for he went out.* The temptation was indeed

very strong; he had a fair opportunity (as we say) to make his fortune, and to have been serviceable to Israel too, with his interest at court; he was obliged, in gratitude as well as interest, to Pharaoh's daughter, and yet he obtained a glorious victory by faith over his temptation. He reckoned it much more his honour and advantage to be a son of Abraham, than to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 2. His tender concern for his poor brethren in bondage, with whom (though he might easily have avoided it) he *chose to suffer affliction*; he looked on their burthens, as one that not only pitied them, but was resolved to venture *with* them, and, if occasion were, to venture *for* them.

II. He gives a specimen of the great things he was afterward to do for God and his Israel, in two little instances, related particularly by Stephen, (Acts 7. 23, &c.) with design to show how their fathers had *always resisted the Holy Ghost*, (v. 51.) even in Moses himself, when he first appeared as their deliverer, wilfully shutting their eyes against this day-break of their enlargement. He found himself, no doubt, under a divine direction and impulse in what he did, and that he was in an extraordinary manner called of God to it. Now, observe,

1. Moses was afterward to be employed in plaguing the Egyptians for the wrongs they had done to God's Israel; and, as a specimen of that, he killed the Egyptian who smote the Hebrew; (v. 11, 12.) probably, it was one of the Egyptian task-masters, whom he found abusing his Hebrew slave, a relation (as some think) of Moses, a man of the same tribe. It was by special warrant from Heaven, (which makes not a precedent in ordinary cases,) that Moses slew the Egyptian, and rescued his oppressed brother. The Jews' tradition is, that he did not slay him with any weapon, but, as Peter slew Ananias and Sapphira, with the word of his mouth. His *hiding him in the sand* signified, that hereafter Pharaoh and all his Egyptians should, under the control of the rod of Moses, be buried in the sand of the Red-sea. His taking care to execute this justice privately, when no man saw, was a piece of needful prudence and caution, it being but an assay, and perhaps his faith was yet weak, and what he did, was with some hesitation. Those who come to be of great faith, yet begin with a little, and at first spake trembling.

2. Moses was afterward to be employed in governing Israel, and, as a specimen of that, we have him here trying to end a controversy between two Hebrews, in which he is forced (as he did afterward for forty years) to suffer their manners. Observe here,

(1.) The unhappy quarrel which Moses observed between two Hebrews, v. 13. It does not appear what was the occasion; but, whatever it was, it was certainly very unseasonable for Hebrews to strive with one another, when they were all oppressed and ruled with rigour by the Egyptians. Had they not beating enough from the Egyptians, but they must beat one another? Note, [1.] Even sufferings in common do not always unite God's professing people to one another, so much as one might reasonably expect. [2.] When God raises up instruments of salvation for the church, they will find enough to do, not only with oppressing Egyptians, to restrain them, but with quarrelsome Israelites, to reconcile them.

(2.) The way he took of dealing with them: he marked him that caused the division, that did the wrong, and mildly reasoned with him, *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?* The injurious Egyptian was killed, the injurious Hebrew was only reprimanded; for what the former did, was from a rooted malice; what the latter did, we may suppose,

was only upon a sudden provocation. The wise God makes, and according to his example, all wise governors make, a difference between one offender and another, according to the several qualities of the same offence. Moses endeavoured to make them friends; a good office; thus we find Christ often reproving his disciples' strife; (Luke 9. 46, &c. —22. 24, &c.) for he was a Prophet like unto Moses, a healing Prophet, a Peace-Maker, who visited his brethren with a design to slay all enmities. The reproof Moses gave on this occasion, may still be of use, *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?* Note, Smiting our fellows is bad in any, especially in Hebrews; smiting with tongue or hand, either in a way of persecution, or in a way of strife and contention. Consider the person thou smitest; it is thy fellow, thy fellow-creature, thy fellow-Christian, it is thy fellow-servant, thy fellow-sufferer. Consider the cause, *Wherefore smitest?* Perhaps it was for no cause at all, or no just cause, or none worth speaking of.

(3.) The ill success of his attempt; (v. 14.) *He said, Who made thee a prince?* He that did the wrong, thus quarrelled with Moses; the injured party, it should seem, was inclinable enough to peace, but the wrong-doer was thus touchy. Note, It is a sign of guilt to be impatient of reproof; and it is often easier to persuade the injured to bear the trouble of taking wrong, than the injurious to bear the conviction of having *done wrong*, 1 Cor. 6. 6.

8. It was a very wise and mild reproof which Moses gave to this quarrelsome Hebrew, but he cannot bear it, he kicks against the pricks, (Acts 9. 5.) and crosses questions with his reprover. [1.] He challenges his authority; *Who made thee a prince?* A man needs no great authority for the giving of a friendly reproof, it is an act of kindness; yet this man needs will interpret it an act of dominion, and represents his reprover as imperious and assuming. Thus when people dislike good discourse or a seasonable admonition, they will call it *preaching*, as if a man could not speak a word for God, and against sin, but he *took too much upon him*. Yet Moses was indeed a prince and a judge, and knew it, and thought the Hebrews would have understood it, and struck in with him, but they stood in their own light, and *thrust him away*, Acts 7. 25, 27. [2.] He upbraids him with what he had done in killing the Egyptian; *Intendest thou to kill me?* See what base constructions malice puts upon the best words and actions. Moses, for reproving him, is immediately charged with a design to kill him. An attempt upon his sin was interpreted an attempt upon his life; and his having killed the Egyptian was thought sufficient to justify the suspicion; as if Moses made no difference between an Egyptian and a Hebrew. If Moses, to right an injured Hebrew, had put his life in his hand, and slain an Egyptian, he ought therefore to have submitted to him, not only as a friend to the Hebrews, but as a friend that had more than ordinary power and zeal. But he throws that in his teeth as a crime, which was bravely done, and was intended as a specimen of the promised deliverance; if the Hebrews had taken the hint, and come in to Moses as their head and captain, it is probable that they would have been delivered now; but, despising their deliverer, their deliverance was justly deferred, and their bondage prolonged forty years; as, afterward, their despising of Canaan kept them out of it forty years more. *I would, and ye would not*. Note, Men know not what they do, nor what enemies they are to their own interests, when they resist and despise faithful reproofs and reprovers. When the Hebrews strove with Moses, God sent him away into Midian, and they never heard of him for forty years; thus the things that belonged to their peace,

were hidden from their eyes, because they knew not the day of their visitation. As to Moses, we may look on it as a great damp and discouragement to him. He was now *choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God*, and embracing *the reproach of Christ*; and now, at his first setting out, to meet with this affliction and reproach from them, was a very sore trial of his resolution. He might have said, "If this be the spirit of the Hebrews, I will go to court again, and be the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Note, *First*, We must take heed of being prejudiced against the ways and people of God, by the follies and peevishness of some particular persons that profess religion. *Secondly*, It is no new thing for the church's best friends to meet with a great deal of opposition and discouragement in their healing saving attempts, even from their own mother's children; Christ himself was set at naught by the builders, and is still rejected by those he would save.

(4.) The flight of Moses to Midian, in consequence. The affront given him thus far proved a kindness to him; it gave him to understand that his killing of the Egyptian was discovered, and so he had time to make his escape, otherwise the wrath of Pharaoh might have surprised him and taken him off. Note, God can over-rule even the strife of tongues, so as, one way or other, to bring good to his people out of it. Information was brought to Pharaoh (and it is well if it were not brought by the Hebrew himself whom Moses reproved) of his killing the Egyptian; warrants are presently out for the apprehending of Moses; which obliged him to shift for his own safety, by flying into the land of Midian, *v. 15*. [1.] Moses did this out of a prudent care of his own life. If this be his forsaking of Egypt, which the apostle refers to, as done by faith, (*Heb. 11. 27.*) it teaches us, that when we are at any time in trouble and danger for doing our duty, the grace of faith will be of good use to us in taking proper methods for our own preservation. Yet there, it is said, *He feared not the wrath of the king*; here it is said he *feared*, *v. 14*. He did not fear with a fear of diffidence and amazement, which weakens, and has torment, but with a fear of diligence, which quickened him to take that way which providence opened to him for his own preservation. [2.] God ordered it for wise and holy ends. Things were not yet ripe for Israel's deliverance. The measure of Egypt's iniquity was not yet full; the Hebrews were not sufficiently humbled, nor were they yet increased to such a multitude as God designed; Moses is to be further fitted for the service, and therefore is directed to withdraw for the present, till the time to favour Israel, even the set time, came. God guided Moses to Midian, because the Midianites were of the seed of Abraham, and retained the worship of the true God among them, so that he might have not only a safe, but a comfortable settlement among them. And through this country he was afterwards to lead Israel, with which (that he might do it the better) he now had opportunity of making himself acquainted. Hither he came, and sat down by a well, tired and thoughtful, at a loss, and waiting to see which way Providence would direct him. It was a great change with him, since he was but the other day at ease in Pharaoh's court: thus God tried his faith, and it was found to praise and honour.

16. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew *water*, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. 18.

And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, *How is it that ye are come so soon to-day?* 19. And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew *water* enough for us, and watered the flock. 20. And he said unto his daughters, And where *is he*? Why *is it that ye have left the man*? Call him, that he may eat bread. 21. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. 22. And she bare *him* a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

Moses here gains a settlement in Midian, just as his father Jacob had gained one in Syria, *Gen. 29. 2, &c.* And both these instances should encourage us to trust Providence, and to follow it. Events that seem inconsiderable and pure y accidental, afterward appear to have been designed by the wisdom of God for very good purposes, and of great consequence to his people. A casual transient occurrence has sometimes occasioned the greatest and happiest turns of a man's life.

Observe,

I. Concerning the seven daughters of Reuel the priest or prince of Midian; 1. They were humble and very industrious, according as the employment of the country was; they *drew water for their father's flock*, *v. 16*. If their father was a *prince*, it teaches us that even those who are honourably born, and are of quality and distinction in their country, yet should apply themselves to some useful business, and what their hand finds to do, do it with all their might. Idleness can be no one's honour. If their father was a *priest*, it teaches us that ministers' children should, in a special manner, be examples of humility and industry. 2. They were modest, and would not ask this strange Egyptian to come home with them, (though handsome and a great courtier,) till their father sent for him. Modesty is the ornament of that sex.

II. Concerning Moses; he was taken for an Egyptian; (*v. 19.*) and strangers must be content to be mistaken; but it is observable,

1. How ready he was to help Reuel's daughters to water their flocks. Though bred in learning and at court, yet he knew how to turn his hand to such an office as this, when there was occasion; nor had he learned of the Egyptians to despise shepherds. Note, Those that have had a liberal education, yet should not be strangers to servile work, because they know not what necessity Providence may put them in of working for themselves, or what opportunity Providence may give them of being serviceable to others. These young women, it seems, met with some opposition in their employment, more than they and their servants could conquer; the shepherds of some neighbouring prince, as some think, or some idle fellows that called themselves *shepherds*, *drove away their flocks*; but Moses, though melancholy and in distress, *stood up and helped them*, not only to get clear of the shepherds, but when that was done, to water the flocks. This he did, not only in compliance to the daughters of Reuel, (though that also did very well become him,) but because, wherever he was, as occasion offered itself, (1.) He loved to be doing justice, and appearing in the defence of such as he saw injured, which every man ought to do, as far as it is in the power of his hand to do it. (2.) He loved to be doing good; wherever the providence of God casts us, we should desire and endeavour to be useful; and

when we cannot do the good we would, we must be ready to do the good we can. And he that is faithful in a little, shall be entrusted with more.

2. How well he was paid for his servicerableness. When the young woman acquainted their father with the kindnesses they had received from this stranger, he sent to invite him to his house, and made much of him, v. 20. Thus God will recompense the kindnesses which are at any time shown to his children; they shall in no wise lose their reward. Moses soon recommended himself to the esteem and good affection of this prince of Midian, who took him into his house, and in process of time, married one of his daughters to him, (v. 21.) by whom he had a son, whom he called *Gershom*, a stranger there, (v. 22.) that if ever God should give him a home of his own, he might keep in remembrance the land in which he had been a stranger. Now this settlement of Moses in Midian, was designed by Providence, (1.) To shelter him, for the present. God will find hiding-places for his people in the day of their distress; nay, he will himself be to them a little sanctuary, and will secure them, either under heaven, or in heaven. But, (2.) It was also designed to prepare him for the great services he was farther designed for. His manner of life in Midian, where he kept the flock of his father-in-law, (having none of his own to keep,) would be of use to him, [1.] To inure him to hardship and poverty, that he might learn how to want as well as how to abound. God humbles those first, whom he intends to exalt. [2.] To inure him to contemplation and devotion. Egypt accomplished him for a scholar, a gentleman, a statesman, a soldier, all which accomplishments would be afterward of use to him; but yet lacketh he one thing, in which the court of Egypt could not befriend him. He that was to do all by divine revelation, must know, by a long experience, what it was to live a life of communion with God; and in this he would be greatly furthered by the solitude and retirement of a shepherd's life in Midian. By the former he was prepared to rule in Jeshurun, but by the latter he was prepared to converse with God in Mount Horeb, near which mount he had spent much of his time. Those that know what it is to be alone with God in holy exercises, are acquainted with better delights than ever Moses tasted in the court of Pharaoh.

23. And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. 24. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

Here is,

1. The continuance of the Israelites' bondage in Egypt, v. 23. Probably, the murdering of their infants did not continue; this part of their affliction attended only the period immediately connected with the birth of Moses, and served to signalize it. The Egyptians now were content with their increase, finding that Egypt was enriched by their labour; so that they might have them for slaves, they cared not how many they were. On this therefore they were intent, to keep them all at work, and make the best hand they could of their labour. When one Pharaoh died, another rose up in his place, that was governed by the same maxims, and

was as cruel to Israel as his predecessors. If there was sometimes a little relaxation, yet it presently revived again with as much rigour as ever; and probably, as the more Israel were oppressed, the more they multiplied, so the more they multiplied, the more they were oppressed. Note, Sometimes God suffers the rod of the wicked to lie very long and very heavy on the lot of the righteous. If Moses, in Midian, at any time began to think how much better his condition might have been, had he staid among the *courtiers*; he must of himself think this also, how much worse it would have been, if he had had his lot with his *brethren*: it was a great degradation to him to be keeping sheep in Midian, but better so, than making brick in Egypt. The consideration of our brethren's affliction should help to reconcile us to our own.

2. The preface to their deliverance at last.

(1.) *They cried*, v. 23. Now, at last, they began to think of God under their troubles, and to return to him from the idols they had served, Ezek. 20. 8. Hitherto they had fretted at the instruments of their trouble, but God was not in all their thoughts. Thus *hypocrites in heart heap up wrath, they cry not when he binds them*, Job 36. 13. But before God unbanded them, he put it into their hearts to cry unto him, as it is explained, Num. 20. 16. Note, It is a good sign that God is coming toward us with deliverance, when he inclines and enables us to cry to him for it.

(2.) *God heard*, v. 24, 25. The name of God is here emphatically prefixed to four different expressions of a kind intention toward them. [1.] *God heard their groaning*; that is, he made it to appear that he took notice of their complaints. The groans of the oppressed cry loud in the ears of the righteous God, to whom vengeance belongs; especially the groans of God's spiritual Israel; he knows the burthens they groan under, and the blessings they groan after, and that the blessed Spirit, by these groanings, makes intercession in them. [2.] *God remembered his covenant*, which he seemed to have forgotten, but of which he is ever mindful. This, God had an eye to, and not to any merit of their's, in what he did for them. See Lev. 26. 42. [3.] *God looked upon the children of Israel*: Moses looked upon them and pitied them, (v. 11.) but now God looked upon them and helped them. [4.] *God had respect unto them*, a favourable respect unto them as his own. The frequent repetition of the name of God here, intimates that now we are to expect something great. *Opus Deo dignum—A work worthy of God*. His eyes which run to and fro through the earth, are now fixed upon Israel, to show himself strong, to show himself a God in their behalf.

CHAP. III.

As prophecy had ceased for many ages before the coming of Christ, that the revival and perfection of it in that great Prophet might be the more remarkable; so vision had ceased (for aught that appears) among the patriarchs for some ages before the coming of Moses, that God's appearances to him for Israel's salvation might be the more welcome; and, in this chapter, we have God's first appearance to him in the bush, and the conference between God and Moses in that vision. Here is, I. The discovery God was pleased to make of his glory to Moses at the bush, which Moses was forbidden to approach too near to, v. 1. . . 5. II. A general declaration of God's grace and good-will to his people, who were beloved for their fathers' sakes, v. 6. III. A particular notification of God's purpose concerning the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. 1. He assures Moses it should now be done, v. 7. . . 9. 2. He gives him a commission to act in it, as his ambassador both to Pharaoh (v. 10.) and to Israel, v. 16. 3. He answers the objection Moses made of his own unworthiness, v. 11, 12. 4. He gives him full instructions what to say, both to Pharaoh and to Israel, v. 13. . . 18. 5. He tells him beforehand what the issue would be, v. 19. . . 22.

1. **N**OW Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb. 2. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed. 3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I. 5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground. 6. Moreover he said, I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

The years of the life of Moses are remarkably divided into three forties; the first forty he spent as a prince in Pharaoh's court, the second a shepherd in Midian, the third a king in Jeshurun; so changeable is the life of men, especially the life of good men. He had now finished the second forty, when he received his commission to bring Israel out of Egypt. Note, Sometimes it is long before God calls his servants out to that work which of old he designed them for, and has been graciously preparing them for. Moses was born to be Israel's deliverer, and yet not a word is said of it to him, till he is eighty years of age. Now observe,

I. How this appearance of God to him found him employed. He was keeping the flock, that is, tending sheep, near mount Horeb, *v.* 1. This was a poor employment for a man of his parts and education, yet he rests satisfied with it, and thus learns meekness and contentment to a high degree, for which he is more celebrated in sacred writ than for all his other learning. Note, 1. In the calling to which we are called, we should abide, and not be given to change. 2. Even those that are qualified for great employments and services, must not think it strange if they be confined to obscurity; it was the lot of Moses before them, who foresaw nothing to the contrary but that he should die, as he had lived a great while, a poor despicable shepherd. Let those that think themselves buried alive, be content to shine like lamps in their sepulchres, and wait till God's time come for setting them in a candlestick. Thus employed Moses was, when he was honoured with this vision. Note, (1.) God will encourage industry. The shepherds were keeping their flocks, when they received the tidings of our Saviour's birth, Luke 2. 8. Satan loves to find us idle; God is well pleased when he finds us employed. (2.) Retirement is a good friend to our communion with God. When we are alone, the Father is with us. Moses saw more of God in a desert, than ever he had seen in Pharaoh's court.

II. What the appearance was. To his great surprise, he saw a bush burning, when he perceived no fire either from earth or heaven to kindle it, and, which was more strange, it did not consume, *v.* 2. It was an angel of the Lord that appeared to him; some think, a created angel, who speaks in the lan-

guage of him that sent him; others, the second person, the Angel of the covenant, who is himself Jehovah. It was an extraordinary manifestation of the divine presence and glory; what was visible, was produced by the ministry of an angel, but he heard God in it speaking to him. 1. He saw a flame of fire; *for our God is a consuming fire.* When Israel's deliverance out of Egypt was promised to Abraham, he saw a burning lamp, which signified the light of joy which that deliverance should cause; (Gen. 15. 17.) but now it shines brighter as a flame of fire, for God in that deliverance brought terror and destruction to his enemies, light and heat to his people, and displayed his glory before all. See Isa. 10. 17. 2. This fire was not in a tall and stately cedar, but *in a bush, a thorny bush*, so the word signifies; for God chooses the weak and despised things of the world, such as Moses, now a poor shepherd, with them to confound the wise: he delights to beautify and crown the humble. 3. *The bush burned*, and yet *was not consumed*; an emblem of the church now in bondage in Egypt, burning in the brick-kilns, yet not consumed; perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed.

III. The curiosity Moses had to inquire into this extraordinary sight; (*v.* 3.) *I will turn aside and see.* He speaks as one inquisitive and bold in his inquiry; whatever it was, he would, if possible, know the meaning of it. Note, Things revealed belong to us, and we ought diligently to inquire into them.

IV. The invitation he had to draw near, yet with a caution not to come too near, nor rashly.

1. God gave him a gracious call, to which he returned a ready answer, *v.* 4. When God saw that he took notice of the burning bush, and turned aside to see it, and left his business to attend it, then God called to him. If he had carelessly neglected it as an *ignis fatuus*—a *deceiving meteor*, a thing not worth taking notice of, it is probable that God would have departed, and said nothing to him; but when he turned aside, God called to him. Note, Those that would have communion with God, must attend upon him, and approach to him, in those ordinances wherein he is pleased to manifest himself, and his power and glory, though it be in a bush; they must come to the treasure, though in an earthen vessel. Those that seek God diligently shall find him, and find him their bountiful Rewarder. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* God called him by name, *Moses, Moses.* This which he *heard*, could not but surprise him much more than what he *saw*. The word of the Lord always went along with the glory of the Lord, for every divine vision was designed for divine revelation, Job 4. 16, &c.—33. 14. 16. Divine calls are then effectual, (1.) When the Spirit of God makes them particular, and calls us by name. The word calls, *Ho every one!* The Spirit, by the application of that, calls, *Ho such a one! I know thee by name;* (Exod. 33. 12.) and, (2.) They are then effectual, when we return an obedient answer to them, as Moses here, *"Here am I, what saith my Lord unto his servant? Here am I,* not only to hear what is said, but to do what I am bidden."

2. God gave him a needful caution against rashness and irreverence in his approach. (1.) He must keep his distance; draw near, but not too near; so near as to hear, but not so near as to pry; his conscience must be satisfied, but not his curiosity; and care must be taken that familiarity do not breed contempt. Note, In all our approaches to God, we ought to be deeply affected with that infinite distance that is between us and God, Eccl. 5. 2. Or, this may be taken as proper to the Old Testament dispensation, which was a dispensation of darkness, bondage, and terror, which the gospel happily frees

us from, giving us boldness to enter into the holiest, and inviting us to draw near. (2.) He must express his reverence, and his readiness to obey; *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet*, as a servant; the putting off the shoe was then what the putting off the hat is now, a token of respect and submission. "The ground, for the present, is *holy ground*, made so by this special manifestation of the divine presence there, and during the continuance of that; therefore tread not on that ground with soiled shoes." *Keep thy foot*, Eccl. 5. 1. Note, We ought to approach to God with a solemn pause and preparation; and, though bodily exercise alone profits little, yet we ought to glorify God with our bodies, and to express our inward reverence by a grave and reverent behaviour in the worship of God, carefully avoiding every thing that looks light and rude, and unbecoming the awfulness of the service.

V. The solemn declaration God made of his name, by which he would be known to Moses; (v. 6.) *I am the God of thy father*.

1. He lets him know it is God that speaks to him, to engage his reverence and attention, his faith and obedience; for that is enough to command all these, *I am the Lord*. Let us always hear the word, *as the word of God*, 1 Thess. 2. 13.

2. He will be known as the God of his father, his pious father Amram, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, his ancestors, and the ancestors of all Israel, for whom God was now about to appear. By this, God designed, (1.) To instruct Moses in the knowledge of another world, and strengthen his belief of a future state. Thus it is interpreted by our Lord Jesus, the best expositor of scripture, who from hence proves that the dead are raised, against the Sadducees; *Moses*, says he, *showed it at the bush*; (Luke 20. 37.) that is, "God there showed it to him, and in him to us," Matt. 22. 31, &c. Abraham was dead, and yet God is the God of Abraham; therefore Abraham's soul lives, to which God stands in relation; and, to make his soul completely happy, his body must live again in due time. This promise, made unto the fathers, that God would be their God, must include a future happiness; for he never did any thing for them in this world sufficient to answer to the vast extent and compass of that great word, but having prepared for them a city, he is not ashamed to be called their God; (Heb. 11. 16.) and see Acts 26. 6, 7.—24. 15. (2.) To assure Moses of the performance of all those particular promises made to the fathers; he may confidently expect that, for by these words it appears God remembered his covenant, ch. 2. 24. Note, [1.] God's covenant-relation to us as our God, is the best support in the worst of times, and a great encouragement to our faith in particular promises. [2.] When we are conscious to ourselves of our own great unworthiness, we may take comfort from God's relation to our fathers, 2 Chron. 20. 6.

VI. The solemn impression this made upon Moses; he *hid his face*, as one both ashamed and afraid to look upon God. Now that he knew it was a divine light, his eyes were dazzled with it; he was not afraid of a burning bush, till he perceived that God was in it. Yea, though God called himself *the God of his father*, and a God in covenant with him, yet he was afraid. Note, 1. The more we see of God, the more cause we shall see to worship him with reverence and godly fear. 2. Even the manifestations of God's grace and covenant-love, should increase our humble reverence of him.

7. And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sor-

rows; 8. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Now that Moses had put off his shoes, (for, no doubt, he observed the orders given him, v. 5.) and covered his face, God enters upon the particular business that was now to be concerted, which was the bringing of Israel out of Egypt. Now, after forty years of Israel's bondage, and Moses' banishment, when we may suppose both he and they began to despair, they of being delivered, and he of delivering them; at length the time is come, even the year of the redeemed. Note, God often comes for the salvation of his people then when they have done looking for him; *Shall he find faith?* Luke 18. 8.

Here is,

1. The notice God takes of the afflictions of Israel; (v. 7. 9.) *Seeing, I have seen*, not only, *I have surely seen*, but I have strictly observed and considered the matter. Three things God took cognizance of, 1. *Their sorrows*; (v. 7.) it is likely they were not permitted to make a remonstrance of their grievances to Pharaoh, nor to seek relief against their task-masters in any of his courts, nor scarcely durst complain to one another; but God observed their tears. Note, Even the secret sorrows of God's people are known to him. 2. *Their cry*; *I have heard their cry*, (v. 7.) *it is come unto me*, (v. 9.) Note, God is not deaf to the cries of his afflicted people. 3. The tyranny of their persecutors; *I have seen the oppression*, v. 9. Note, As the poorest of the oppressed are not below God's cognizance, so the highest and greatest of their oppressors are not above his check, but he will surely visit all these things.

2. The promise God makes of their speedy deliverance and enlargement; (v. 8.) *I am come down to deliver them*. (1.) It denotes his resolution to deliver them, and that his heart was upon it, so that it should be done speedily and effectually, and by methods out of the common road of providence: when God does something very extraordinary, he is said to *come down* to do it, as Isa. 64. 1. (2.) This deliverance was typical of our redemption by Christ, and in that the eternal Word did indeed come down from heaven to deliver us. It was his errand into the world. He promises also their happy settlement in the land of Canaan, that they should exchange bondage for liberty, poverty for plenty, labour for rest, and the precarious condition of tenants at will, for the ease and honour of lords proprietors. Note, Whom God by his grace delivers out of a spiritual Egypt, he will bring to a heavenly Canaan.

3. The commission he gives to Moses in order hereunto, v. 10. He is not only sent as a prophet to Israel, to assure them that they should speedily be delivered, (even that had been a great favour,) but he is sent as an ambassador to Pharaoh, to treat with him, or rather as an herald at arms, to demand

their discharge, and to denounce war in case of refusal; and he is sent as a prince to Israel, to conduct and command them: thus is he taken from *following the ewes great with young*, to a pastoral office much more noble, as David, Ps. 78. 71. Note, God is the Fountain of power; and the powers that be, are ordained of him as he pleases. The same hand that now fetched a shepherd out of a desert, to be the planter of a Jewish church, afterwards fetched fishermen from their ships, to be the planters of the Christian Church, *That the excellency of the power might be of God.*

11. And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12. And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. 13. And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, What *is* his name? What shall I say unto them? 14. And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

God, having spoken to Moses, allows him also a liberty of speech, which he here improves: and

I. He objects his own insufficiency for the service he was called to; (v. 11.) *Who am I?* He thinks himself unworthy of the honour, and not *par negotio—equal to the task*. He thinks he wants courage, and therefore cannot go to Pharaoh, to make a demand which might cost the demandant his head: he thinks he wants conduct, and therefore cannot bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt; they are unarmed, undisciplined, quite dispirited, utterly unable to help themselves, it is morally impossible to bring them out. 1. Moses was incomparably the fittest of any man living for this work, eminent for learning, wisdom, experience, valour, faith, holiness; and yet, he says, *Who am I?* Note, The more fit any person is for service, commonly the less opinion he has of himself; see Judg. 9. 8. &c. 2. The difficulties of the work were indeed very great, enough to startle the courage, and stagger the faith, of Moses himself. Note, Even wise and faithful instruments may be much discouraged at the difficulties that lie in the way of the church's salvation. 3. Moses had formerly been very courageous when he slew the Egyptian, but now his heart failed him; for good men are not always alike bold and zealous. 4. Yet Moses is the man that does it at last: for God gives grace to the lowly. Modest beginnings are very good presages.

II. God answers this objection, v. 12. 1. He promises him his presence, *Certainly I will be with thee*, and that is enough. Note, Those that are

weak in themselves, yet may do wonders, being strong in the Lord and in the power of his might; and those that are most diffident in themselves, may be most confident in God. God's presence puts an honour upon the worthless, wisdom and strength into the weak and foolish, makes the greatest difficulties dwindle to nothing, and is enough to answer all objections. 2. He assures him of success, and particularly that the Israelites should serve God upon this mountain. Note, (1.) Those deliverances are most valuable, which open to us a door of liberty to serve God. (2.) If God give us opportunity and a heart to serve him, it is a happy and encouraging earnest of further favours designed us.

III. He begs instructions for the executing of his commission, and has them, thoroughly to furnish him. He desires to know by what name God would at this time make himself known, v. 13.

1. He supposes the children of Israel would ask him, *What is his name?* This they would ask either, (1.) To perplex Moses: he foresaw difficulty, not only in dealing with Pharaoh, to make him willing to part with them, but in dealing with them, to make them willing to move. They would be scrupulous and apt to cavil, would bid him produce his commission, and, probably, this would be the trial; "Does he know the name of God? Has he the watch-word?" Once he was asked, *Who made thee a judge?* Then he had not his answer ready, and he would not be nonplussed so again, but would be able to tell in whose name he came. (2.) They would ask this question, for their own information. It is to be feared that they were grown very ignorant in Egypt, by reason of their hard bondage, want of teachers, and loss of the Sabbath, so that they needed to be told the first principles of the oracles of God. Or, this question, *What is his name?* amounted to an inquiry into the nature of the dispensation they were now to expect; "How will God in it be known to us, and what may we depend upon from him?"

2. He desires instructions what answer to give them; "*What shall I say to them?*" What name shall I vouch to them for the proof of my authority? I must have something great and extraordinary to say to them; what must it be? If I must go, let me have full instructions, that I may not run in vain." Note, (1.) It highly concerns those who speak to people in the name of God, to be well prepared before-hand. (2.) Those who would know what to say, must go to God, to the word of his grace, and to the throne of his grace, for instructions, Ezek. 2. 7.—3. 4, 10, 17. (3.) Whenever we have any thing to do with God, it is desirable to know, and our duty to consider, what is his name.

IV. God readily gives him full instructions in this matter: two names God would now be known by.

1. A name that denotes what he is in himself; (v. 14.) *I am that I am*: this explains his name *Jehovah*; and signifies, (1.) That he is self-existent; he has his being of himself, and has no dependence upon any other: the greatest and best man in the world must say, By the grace of God, *I am what I am*; but God says it absolutely, and it is more than any creature, man or angel, can say, *I am that I am*. Being self-existent, he cannot but be self-sufficient, and therefore all-sufficient, and the inexhaustible Fountain of being and bliss. (2.) That he is eternal and unchangeable, and always the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever; he will be what he will be, and what he is: see Rev. 1. 8. (3.) That we cannot by searching find him out; this is such a name as checks all bold and curious inquiries concerning God, and, in effect, says, *Ask not after my name, seeing it is secret*, Judg. 13. 18.

Prov. 30. 4. Do we ask what is God? Let it suffice us to know, that he is what he is, what he ever was, and ever will be. *How little a portion is heard of him!* Job 26. 14. (4.) That he is faithful and true to all his promises, unchangeable in his word as well as in his nature, and not a man that he should lie; let Israel know this, *I AM hath sent me unto you.*

2. A name that denotes what he is to his people; lest that name *I AM should amuse and fuzzle them*, he is further directed to make use of another name of God, more familiar and intelligible; (v. 15.) *The Lord God of your fathers hath sent me unto you.* Thus God had made himself known to him, (v. 6.) and thus he must make him known to them, (1.) That he might revive among them the religion of their fathers, which it is to be feared, was much decayed, and almost lost. This was necessary, to prepare them for deliverance, Ps. 80. 19. (2.) That he might raise their expectations of the speedy performance of the promises made unto their fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are particularly named, because with Abraham the covenant was first made, and with Isaac and Jacob often expressly renewed, and these three were distinguished from their brethren, and chosen to be the trustees of the covenant, when their brethren were rejected. God will have this to be his name for ever, and it has been, is, and will be, his name, by which his worshippers know him, and distinguish him from all false gods: see 1 Kings 18. 36. Note, God's covenant-relation to his people is what he will be ever mindful of, what he glories in, and what he will have us never forget, but give him the glory of: if he will have this to be his memorial unto all generations, we have all the reason in the world to make it so with us, for it is a precious memorial.

16. Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in Egypt: 17. And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. 18. And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt; and you shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 19. And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. 20. And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. 21. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty; 22. But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her

that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put *them* upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

Moses is here more particularly instructed in his work, and informed beforehand of his success.

1. He must deal with the elders of Israel, and raise their expectations of a speedy remove to Canaan, v. 16, 17. He must repeat to them what God had said to him, as a faithful ambassador. Note, That which ministers have received of the Lord, they must deliver to his people, and keep back nothing that is profitable. Lay an emphasis on that, (v. 17.) *I have said, I will bring you up;* that is enough to satisfy them, *I have said it:* and hath he spoken, and will he not make it good? With us saying and doing are two things, but they are not so with God, for he is in one mind, and who can turn him? "I have said it, and all the world cannot gainsay it," his counsel shall stand.

His success with the elders of Israel would be good; so he is told, (v. 18.) *They shall hearken to thy voice,* and not thrust thee away, as they did forty years ago: he who, by his grace, inclines the heart, and opens the ear, could say beforehand, *They shall hearken to thy voice,* having determined to make them willing in this day of power.

2. He must deal with the *king of Egypt*, v. 18. (1.) They must not begin with a demand, but with a humble petition; that gentle and submissive method must be first tried, even with one who, it was certain, would not be wrought upon by it; *We beseech thee, let us go.* (2.) They must only beg leave of Pharaoh to go as far as Mount Sinai to worship God, and say nothing to him of going quite away to Canaan; that would have been immediately rejected, but this was a very modest and reasonable request, and his denying of it was utterly inexcusable, and justified them in the total deserting of his kingdom. If he would not give them leave to go sacrifice at Sinai, justly did they go without leave to settle in Canaan. Note, The calls and commands which God sends to sinners, are so highly reasonable in themselves, and delivered to them in such a gentle winning way, that the mouth of the disobedient must needs be for ever stopped.

As to his success with Pharaoh, he is here told, [1.] That petitions, and persuasions, and humble remonstrances, would not prevail with him, no, nor a mighty hand stretched out in signs and wonders; (v. 19.) *I am sure he will not let you go.* Note, God sends his messengers to those whose hardness and obstinacy he certainly knows and foresees, that it may appear he would have them turn and live. [2.] That plagues should compel him to it; (v. 20.) *I will smite Egypt,* and then he will let you go. Note, These will certainly be broken by the power of God's hand, that will not bow to the power of his word; we may be sure that *when God judges, he will overcome.* [3.] That his people should be more kind to them, and furnish them at their departure with abundance of plate and jewels, to their great enriching; (v. 21, 22.) *I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians.* Note, First, God sometimes makes the enemies of his people, not only to be at peace with them, but to be kind to them. Secondly, God has many ways of balancing accounts between the injured and the injurious, of righting the oppressed, and compelling those that have done wrong, to make restitution; for he sits in the throne judging right.

CHAP. IV.

This chapter, I. Continues and concludes God's discourse with Moses at the bush concerning this great affair of

bringing Israel out of Egypt. 1. Moses objects the people's unbelief, (v. 1.) and God answers that objection by giving him a power to work miracles, (1.) To turn his rod into a serpent, and then into a rod again, v. 2..5. (2.) To make his hand leprous, and then whole again, v. 6..8. (3.) To turn the water into blood, v. 9. 2. Moses objects his own slowness of speech, (v. 10.) and begs to be excused; (v. 13.) but God answers this objection, (1.) By promising him his presence, v. 11, 12. (2.) By joining Aaron in commission with him, v. 14..16. (3.) By putting an honour upon the very staff in his hand, v. 17. II. It begins Moses's execution of his commission. 1. He obtains leave of his father-in-law to return into Egypt, v. 18. 2. He receives further instructions and encouragements from God, v. 19..23. 3. He hastens his departure, and takes his family with him, v. 20. 4. He meets with some difficulty in the way about the circumcising of his son, v. 24..26. 5. He has the satisfaction of meeting his brother Aaron, v. 27, 28. 6. He produces his commission before the elders of Israel, to their great joy, v. 29..31. And thus the wheels were set a-going toward that great deliverance.

1. **AND** Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. 2. And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. 3. And He said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. 4. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand. 5. That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. 6. And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. 7. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom; and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. 8. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. 9. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water, which thou takest out of the river, shall become blood upon the dry land.

It was a very great honour that Moses was called to, when God commissioned him to bring Israel out of Egypt; yet he is hardly persuaded to accept the commission, and does it at last with great reluctance, which we should rather impute to a humble diffidence of himself and his own sufficiency, than to any unbelieving distrust of God and his word and power. Note, Those whom God designs for preferment, he clothes with humility: the most fit for service are the least forward.

1. Moses objects, that, in all probability, the peo-

ple would not *hearken to his voice*, (v. 1.) that is, they would not take his bare word, unless he showed them some sign, which he had not been yet instructed to do. This objection cannot be justified, because it contradicts what God had said, (ch. 3. 18.) *They shall hearken to thy voice*. If God says, *They will*, does it become Moses to say, *They will not?* Surely, he means, "Perhaps, they will not at first," or, "Some of them will not." If there should be some gainsayers among them who would question his commission, how should he deal with them? And what course sh^d he take to convince them? He remembered how they had once rejected him, and feared it would be so again. Note, 1. Present discouragements often arise from former disappointments. 2. Wise and good men have sometimes a worse opinion of people than they deserve; Moses said, (v. 1.) *They will not believe me*; and yet he was happily mistaken, for it is said, (v. 31.) *The people believed*; but then the signs which God appointed in answer to this objection, were first wrought in their sight.

II. God empowers him to work miracles, directs him to three particularly, two of which were now immediately wrought for his own satisfaction. Note, True miracles are the most convincing external proofs of a divine mission attested by them. Therefore our Saviour often appealed to his works, as John 5. 36. and Nicodemus owns himself convinced by them, John 3. 2. And here Moses, having a special commission given him as a judge and law-giver to Israel, has this seal affixed to his commission, and comes supported by these credentials.

1. The rod in his hand is made the subject of a miracle, a double miracle: it is but thrown out of his hand and it becomes a serpent, he resumes it and it becomes a rod again, v. 2..4. Now, (1.) Here was a divine power manifested in the change itself, that a dry stick should be turned into a living serpent, a lively one, so formidable a one, that Moses himself, on whom, it should seem, it turned in some threatening manner, *fled from before it*, though we may suppose, in that desert, serpents were no strange things to him; but what was produced miraculously, was always the best and strongest of the kind, as the water turned to wine: and then, that this living serpent should be turned into a dry stick again, this was the Lord's doing. (2.) Here was an honour put upon Moses, that this change was wrought, upon his throwing it down and taking it up, without any spell, or charm, or incantation: his being empowered thus to act under God, out of the common course of nature and providence, was a demonstration of his authority, under God, to settle a new dispensation of the kingdom of grace. We cannot imagine that the God of truth would delegate such a power as this to an impostor. (3.) There was a significancy in the miracle itself; Pharaoh had turned the rod of Israel into a serpent, representing them as dangerous, (ch. 1. 10.) causing their belly to cleave to the dust, and seeking their ruin; but now they should be turned into a rod again: or thus, Pharaoh had turned the rod of government into the serpent of oppression, from which Moses had himself fled into Midian; but by the agency of Moses the scene was altered again. (4.) There was a direct tendency in it to convince the children of Israel that Moses was indeed sent of God to do what he did, v. 5. Miracles were for signs to them that believed not, 1 Cor. 14. 22.

2. His hand itself is next made the subject of a miracle; he puts it once into his bosom, and takes it out leprous; he puts it again into the same place, and takes it out well, v. 6, 7. This signified, (1.) That Moses, by the power of God, should bring sore diseases upon Egypt, and that, at his prayer, they should be removed. (2.) That whereas the

Israelites in Egypt were become leprous, polluted by sin, and almost consumed by oppression, (a leper is *as one dead*, Numb. 12. 12.) by being taken into the bosom of Moses, they should be cleansed and cured, and all their grievances redressed. (3.) That Moses was not to work miracles by his own power, nor for his own praise, but by the power of God, and for his glory; the leprous hand of Moses does for ever exclude boasting. Now it was supposed that if the former sign did not convince, this latter would. Note, God is willing more abundantly to show the truth of his word, and is not sparing in his proofs; the multitude and variety of the miracles corroborate the evidence.

3. He is directed, when he should come to Egypt, to turn some of the water of the river into blood, v. 9. This was done, at first, as a sign, but not gaining due credit with Pharaoh, the whole river was afterward turned into blood, and then it became a plague. He is ordered to work this miracle, in case they would not be convinced by the other two. Note, Unbelief shall be left inexcusable, and convicted of a wilful obstinacy. As to the people of Israel, God had said, (*ch. 3. 18.*) *They shall hearken*; yet he appoints these miracles to be wrought for their conviction, for he that has ordained the end, has ordained the means.

10. And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. 11. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the LORD? 12. Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. 13. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of *him whom* thou wilt send. 14. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses; and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. 15. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. 16. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, *even* he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. 17. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.

Moses still continues backward to the service God had designed him for, even to a fault; for now we can no longer impute it to his humility and modesty, but must own that there was too much of cowardice, slothfulness, and unbelief, in it. Observe here,

1. How Moses endeavours to excuse himself from the work.

1. He pleads that he was no good spokesman; (v. 10.) *O my lord! I am not eloquent*; he was a great philosopher, statesman, and diviner, and yet no orator; a man of a clear head, great thought, and solid judgment, but had not a voluble tongue, or ready utterance, and therefore he thought himself unfit to

speak before great men about great affairs, and in danger of being run down by the Egyptians. Observe, (1.) We must not judge of men by the readiness and fluency of their discourse; Moses was *mighty in word*, (Acts 7. 22.) and yet not *eloquent*: what he said, was strong and nervous, and to the purpose, and distilled as the dew, (Deut. 32. 2.) though he did not deliver himself with that readiness, ease, and elegance, that some do, who have not the tenth part of his sense; St. Paul's speech was contemptible, 2 Cor. 10. 10. A great deal of wisdom and true worth is concealed by a slow tongue. (2.) God is pleased sometimes to make choice of those as his messengers, who have least of the advantages of art or nature, that his grace in them may appear the more glorious; Christ's disciples were no orators, till the spirit made them such.

2. When the plea was over-ruled, and all his excuses were answered, he begged that God would send some one else on this errand, and leave him to keep sheep in Midian; (v. 13.) "Send by any hand but mine; thou canst certainly find one much more fit." Note, An unwilling mind will take up with a sorry excuse rather than none, and is willing to devolve those services upon others, that have any thing of difficulty or danger in them.

II. How God condescends to answer all his excuses: though the *anger of the Lord was kindled against him*, (v. 14.) yet he continued to reason with him, till he had overcome him. Note, 1. Even self-diffidence, when it grows into an extreme, when it either hinders us *from* duty, or clogs us *in* duty, or discourages our dependence upon the grace of God, is very displeasing to him. God justly resents our backwardness to serve him, and has reason to take it ill; for he is such a benefactor as is beforehand with us, and such a Rewarder as will not be behindhand with us. 2. God is justly displeased with those whom yet he does not reject: he vouchsafes to reason the case even with his froward children, and overcomes them, as he did Moses here, with grace and kindness.

(1.) To balance the weakness of Moses, he here reminds him of his own power, v. 11. [1.] His power in that, concerning which Moses made the objection, *Who has made man's mouth? Have not I the Lord?* Moses knew that God made man, but he must be reminded now, that *God made man's mouth*. An eye to God as Creator would help us over a great many of the difficulties which lie in the way of our duty, Ps. 124. 8. God, as the Author of nature, has given us the power and faculty of *speaking*; and from him as the fountain of gifts and graces, comes the faculty of speaking *well*, the *mouth and wisdom*, (Luke 21. 15.) the *tongue of the learned*; (Isa. 50. 4.) he *pours grace into the lips*, Ps. 45. 2. [2.] His power in general over the other faculties, *Who but God makes the dumb and the deaf, the seeing and the blind?* First, The perfections of our faculties are his work, he makes the *seeing*; he formed the eye, (Ps. 94. 9.) he opens the understanding, the eye of the mind, Luke 24. 45. Secondly, Their *imperfections* are from him too; he makes the *dumb, and deaf, and blind*. Is there any evil of this kind, and the Lord has not done it? No doubt, he has, and always in wisdom and righteousness, and for his own glory, John 9. 3. Pharaoh and the Egyptians were made deaf and blind spiritually, as Isa. 6. 9, 10. But God knew how to manage them, and get himself honour upon them.

(2.) To encourage him in this great undertaking, he repeats the promise of his presence, not only in general, *I will be with thee*, (*ch. 3. 12.*) but in particular, *"I will be with thy mouth"*; so that the imperfection in thy speech shall be no prejudice to thy message." It does not appear that God did imme-

diately remove the infirmity, whatever it was; but he did that which was equivalent, he taught him what to say, and then let the matter recommend itself; if others spake more gracefully, none spake more powerfully. Note, Those whom God employs to seek for him, ought to depend upon him for instructions, and it shall be given them what they shall speak, Matt. 10. 19.

(3.) He joins Aaron in commission with him; he promises that Aaron should meet him opportunely, and that he would be glad to see him, they having not seen one another, (it is likely,) for many years, v. 14. He directs him to make use of Aaron as his *spokesman*, v. 16. God might have laid Moses wholly aside, for his backwardness to be employed; but he considered his frame, and ordered him an assistant. Observe, [1.] That two are better than one, Eccl. 4. 9. God will have his *two witnesses*, (Rev. 11. 3.) that out of their mouths every word may be established. [2.] Aaron was the brother of Moses, divine wisdom so ordering it, that their natural affection one to another might strengthen their union in the joint execution of their commission. Christ sent his disciples two and two, and some of the couples were brothers. [3.] Aaron was the elder brother, and yet he was willing to be employed under Moses in this affair, because God would have it so. [4.] Aaron could speak well, and yet was far inferior to Moses in wisdom. God dispenses his gifts variously to the children of men, that we may see our need one of another, and each may contribute something to the good of the body, 1 Cor. 12. 21. The tongue of Aaron, with the head and heart of Moses, would make one completely fit for this embassy. [5.] God promises, *I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth*. Even Aaron that could speak well, yet could not speak to purpose, unless God was with his mouth; without the constant aids of divine grace, the best gifts will fail.

(4.) He bids him take the rod with him in his hand, (v. 17.) to intimate that he must bring about his undertaking, rather by acting than by speaking; the signs he should work with this rod, might abundantly supply the want of eloquence; one miracle would do him better service than all the rhetoric in the world. *Take this rod*; the rod he carried as a shepherd, that he might not be ashamed of that mean condition out of which God called him. This rod must be his staff of authority, and must be to him instead both of sword and sceptre.

18. And Moses went, and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said *unto him*, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace. 19. And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. 20. And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand. 21. And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. 22. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, *even my first-born*: 23. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve

me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, *even thy first-born*.

Here,

I. Moses obtains leave of his father-in-law to return into Egypt, v. 18. His father-in-law had been kind to him when he was a stranger, and therefore he would not be so uncivil as to leave his family, nor so unjust as to leave his service, without giving him notice. Note, The honour of being admitted into communion with God, and of being employed for him, does not discharge us from the duties of our relations and callings in this world. Moses said nothing to his father-in-law (for ought that appears) of the glorious manifestation of God to him; such favours we are to be thankful for to God, but not to boast of before men.

II. He receives from God further encouragements and directions in his work. After God had appeared to him in the bush to settle a correspondence, it should seem, he often spake to him, as there was occasion, with less overwhelming solemnity: and,

1. He assures Moses that the coasts were clear: whatever new enemies he might make by his undertaking, his old enemies were *all dead, all that sought his life*, v. 19. Perhaps some secret fear of falling into their hands, was at the bottom of Moses's backwardness to go to Egypt, though he was not willing to own it, but pleaded unworthiness, insufficiency, want of elocution, &c. Note, God knows all the temptations his people lie under, and how to arm them against their secret fears, Ps. 142. 3.

2. He orders him to do the miracles, not only before the elders of Israel, but before Pharaoh, v. 21. There were some alive perhaps in the court of Pharaoh, who remembered Moses when he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and had many a time called him a *fool* for deserting the honours of that relation; but he is now sent back to court, clad with greater powers than Pharaoh's daughter could have advanced him to, so that it might appear he was no loser by his choice: this wonder-working rod did more adorn the hand of Moses, than the sceptre of Egypt could have done. Note, Those that look with contempt upon worldly honours, shall be recompensed with the honour that cometh from God, which is the true honour.

3. That Pharaoh's obstinacy might be no surprise or discouragement to him, God tells him before, that he would *harden his heart*. Pharaoh had hardened his own heart against the groans and cries of the oppressed Israelites, and shut up the bowels of his compassion from them; and now God, in a way of righteous judgment, hardens his heart against the conviction of the miracles, and the terror of the plagues. Note, Ministers must expect with many to labour in vain: we must not think it strange, if we meet with those who will not be wrought upon by the strongest arguments and fairest reasonings; our judgment is with the Lord.

4. Words are put into his mouth with which to address Pharaoh, v. 22, 23. God had promised him, (v. 12.) *I will teach thee what thou shalt say*; and here he does teach him. (1.) He must deliver his message in the name of the great Jehovah, *Thus saith the Lord*; this is the first time that preface is used by any man, which afterward is used so frequently by all the prophets: whether Pharaoh will hear, or whether he will forbear, Moses must tell him, *Thus saith the Lord*. (2.) He must let Pharaoh know Israel's relation to God, and God's concern for Israel. *Is Israel a servant, is he a home-born slave?* (Jer. 2. 14.) No, *Israel is my son, my first-born; precious in my sight, honourable, and dear to me*, not to be thus insulted and abused.

(3.) He must demand a discharge for them. "*Let my son go*; not only my servant whom thou hast no right to detain, but my son whose liberty and honour I am very jealous for. It is my son, my son that serves me, and therefore must be spared, must be pleaded for," Mal. 3. 17. (4.) He must threaten Pharaoh with the death of the first-born of Egypt, in case of a refusal, *I will slay thy son, even thy first born*. As men deal with God's people, let them expect so to be themselves dealt with; with the froward he will wrestle.

III. Moses addresses himself to this expedition; when God had assured him, (v. 19.) that the men were dead who sought his life, immediately it follows, (v. 20.) *he took his wife and his sons*, and set out for Egypt. Note, Though corruption may object much against the services God calls us to, yet grace will get the upper hand, and will be obedient to the heavenly vision.

24. And it came to pass, by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. 25. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. 26. So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision. 27. And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. 28. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. 29. And Moses and Aaron went, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: 30. And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Moses is here going to Egypt, and we are told,

I. How God met him in anger, v. 24. 26. This is a very difficult passage of story; much has been written and excellently well to make it intelligible; we will try to make it improving. Here is,

1. The sin of Moses, which was, neglecting to circumcise his son, which perhaps was the effect of his being unequally yoked with a Midianite, who was too indulgent of her child, while Moses was too indulgent of her. Note, (1.) We have need to watch carefully over our own hearts, lest fondness for any relation prevail above our love to God, and take us off from our duty to him. It is charged upon Eli, that he *honoured his sons more than God*; (1 Sam. 2. 29.) and see Matt. 10. 37. (2.) Even good men are apt to cool in their zeal for God and duty, when they have long been deprived of the society of the faithful; solitude has its advantages, but they seldom balance the loss of christian communion.

2. God's displeasure against him: he met him, and probably, by a sword in an angel's hand, sought to kill him. This was a great change; very lately, God was conversing with him, and lodging a trust in him, as a friend; and now he is coming forth against him as an enemy. Note, (1.) Omissions are

sins, and must come into judgment, and particularly the contempt and neglect of the seals of the covenant; for it is a sign that we undervalue the promises of the covenant, and are displeased with the conditions of it. He that has made a bargain, and is not willing to seal and ratify it, one may justly suspect neither likes it, nor designs to stand to it. (2.) God takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the sins of his own people; if they neglect their duty, let them expect to hear of it by their consciences, and perhaps to feel from it by cross providences; for this cause, many are sick and weak, as some think Moses was here.

3. The speedy performance of the duty, for the neglect of which God had now a controversy with him. His son must be circumcised; he is disabled to do it; therefore, in this case of necessity, Zipporah does it, whether with passionate words, expressing her dislike of the ordinance itself, or, at least, the administration of it to so young a child, and in a journey (as to me it seems;) or, with proper words, solemnly expressing the espousal of the child to God by the covenant of circumcision, as some read it; or her thankfulness to God for sparing her husband, giving him a new life, and thereby giving her, as it were, a new marriage to him, upon her circumcising her son, as others read it; I cannot determine: but we learn, (1.) That when God discovers to us what is amiss in our lives, we must give all diligence to amend it speedily, and particularly return to the duties we have neglected. (2.) The putting away of our sins is indispensably necessary to the removal of God's judgments: this is the voice of every rod, it calls us to return to him that smites us.

4. The release of Moses thereupon; *so he let him go*; the distemper went off, the destroying angel withdrew, and all was well: only Zipporah cannot forget the fright she was in, but will unreasonably call Moses a *bloody husband*, because he obliged her to circumcise the child; and, upon this occasion, (it is probable,) he sent them back to his father-in-law, that they might not create him any further uneasiness. Note, (1.) When we return to God in a way of duty, he will return to us in a way of mercy; take away the cause, and the effect will cease. (2.) We must resolve to bear it patiently, if our zeal for God and his institutions be misinterpreted and discouraged by some that should understand themselves, and us, and their duty better, as David's zeal was misinterpreted by Michal; but if this be to be vile, if this be to be bloody, we must be yet more so. (3.) When we have any special service to do for God, we should remove that as far from us as we can, which is likely to be our hindrance; *Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me*.

II. How Aaron met him in love, v. 27, 28. 1. God sent Aaron to meet him, and directed him where to find him, in the wilderness, that lay toward Midian. Note, The providence of God is to be acknowledged in the comfortable meeting of relations and friends. 2. Aaron made so much haste, in obedience to his God, and in love to his brother, that he met him *in the mount of God*, the place where God had met with him. 3. They embraced one another with mutual endearments; the more they saw of God's immediate direction in bringing them together, the more pleasant their interview was: they *kissed*, not only in token of brotherly affection, and in remembrance of ancient acquaintance, but as a pledge of their hearty concurrence in the work they were jointly called to. 4. Moses informed his brother of the commission he had received, with all the instructions and credentials affixed to it, v. 28. Note, What we know of God, we should communicate for the benefit of others; and those that are fellow-servants to God in the

same work, should use a mutual freedom, and endeavour rightly and fully to understand one another.

III. How the elders of Israel met him in faith and obedience: when Moses and Aaron first opened their commission in Egypt, said what they were ordered to say, and, to confirm that, did what they were ordered to do, they met with a better reception than they promised themselves, *v. 29. . 31.* 1. The Israelites gave credit to them; the people believed, as God had foretold, (*ch. 3. 18.*) knowing that no man could do those works that they did, unless God were with him. They gave glory to God, they bowed their heads and worshipped; therein expressing not only their humble thankfulness to God, who had raised them up and sent them a deliverer, but also their cheerful readiness to observe orders, and pursue the methods of their deliverance.

CHAP. V.

Moses and Aaron are here dealing with Pharaoh, to get leave of him to go worship in the wilderness. 1. They demand leave in the name of God, (*v. 1.*) and he answers their demand with a defiance of God, *v. 2.* II. They beg leave in the name of Israel, (*v. 3.*) and he answers their request with further orders to oppress Israel, *v. 4. . 9.* These cruel orders were, 1. Executed by the taskmasters, *v. 10. . 14.* 2. Complained of to Pharaoh, but in vain, *v. 15. . 19.* 3. Complained of by the people to Moses, (*v. 20, 21.*) and by him to God, *v. 22, 23.*

I. AND afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. 2. And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

Moses and Aaron, having delivered their message to the elders of Israel, with whom they found good acceptance, are now to deal with Pharaoh, to whom they come in peril of their lives; Moses particularly, who perhaps was outlawed for killing the Egyptian forty years before, so that if any of the old courtiers should happen to remember that against him now, it might have cost him his head; however, the message itself was displeasing, and touched Pharaoh, both in his honour and in his profit, two tender points; yet these faithful ambassadors boldly deliver their errand, whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear.

1. Their demand is piously bold; (*v. 1.*) Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go. Moses, in treating with the elders of Israel, is directed to call God the God of their fathers; but, in treating with Pharaoh, they call him the God of Israel, and it is the first time we find him called so in scripture: he is called the God of Israel, the person, (*Gen. 33. 20.*) but here it is Israel, the people. They are just beginning to be formed into a people, when God is called their God. Moses, it is likely, was directed to call him so, at least, it might be inferred from *ch. 4. 22, Israel is my son.* In this great name they deliver their message, Let my people go. (1.) They were God's people, and therefore Pharaoh ought not to detain them in bondage. Note, God will own his people, though ever so poor and despicable, and will find a time to plead their cause. "The Israelites are slaves in Egypt, but they are my people," says God, "and I will not suffer them to be always trampled upon." See *Isa. 52. 4, 5.* (2.) He expected services and sacrifices from them, and therefore they must have leave to go where they could freely exercise their religion, without giving offence to, or receiving offence from,

the Egyptians. Note, God delivers his people out of the hand of their enemies, that they may serve him cheerfully; that they may hold a feast to him; which they may do, while they have his favour and presence, even in a wilderness, a dry and barren land.

2. Pharaoh's answer is impiously bold; (*v. 2.*) Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? Being summoned to surrender, he thus hangs out the flag of defiance, hectors Moses and the God that sends him; and peremptorily refuses to let Israel go; he will not treat about it, nor so much as bear the mention of it.

Observe, (1.) How scornfully he speaks of the God of Israel; "Who is Jehovah? I neither know him, nor care for him; neither value him, nor fear him;" it is a hard name that he never heard before, but he resolves it shall be no bugbear to him. Israel was now a despised oppressed people, looked on as the tail of the nation, and by the character they bore, Pharaoh makes his estimate of their God, and concludes that he made no better a figure among the gods, than his people did among the nations. Note, [1.] Hardened persecutors are more malicious against God himself, than they are against his people. See *Isa. 37. 23.* [2.] Ignorance and contempt of God are at the bottom of all the wickedness that is in the world. Men knew not the Lord, or have very low and mean thoughts of him, and therefore they obey not his voice, nor will let any thing go for him.

(2.) How proudly he speaks of himself; "That I should obey his voice;" 1. the king of Egypt, a great people, obey the God of Israel, a poor enslaved people? Shall I, that rule the Israel of God, obey the God of Israel? No, it is below me, I scorn to answer his summons." Note, They are the children of pride, that are the children of disobedience, *Job 41. 34. Eph. 5. 6.* Proud men think themselves too good to stoop even to God himself, and would not be under control, *Jer. 43. 2.* Here is the core of the controversy, God must rule, but man will not be ruled: "I will have my will done," says God; "But I will do my own will," says the sinner.

(3.) How resolutely he denies the demand, Neither will I let Israel go. Note, Of all sinners none are so obstinate, nor so hardly persuaded to leave their sin, as persecutors are.

3. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. 4. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? Get you unto your burdens. 5. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and you make them rest from their burdens. 6. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the task-masters of the people, and their officers, saying, 7. Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, you shall lay upon them; you shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. 9. Let there more work be laid

upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

Finding that Pharaoh had no veneration at all for God, Moses and Aaron next try whether he had any compassion for Israel, and become humble suitors to him for leave to go and sacrifice, but in vain.

1. Their request is very humble and modest, v. 3. They make no complaint of the rigour they were ruled with; they plead that the journey they designed, was not a project formed among themselves, but that their God had met with them, and called them to it; they beg with all submission, *We pray thee*: the poor useth entreaties; though God may summon princes that oppress, it becomes us to beseech and make supplication to them. What they ask is very reasonable, only for a short vacation, while they went three days' journey into the desert, and that on a good errand, and unexceptionable; "*We will sacrifice unto the Lord our God*, as other people do to their's;" and (*lastly*) they give a very good reason, "Lest if we quite cast off his worship, he fall upon us with one judgment or other, and then Pharaoh will lose his vassals."

2. Pharaoh's denial of their request is very barbarous and unreasonable, v. 4.-9. (1.) His suggestions were very unreasonable; [1.] That the people were *idle*, and that therefore they talked of going to sacrifice. The cities they built for Pharaoh, and the other fruit of their labours, were witnesses for them, that they were not idle; yet he thus basely misrepresents them, that he might have a pretence to increase their burthens. [2.] That Moses and Aaron made them idle with *vain words*, v. 9. God's words are here called *vain words*; and those that called them to the best and most needful business, are accused of making them idle. Note, The malice of Satan has often represented the service and worship of God as fit employment for those only that have nothing else to do, and the business only of the idle, whereas indeed it is the indispensable duty of those that are most busy in the world. (2.) His resolutions hereupon were most barbarous: [1.] Moses and Aaron themselves must get to *their burthens*, (v. 4.) they are Israelites, and, however God had distinguished them from the rest, Pharaoh makes no difference, they must share in the common slavery of their nation. Persecutors have always taken a particular pleasure in putting contempt and hardship upon the ministers of the churches. [2.] The usual tale of bricks must be exacted, without the usual allowance of straw to mix with the clay, or to burn them with; that thus more work might be laid upon the men, which if they performed, they would be broken with labour; and if not, they would be exposed to punishment.

10. And the task-masters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. 11. Go ye, get you straw where you can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. 12. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble instead of straw. 13. And the task-masters hastened *them*, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw. 14. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's task-masters had set over them, were beaten, *and* demanded,

Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick, both yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?

Pharaoh's orders are here put in execution; straw is denied, and yet the work not diminished. 1. The Egyptian taskmasters were very severe. Pharaoh having decreed unrighteous decrees, the taskmasters were ready to write the grievousness that he had prescribed, Isa. 10. 1. Cruel princes will never want cruel instruments to be employed under them, who will justify them in that which is most unreasonable. These taskmasters insisted upon the daily tasks, *as when there was straw*, v. 13. See what need we have to pray that *we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men*, 2 Thess. 3. 2. The enmity of the serpent's seed against the seed of the woman, is such as breaks through all the laws of reason, honour, humanity and common justice. 2. The people hereby were dispersed throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble, v. 12. By this means Pharaoh's unjust and barbarous usage of them came to be known to all the kingdom, and perhaps caused them to be pitied by all their neighbours, and made Pharaoh's government less acceptable even to his own subjects: good-will is never got by persecution. 3. The Israelite-officers were used with particular harshness, v. 14. They that were the fathers of the houses of Israel paid dear for their honour; for from them immediately the service was exacted, and they were beaten when it was not performed. See here, (1.) What a miserable thing slavery is, and what reason we have to be thankful to God that we are a free people, and not oppressed. Liberty and property are valuable jewels in the eyes of those whose services and possessions lie at the mercy of an arbitrary power. (2.) What disappointments we often meet with, after the raising of our expectations. The Israelites were now lately encouraged to hope for enlargement; but, behold, greater distresses. This teaches us always to rejoice with trembling. (3.) What strange steps God sometimes takes in delivering his people; he often brings them to the utmost straits, then when he is just ready to appear for them. The lowest ebbs go before the highest tides; and very cloudy mornings commonly introduce the fairest days, Deut. 32. 36. God's time to help is when things are at the worst; and Providence verifies the paradox, *The worse, the better*.

15. Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? 16. There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants *are* beaten; but the fault *is* in thine own people. 17. But he said, *Ye are idle, ye are idle*; therefore ye say, Let us go *and* do sacrifice to the Lord. 18. Go therefore now *and* work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. 19. And the officers of the children of Israel did see *that they were* in evil case, after it was said, *Ye shall not diminish ought* from your bricks of your daily task. 20. And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh; 21. And they said unto them, The Lord look upon you, and judge; because you have made our sa

vour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us. 22. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? 23. For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

It was a great strait that the head workmen were in, when they must either abuse those that were under them, or be abused by those that were over them; yet, it should seem, rather than they would tyrannize, they would be tyrannized over; and they were so. In this evil case, (v. 19.) observe,

1. How justly they complained to Pharaoh; they *came and cried unto Pharaoh*, v. 15. Whither should they go with a remonstrance of their grievances, but to the supreme power, which is ordained for the protection of the injured? As bad as Pharaoh was, his oppressed subjects had liberty to complain to him; there was no law against petitioning: it was a very modest, but moving, representation that they made of their condition; (v. 16.) *Thy servants are beaten*, (severely enough, no doubt, when things were in such a ferment,) and yet, *the fault is in thine own people*, the task-masters, who deny us what is necessary for carrying on our work. Note, It is common for those to be most rigorous in blaming others, who are most blame-worthy themselves.

But what did they get by this complaint? It did but make bad worse: 1. Pharaoh taunted them; (v. 17.) when they were almost killed with working, he told them they were *idle*: they underwent the fatigue of industry, and yet lay under the imputation of slothfulness, while nothing appeared to ground the charge upon but this, that they said, *Let us go and do sacrifice*. Note, It is common for the best actions to be mentioned under the worst names; holy diligence in the best business, is censured by many as a culpable carelessness in the business of the world. It is well for us, that men are not to be our judges, but a God who knows what the principles are on which we act. Those that are diligent in doing sacrifice to the Lord, will, with God, escape the doom of the slothful servant, though with men, they do not. 2. He bound on their burthens; *Go now and work*, v. 18. Note, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: what can be expected from unrighteous men, but more unrighteousness?

II. How unjustly they complained of Moses and Aaron; (v. 21.) *The Lord look upon you, and judge*. This was not fair; Moses and Aaron had given sufficient evidence of their hearty goodwill to the liberties of Israel: and yet, because things succeed not immediately so as they hoped, they are reproached as accessories to their slavery. They should have humbled themselves before God, and taken to themselves the shame of their sin, which turned away good things from them; but, instead of that, they fly in the face of their best friends, and quarrel with the instruments of their deliverance, because of some little difficulties and obstructions they met with in effecting it. Note, Those that are called out to public service for God and their generation, must expect to be tried, not only by the malicious threats of proud enemies, but by the unjust and unkind censures of unthinking friends, who judge only by outward appearance, and look but a little way before them.

Now what did Moses do in this strait? It grieved him to the heart, that the event did not answer, but rather contradict, his expectation; and their upbraidings were very cutting, and like a sword in his bones; but,

1. He returned to the Lord, (v. 22.) to acquaint him with it, and to represent the case to him: he knew that what he had said and done, was by divine direction; and therefore, what blame is laid upon him for it, he considers as reflecting upon God, and, like Hezekiah, spreads it before him as interested in the cause, and appeals to him. Compare this with Jer. 20. 7-9. Note, When we find ourselves, at any time, perplexed and embarrassed in the way of our duty, we ought to have recourse to God, and lay open our case before him by faithful and fervent prayer. If we retreat, let us retreat to him, and no further.

He expostulated with him, v. 22, 23. He knew not how to reconcile the providence with the promise and the commission which he had received. "Is this God's coming down to deliver Israel? Must I, who hoped to be a blessing to them, become a scourge to them? By this attempt to get them out of the pit, they are but sunk the deeper into it." Now he asks, (1.) *Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people?* Note, [1.] Even then when God is coming toward his people in ways of mercy, yet sometimes he takes such methods as that they may think themselves but ill-treated. The instruments of deliverance, when they aim to help, are found to hinder, and that becomes a trap, which, it was hoped would have been for their welfare; God suffering it to be so, that we may learn to cease from man, and may come off from a dependence upon second causes. [2.] When the people of God think themselves ill-treated, they should go to God by prayer, and plead with him, and that is the way to have better treatment in God's good time. Moses asks further, (2.) *Why is it thou hast sent me?* Thus, [1.] He complains of his ill-success; "Pharaoh has done evil to this people, and not one step seems to be taken toward their deliverance." Note, It cannot but sit very heavy upon the spirits of those whom God employs for him, to see that their labour does no good, and much more, to see that it does hurt, eventually, though not designedly. It is uncomfortable to a god minister, to perceive that his endeavours for men's conviction and conversion, do but exasperate their corruptions, confirm their prejudices, harden their hearts, and seal them up under unbelief. This makes them go in the bitterness of their souls, as the prophet Ezek. 3. 14. Or, [2.] He inquires what was further to be done; *Why hast thou sent me?* that is, "What other method shall I take in pursuance of my commission?" Note, Disappointments in our work must not drive us from our God, but still we must consider why we are sent.

CHAP. VI.

Much ado there was to bring Moses to his work, and when the ice was broken, some difficulty having occurred in carrying it on, there was no less ado to put him forward in it. Witness this chapter, in which, I. God satisfies Moses himself in an answer to his complaints in the close of the foregoing chapter, v. 1. II. He gives him fuller instructions than had yet been given him, what to say to the children of Israel, for their satisfaction, v. 2-8. but to little purpose, v. 9. III. He sends him again to Pharaoh, v. 10, 11. But Moses objects against that, (v. 12.) upon which a very strict charge is given to him and his brother, to execute their commission with vigour, v. 13. IV. Here is an abstract of the genealogy of the tribes of Reuben and Simeon, to introduce that of Levi, that the pedigree of Moses and Aaron might be cleared; (v. 14, 25.) and then the chapter concludes with a repetition of so much of the preceding story, as was necessary to make way for the following chapter.

1. **THEN** the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. 2. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, *I am the LORD*: 3. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name **JEHOVAH** was I not known to them. 4. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. 5. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. 6. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, *I am the LORD*, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage; and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments: 7. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that *I am the LORD* your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: *I am the LORD*. 9. And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

Here,

I. God silences Moses's complaints with the assurance of success in this negotiation, repeating the promise made him, (ch. 3. 20.) *After that, he will let you go*. Then when Moses was at his wit's end, wishing he had staid in Midian, rather than have come to Egypt to make bad worse, when he was quite at a loss what to do, *Then the Lord said unto Moses*, for the quieting of his mind, "*Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh*; (v. 1.) now that the affair is come to a crisis, things are as bad as they can be, Pharaoh is in the height of pride, and Israel in the depth of misery; now is my time to appear." See Ps. 12. 5, *Now will I arise*. Note, Man's extremity is God's opportunity of helping and saving. Moses had been *expecting* what God would do: but now he shall *see* what he will do, shall see his day at length, Job. 24. 1. Moses had been trying what he could do; and could effect nothing. "Well," says God, now thou shalt see what I will do; let me alone to deal with this proud man," Job 40. 12, 13. Note, Then the deliverance of God's church will be accomplished, when God takes the work into his own hands. *With a strong hand*, that is, being forced to it by a strong hand, he shall let them go. Note, As some are brought to their duty by the strong hand of God's grace, who are made willing in the day of his power; so others by the strong hand of his justice, breaking those that would not bend.

II. He gives him further instructions, that both he and the people of Israel might be encouraged

to hope for a glorious issue of this affair. Take comfort,

1. From God's name *Jehovah*, v. 2. 3. He begins with this, *I am Jehovah*, the same with *I am that I am*, The fountain of being, and blessedness, and infinite perfection. The patriarchs knew his name, but they did not know him in this matter by that which this name signifies. God would now be known by his name *Jehovah*, that is, (1.) A God performing what he had promised, and so inspiring confidence in his promises. (2.) A God perfecting what he had begun, and finishing his own work. In the history of the creation, God is never called *Jehovah*, till the heavens and the earth were finished, Gen. 2. 4. When the salvation of the saints is completed in eternal life, then he will be known by his name *Jehovah*; (Rev. 22. 13.) in the mean time they shall find him for their strength and support, *El-shaddai*, a God all-sufficient, a God that is enough, and will be so, Mic. 7. 20.

2. From his covenant; (v. 4.) *I have established my covenant*. Note, the covenants God makes, he establishes; they are made as firm as the power and truth of God can make them. We may venture our all upon this bottom.

3. From his compassions; (v. 5.) *I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel*; he means their groaning on occasion of the late hardships put upon them. Note, God takes notice of the increase of his people's calamities, and observes how their enemies grow upon them.

4. From his present resolutions, v. 6, 8. Here is line upon line to assure them that they shall be brought triumphantly out of Egypt, (v. 6.) and should be put in possession of the land of Canaan; (v. 8.) *I will bring you out. I will rid you. I will redeem you. I will bring you into the land of Canaan, and I will give it you*. Let man take the shame of his unbelief which needs such repetitions, and let God have the glory of his condescending grace which gives us such repeated assurances for our satisfaction.

5. From his gracious intentions in all these, which were great, and becoming him, v. 7. (1.) He intended their happiness; *I will take you to me for a people*, a peculiar people, and *I will be to you a God*; more than this we need not ask, we cannot have, to make us happy. (2.) He intended his own glory; *Ye shall know that I am the Lord*. God will attain his own ends, nor shall we come short of them, if we make them our chief end too. Now, one would think, these good words and comfortable words, should have revived the drooping Israelites, and made them to forget their misery; but, on the contrary, their miseries made them regardless of God's promises; (v. 9.) they *hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit*. That is, [1.] They were so taken up with their troubles, that they did not heed him. [2.] They were so cast down with their late disappointment, that they did not believe him. And, [3.] They had such a dread of Pharaoh's power and wrath, that they durst not themselves move in the least toward their deliverance. Note, *First*, Disconsolate spirits often put from them the comforts they are entitled to, and stand in their own light. See Isa. 28. 12. *Secondly*, Strong passions oppose strong consolations. By indulging ourselves in discontent and fretfulness, we deprive ourselves of the comfort we might have both from God's word and from his providence, and must thank ourselves if we go comfortless.

10. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 11. Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. 12. And Moses

spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who *am* of uncircumcised lips? 13. And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Here,

1. God sends Moses the second time to Pharaoh, (v. 11.) upon the same errand as before, to command him at his peril, that he *let the children of Israel go*. Note, God repeats his precepts, before he begins his punishments. Those that have often been called in vain to leave their sins, yet must be called again and again, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, Ezek. 3. 11. God is said to *hew sinners* by his prophets, (Hos. 6. 5.) which denotes the repetition of the strokes; *How often would I have gathered you!*

2. Moses makes objections, as one discouraged, and willing to give up the cause; (v. 12.) He pleads, (1.) The unlikelihood of Pharaoh's hearing; "*Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me*, they give no heed, no credit to what I have said; how then can I expect that Pharaoh should hear me? If the anguish of their spirit makes them deaf to that which would compose and comfort them, much more will the anger of his spirit, his pride and insolence, make him deaf to that which will but exasperate and provoke him." If God's professing people hear not his messengers, how can it be thought that his professed enemy should? Note, The forwardness and untractableness of those that are called christians, greatly discourage ministers, and make them ready to despair of success, in dealing with those that are atheistical and profane. We would be instrumental to unite Israelites, to refine and purify them, to comfort and pacify them; but if they hearken not to us, how shall we prevail with those in whom we cannot pretend to such an interest? But with God all things are possible. (2.) He pleads the unreadiness and infirmity of his own speaking; *I am of uncircumcised lips*; it is repeated, v. 30. He was conscious to himself that he had not the gift of utterance, had no command of language; his talent did not lie that way. This objection God had given a sufficient answer to before, and therefore he ought not to have insisted upon it, for the sufficiency of grace can supply the defects of nature at any time. Note, Though our infirmities ought to humble us, yet they ought not to discourage us from doing our best in any service we have to do for God. His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

3. God again joins Aaron in commission with Moses, and puts an end to the dispute, by interposing his own authority, and giving them both a solemn charge, upon their allegiance to their great Lord, to execute it with all possible expedition and fidelity. When Moses repeats his baffled arguments, he shall be argued with no longer, but God gives him a charge, and Aaron with him, both to the children of Israel and to Pharaoh, v. 13. Note, God's authority is sufficient to answer all objections, and binds us to obedience, without murmuring or disputing, Phil. 2. 14. Moses himself has need to be charged, and so has Timothy, 1 Tim. 6. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 1.

14. These *be* the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel; Hanoch, and Phallu, Hezron,

and Carmi: these *be* the families of Reuben. 15. And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman: these *are* the families of Simeon. 16. And these *are* the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi *were* a hundred thirty and seven years. 17. The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. 18. And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath *were* a hundred thirty and three years. 19. And the sons of Merari; Mahali, and Mushi: these *are* the families of Levi, according to their generations. 20. And Amram took him Jochebed, his father's sister, to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram *were* a hundred and thirty and seven years. 21. And the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. 22. And the sons of Uzziel; Mishaël, and Elzaphan, and Zithri. 23. And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 24. And the sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these *are* the families of the Korhites. 25. And Eleazar, Aaron's son, took him *one* of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinchas: these *are* the heads of the fathers of the Levites, according to their families. 26. These *are* that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, according to their armies. 27. These *are* they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these *are* that Moses and Aaron. 28. And it came to pass, on the day *when* the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt, 29. That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I *am* the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee. 30. And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

We have here a genealogy, not an endless one, such as the apostle condemns, (1 Tim. 1. 4.) for it ends in those two great patriots, Moses and Aaron, and comes in here to show that they were Israelites, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, whom they were sent to deliver, raised up unto them of their brethren, as Christ also should be, who was to be the Prophet and Priest, the Redeemer and Lawgiver, of the people of Israel, and whose genealogy also, like this, was to be carefully preserved

The heads of the houses of three of the tribes are here named, agreeing with the accounts we had, Gen. 46. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, are thus dignified here by themselves for this reason; because they three were left under marks of infamy by their dying father, Reuben for his incest, and Simeon and Levi for their murder of the Shechemites; and therefore Moses would put this particular honour upon them, to magnify God's mercy in their repentance and remission, as a pattern to them that should afterward believe: the two first, rather, seem to be mentioned only for the sake of a third, which was Levi, from whom Moses and Aaron descended, and all the priests of the Jewish church. Thus was the tribe of Levi distinguished betimes. Observe here,

1. That Kohath, from whom Moses and Aaron, and all the priests, derived their pedigree, was a younger son of Levi, v. 16. Note, The grants of God's favours do not go by seniority of age, and priority of birth, but the divine sovereignty often prefers the younger before the elder, so crossing hands.

2. That the ages of Levi, Kohath, and Amram, the father, grandfather, and great-grandfather of Moses, are here recorded; they all lived to a great age, Levi to 137, Kohath to 133, and Amram to 137; Moses himself came much short of them, and fixed 70 or 80 for the ordinary stretch of human life: (Ps. 90. 10.) for now that God's Israel was multiplied, and become a great nation, and divine revelation was by the hand of Moses committed to writing, and no longer trusted to tradition, the two great reasons for the long lives of the patriarchs ceased, and therefore from henceforward fewer years must serve men.

3. That Aaron married Elisheba, (the same name with that of the wife of Zecharias, Elizabeth, as Miriam the same with Mary,) daughter of Aminadab, one of the chief of the fathers of the tribe of Judah; for the tribes of Levi and Judah often intermarried, v. 23.

4. It must not be omitted that Moses has recorded the marriage of his father Amram with Jochebed his own aunt; (v. 20.) and it appears by Numb. 26. 59, that it must be taken strictly for his father's own sister, at least by the half blood: this marriage was afterward forbidden, as incestuous, (Lev. 18. 12.) which might be looked upon as a blot upon his family, though before that law; yet Moses does not conceal it, for he sought not his own praise, but wrote with a sincere regard to truth, whether it smiled or frowned upon him.

5. He concludes it with a particular mark of honour on the persons he was writing of, though himself was one of them, v. 26, 27. These are *that Moses and Aaron*, whom God pitched upon to be his plenipotentiaries in this treaty. These were they whom *God spake to*, (v. 26.) and who *spoke to Pharaoh* on Israel's behalf, v. 27. Note, Communion with God and serviceableness to his church, are things that, above any other, put true honour upon men. Those are great indeed whom God converses with, and whom he employs in his service. Such were that Moses and Aaron; and something of this honour have all his saints, who are made to our God kings and priests.

In the close of the chapter, he returns to his narrative, which he had broken off from somewhat abruptly, (v. 13.) and repeats (1.) The charge God had given him to deliver his message to Pharaoh; (v. 29.) *Speak all that I say unto thee*, as a faithful ambassador. Note, Those that go on God's errand, must not shun to declare *the whole counsel of God*. (2.) His objection against it, v. 30. Note, Those that have at any time spoken unadvisedly with

their lips, ought often to reflect upon it with regret, as Moses seems to do here.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter, I. The dispute between God and Moses finishes, and Moses applies himself to the execution of his commission, in obedience to God's command, v. 1..7. II. The dispute between Moses and Pharaoh begins, and a famous trial of skill it was; Moses, in God's name, demands Israel's release; Pharaoh denies it. The contest is between the power of the great God, and the power of a proud prince; and it will be found, in the issue, that when God judgeth, he will overcome. 1. Moses confutes the demand he had made to Pharaoh, by a miracle, turning his rod into a serpent; but Pharaoh hardens his heart against this conviction, v. 8..13. 2. He chastises his disobedience by a plague, the first of the ten, turning the waters into blood; but Pharaoh hardens his heart against this correction, v. 14..25.

1. **AND** the LORD said unto Moses, See, **I** have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. 2. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. 3. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. 4. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. 6. And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they. 7. And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

Here,

I. God encourages Moses to go to Pharaoh, and, at last, silences all his discouragements. (1.) He clothes him with great power and authority; (v. 1.) *I have made thee a god to Pharaoh*, that is, my representative in this affair, as magistrates are called *gods*, because they are God's vicegerents. He was authorized to speak and act in God's name and stead, and, under the divine direction, was endued with a divine power, to do that which is above the ordinary power of nature, and invested with a divine authority to demand obedience from a sovereign prince, and punish disobedience. Moses was a god, but he was only a *made* god, not essentially one by nature; he was no god but by commission. He was a god, but he was only a god to Pharaoh; the living and true God is God to all the world. It is an instance of God's condescension, and an evidence that his thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace, that when he treats *with men*, he treats *by men*, whose terror shall not make us afraid. (2.) He again nominates him an assistant, his brother Aaron, who was not a man of uncircumcised lips, but a notable spokesman; "He shall be *thy prophet*," that is, "he shall speak from thee to Pharaoh, as prophets do from God to the children of men. Thou shalt, as a god, inflict and remove the plagues, and Aaron as a prophet, shall denounce them, and threaten Pharaoh with them." (3.) He

tells him the worst of it, that Pharaoh would not hearken to him, and yet the work should be done at last, *Isaiah* should be delivered, that God therein should be glorified, *v. 4, 5*. The Egyptians who would not know the Lord, should be made to know him. Note, It is, and ought to be, satisfaction enough to God's messengers, that whatever contradiction and opposition may be given them, thus far they shall gain their point, that God will be glorified in the success of their embassy, and all his chosen Israel will be saved, and then they have no reason to say that they have laboured in vain. See here, [1.] How God glorifies himself; he makes people know that he is *Jehovah*: Israel is made to know it by the performance of his promises to them, (*ch. 6. 3.*) and the Egyptians are made to know it by the pouring out of his wrath upon them; thus God's name is exalted both in them that are saved and in them that perish. [2.] What method he takes to do this: he humbles the proud, and exalts the poor, *Luke 1. 51, 52*. If God stretch out his hand to sinners in vain, he will at last stretch out his hand upon them; and who can bear the weight of it?

II. Moses and Aaron apply themselves to their work without further objection: *They did as the Lord commanded them, v. 6*. Their obedience, all things considered, was well worthy to be celebrated, as it is by the Psalmist; (*Ps. 105. 28.*) *They rebelled not against his word*, namely, Moses and Aaron, whom he mentions, *v. 26*. Thus Jonah, though, at first, he was very averse, at length went to Nineveh. Notice is taken of the age of Moses and Aaron, when they undertook this glorious service. Aaron, the elder, (and yet in the inferior office,) was eighty-three, Moses was eighty; both of them men of great gravity and experience, whose age was venerable, and whose years might teach wisdom, *v. 7*. Joseph, who was to be only a servant to Pharaoh, was preferred at thirty years old; but Moses, who was to be a god to Pharaoh, was not so dignified until he was eighty years old. It was fit that he should long wait for such an honour, and be long in preparing for such a service.

8. And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 9. When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. 10. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments: 12. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13. And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

The first time that Moses made his application to Pharaoh, he produced his instructions only; now he is directed to produce his credentials, and does accordingly.

1. It is taken for granted, that Pharaoh would challenge these demandants to work a miracle, that,

by a performance evidently above the power of nature, they might prove their commission from the God of nature. Pharaoh will say, *Show a miracle*; not with any desire to be convinced, but with the hope that none will be wrought, and then he would have some colour for his infidelity.

2. Orders are therefore given to turn the rod into a serpent, according to the instructions, *ch. 4. 3*. The same rod that was to give the signal of the other miracles, is now itself the subject of a miracle, to put a reputation upon it. Aaron cast his rod to the ground, and instantly it became a serpent, *v. 10*. This was proper, not only to affect Pharaoh with wonder, but to strike a terror upon him; serpents are hurtful, dreadful animals; the very sight of one, thus miraculously produced, might have softened his heart into a fear of that God by whose power it was produced. This first miracle, though it was not a plague, yet amounted to the threatening of a plague. If it made not Pharaoh feel, it made him fear; and this is God's method of dealing with sinners—he comes upon them gradually.

3. This miracle, though too plain to be denied, is enervated, and the conviction of it taken off, by the magicians' imitation of it, *v. 11, 12*. Moses had been originally instructed in the learning of the Egyptians, and was suspected to have improved himself in magical arts, in his long retirement; the magicians are therefore sent for, to vie with him. And some think those of that profession had a particular spite against the Hebrews, ever since Joseph put them all to shame, by interpreting a dream which they could make nothing of, in remembrance of which slur put upon their predecessors, these magicians withstood Moses, as it is explained, *2 Tim. 3. 8*. Their rods became serpents, real serpents; some think, by the power of God, beyond their intention or expectation, for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Others think by the power of evil angels, artfully substituting serpents in the room of the rods; God permitting the delusion to be wrought, for wise and holy ends, that they might believe a lie, who received not the truth, and herein the Lord was righteous. Yet this might have helped to frighten Pharaoh into a compliance with the demands of Moses, that he might be freed from these dreadful, unaccountable phenomena, with which he saw himself on all sides surrounded. But to the seed of the serpent these serpents were no amazement. Note, God suffers the lying spirit to do strange things, that the faith of some may be tried and manifested, (*Deut. 13. 3. 1 Cor. 11. 19.*) that the infidelity of others may be confirmed, and that he who is filthy, may be filthy still, *2 Cor. 4. 4*.

4. Yet, in this contest, Moses plainly gains the victory; the serpent which Aaron's rod was turned into, swallowed up the others, which was sufficient to have convinced Pharaoh on which side the right lay. Note, Great is the truth, and will prevail. The cause of God will undoubtedly triumph at last over all competition and contradiction, and will reign alone, *Dan. 2. 44*. But Pharaoh was not wrought upon by this; the magicians having produced serpents, he had this to say, that the ease between them and Moses was disputable; and the very appearance of an opposition to truth, and the least head made against it, serve those for a justification of their infidelity, who are prejudiced against the light and love of it.

14. And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. 15. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod

which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. 16. And thou shalt say unto him, the LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldst not hear. 17. Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. 18. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river. 19. And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. 20. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river: and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. 22. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said. 23. And Pharaoh turned, and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. 24. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. 25. And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.

Here is the first of the ten plagues, the turning of the water into blood, which was, 1. A dreadful plague, and very grievous; the very sight of such vast rolling streams of blood, pure blood, no doubt florid and high-coloured, could not but strike a horror upon people: much more afflictive were the consequences of it. Nothing more common than water; so wisely has Providence ordered it, and so kindly, that that which is so needful and serviceable to the comfort of human life, should be cheap, and almost every where to be had: but now the Egyptians must either drink blood, or die for thirst. Fish was much of their food, (Numb. 11. 5.) but the changing of the waters was the death of the fish, it was a pestilence in that element; (v. 21.) *The fish died.* In the general deluge, they escaped, because perhaps they had not then contributed so much to the luxury of man as they have since; but, in this particular judgment, they perished; (Ps. 105. 29.) *He*

slew their fish; and when another destruction of Egypt, long afterward, is threatened, the disappointment of those that make sluices and ponds for fish is particularly noticed, Isa. 19. 10. Egypt was a pleasant land, but the noisome stench of dead fish and blood, which by degrees would grow putrid, now rendered it very unpleasant. 2. It was a *righteous* plague, and justly inflicted upon the Egyptians. For, (1.) Nilus, the river of Egypt, was their idol; they and their land derived so much benefit from it, that they served and worshipped it more than the Creator. The *true* Fountain of Nile being unknown to them, they paid all their devotions to its streams: here therefore God punished them, and turned that into blood, which they had turned into a god. Note, That creature which we idolize, God justly removes from us, or imbitters to us. He makes that a scourge to us, which we make a competitor with him. (2.) They had stained the river with the blood of the Hebrews' children, and now God made that river all bloody; thus he gave them blood to drink, for they were worthy, Rev. 16. 6. Note, Never any thirsted after blood, but, sooner or later, they had enough of it. 3. It was a *significant* plague; Egypt had a great dependence upon their river, (Zech. 14. 18.) so that, in smiting the river, they were warned of the destruction of all the productions of their country, till it came, at last, to their first-born, and this red river proved a direful omen of the ruin of Pharaoh and all his forces in the Red-sea. This plague of Egypt is alluded to in the prediction of the ruin of the enemies of the New Testament church, Rev. 16. 3, 4. But *there*, the sea, as well as the rivers and fountains of water, is turned into blood; for spiritual judgments reach further, and strike deeper, than temporal judgments do. And *lastly*, let me observe in general concerning this plague, that one of the first miracles Moses wrought, was, turning water into blood, but that one of the first miracles our Lord Jesus wrought, was, turning water into wine; for the law was given by Moses, and it was a dispensation of death and terror; but grace and truth, which, like wine, makes glad the heart, came by Jesus Christ.

Now,

I. Moses is directed to give Pharaoh warning of this plague. Pharaoh's heart is hardened, (v. 14.) therefore go try what this will do to soften it, v. 15. Moses perhaps may not be admitted into Pharaoh's presence-chamber, or the room of state, where he used to give audience to ambassadors; and therefore he is directed to meet him by the *river's brink*, whither God foresaw he would come in the morning, either for the pleasure of a morning's walk, or to pay his morning devotions to the river; (for thus all people will walk, every one in the name of his god, they will not fail to worship their god every morning;) there Moses must be ready to give him a new summons to surrender, and, in case of a refusal, to tell him of the judgment that was coming upon that very river, on the banks of which they were now standing. Notice is thus given him of it beforehand, that they might have no colour to say it was a chance, or to attribute it to any other cause, but that it might appear to be done by the power of the God of the Hebrews, and as a punishment upon him for his obstinacy. Moses is expressly ordered to take the rod with him, that Pharaoh might be alarmed at the sight of that rod which had so lately triumphed over the rods of the magicians. Now learn hence, 1. That the judgments of God are known to himself beforehand. He knows what he will do in wrath as well as mercy. Every consumption is a consumption determined, Isa. 10. 23. 2. That men cannot escape the alarms of God's wrath, because they cannot go out of the

hearing of their own consciences: he that made their hearts, can make his sword to approach them. 3. That God warns, before he wounds; for he is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

II. Aaron (who carried the mace) is directed to summon the plague by smiting the river with his rod; *v.* 19, 20. It was done in the sight of Pharaoh and his attendants, for God's true miracles were not performed, as Satan's lying wonders were, by them that peeped and muttered; truth seeks no corners. An amazing change was immediately wrought; all the waters, not only in the river but in all their ponds, were turned into blood. 1. See here the almighty power of God. Every creature is that to us, which he makes it to be, water or blood. 2. See the mutability of all things under the sun, and what changes we may meet with in them. That which is water to-day, may be blood to-morrow; what is always vain may soon become vexatious. A river, at the best, is transient; but divine justice can quickly make it malignant. 3. See what mischievous work sin makes. If the things that have been our comforts, prove our crosses, we must thank ourselves: it is sin that turns our waters into blood.

III. Pharaoh endeavours to confront the miracle, because he resolves not to humble himself under the plague. He sends for the magicians, and, by God's permission, they ape the miracle with their enchantments, (*v.* 22.) and thus served Pharaoh for an excuse not to set his heart to this also; (*v.* 23.) a pitiful excuse it was. Could they have turned the river of blood into water again, it had been a miracle indeed, then they had proved their power, and Pharaoh had been obliged to them as his benefactors. But for them, when there was such scarcity of water, to turn more of it into blood, only to show their art, plainly intimates that the design of the devil is only to delude his devotees and amuse them; not to do them any real kindness, but to keep them from doing real kindness to themselves by repenting, and returning to their God.

IV. The Egyptians, in the mean time, are seeking for relief against the plague, digging round about the river, for water to drink, *v.* 24. Probably, they found some, with much ado, God remembering mercy in the midst of wrath, for he is full of compassion, and would not let the subjects smart too much for the obstinacy of their prince.

V. The plague continued seven days, *v.* 25. In all that time, Pharaoh's proud heart would not let him so much as desire Moses to intercede for the removal of it. Thus the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath, they cry not when he binds them; (*Job* 36. 13.) and then no wonder that his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

CHAP. VIII.

Three more of the plagues of Egypt are related in this chapter, I. That of the frogs, which is, 1. Threatened, *v.* 1. 4. 2. Inflicted, *v.* 5, 6. 3. Mimicked by the magicians, *v.* 7. 4. Removed, at the humble request of Pharaoh, (*v.* 8. 14) who yet hardens his heart, and notwithstanding his promise while the plague was upon him, (*v.* 8.) refuses to let Israel go, *v.* 15. II. The plague of lice, *v.* 16, 17. By which, 1. The magicians were baffled; (*v.* 18, 19.) and yet, 2. Pharaoh was hardened, *v.* 19. III. That of flies, 1. Pharaoh is warned of it before, (*v.* 20, 21) and told that the land of Goshen should be exempt from this plague, *v.* 22, 23. 2. The plague is brought, *v.* 24. 3. Pharaoh treats with Moses about the release of Israel, and humbles himself, *v.* 25. 29. 4. The plague is, therefore, removed, (*v.* 31.) and Pharaoh's heart hardened, *v.* 32.

I. **AND** the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go,

that they may serve me. 2. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: 3. And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs: 4. And the frogs shall come up, both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants. 5. And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. 6. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. 7. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. 8. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD. 9. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only? 10. And he said, To-morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God. 11. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. 12. And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD, because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. 13. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. 14. And they gathered them together upon heaps; and the land stank. 15. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Pharaoh is here threatened first, and then plagued, with frogs, as afterward, in this chapter, with lice and flies, little despicable inconsiderable animals, and yet their vast numbers made sore plagues to the Egyptians. God could have plagued them with lions, or bears, or wolves, or with vultures, or other birds of prey, but he chose to do it by these contemptible instruments; 1. That he might magnify his own power; he is Lord of the hosts of the whole creation, has them all at his beck, and makes what use he pleases of them. Some have thought the power of God is showed as much in the making of an ant, as in the making of an elephant; so is his providence in serving his own

purposes by the least creatures as effectually as by the strongest, that the excellency of the power, in judgment as well as mercy, may be of God, and not of the creature. See what reason we have to stand in awe of this God, who, when he pleases, can arm the smallest parts of the creation against us. If God be our enemy, all the creatures are at war with us. 2. That he might humble Pharaoh's pride, and chastise his insolence. What a mortification must it needs be to this haughty monarch, to see himself brought to his knees, and forced to submit, by such despicable means! Every child is, ordinarily, able to deal with those invaders, and can triumph over them; yet now so numerous are their troops, and so vigorous their assaults, that Pharaoh, with all his chariots and horsemen, could make no head against them. Thus he *pours forth contempt upon princes* that offer contempt to him and his sovereignty, and makes those who will not own him above them, to know that when he pleases, he can make the meanest creature to insult them and trample upon them.

As to the plague of frogs, we may observe,

I. How it was threatened. Moses, no doubt, attended the Divine Majesty daily for fresh instructions, and (perhaps while the river was yet blood) he is here directed to give notice to Pharaoh of another judgment coming upon him, in case he continue obstinate: *If thou refuse to let them go, it is at thy peril, v. 1, 2.* Note, God does not punish men for sin, unless they persist in it. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword;* (Ps. 7. 12.) which implies favour, *if he turn.* So here, *If thou refuse, I will smite thy borders;* intimating, that if Pharaoh complied, the controversy should immediately be dropped. The plague threatened in case of refusal, was formidably extensive; frogs were to make such an inroad upon them, as should make them uneasy in their houses, in their beds, and at their tables; they should neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep in quietness, but, wherever they were, should be infested by them, v. 3, 4. Note, 1. God's curse upon a man will pursue him wherever he goes, and lie heavy upon him whatever he does. See Deut. 28. 16, &c. 2. There is no avoiding divine judgments, when they invade with commission.

II. How it was inflicted. Pharaoh not regarding the alarm, nor being at all inclined to yield to the summons, Aaron is ordered to draw out the forces, and with his out-stretched arm and rod to give the signal of battle. *Dictum factum—no sooner said than done;* the host is mustered, and, under the conduct and command of an invisible power, shoals of frogs invade the land, and the Egyptians with all their art, and all their might, cannot check their progress, or so much as give them a diversion. Compare this with that prophecy of an army of locusts and caterpillars, Joel 2. 2, &c. and see Isa. 34. 16, 17. Frogs came up, at the divine call, and covered the land. Note, God has many ways of disquieting those that live at ease.

III. How the magicians were permitted to imitate it, v. 7. They also brought up frogs, but could not remove those that God sent. The *unclean spirits* which came out of the mouth of the dragon, are said to be like frogs, which go forth to the kings of the earth, to deceive them, (Rev. 16. 13.) which passage, probably, alludes to these frogs, for it follows the account of the turning of the waters into blood. The dragon, like the magicians, intended by them to deceive, but God intended by them to destroy those that would be deceived.

IV. How Pharaoh relented under this plague; it was the first time he did so, v. 8. He begs of Moses to intercede for the removal of the frogs, and promises fair that he *will let the people go.* He that a

while ago had spoken with the utmost disdain both of God and Moses, now is glad to be beholden to the mercy of God and the prayers of Moses. Note, Those that bid defiance to God and prayer, in a day of extremity, first or last, will be made to see their need of both, and will cry, *Lord, Lord,* Matt. 7. 22. Those that had bantered prayer, have been brought to beg it; and the rich man that had scorned Lazarus, courted him for a drop of water.

V. How Moses fixes the time with Pharaoh, and then prevails with God by prayer for the removal of the frogs. Moses, to show that his performances had no dependence upon the conjunctions or compositions of the planets, or the luckiness of any one hour more than another, bids Pharaoh name his time. *Nullum occurrit tempus regi—No time fixed on by the king shall be objected to,* v. 9. *Have thou this honour over me, tell me, against when I shall entreat for thee.* This was designed for Pharaoh's conviction, that if his eyes were not opened by the plague, they might by the removal of it. So various are the methods God takes to bring men to repentance.

Pharaoh sets the time for *to-morrow, v. 10.* And why not immediately? Was he so fond of his guests, that he would have them stay another night with him? No, but probably he hoped that these would go away themselves, and then he should get clear of the plague without being obliged either to God or Moses. However, Moses joins issue with him upon it, "*Be it according to thy word, it shall be done just when thou wouldest have it done, that thou mayest know that, whatever the magicians pretend to, there is none like unto the Lord our God.*" None has such a command as he has over all the creatures, nor is any one so ready to forgive these that humble themselves before him. Note, The great design, both of judgments and mercies, is to convince us, that *there is none like the Lord our God,* none so wise, so mighty, so good, no enemy so formidable, no friend so desirable, so valuable.

Moses, hereupon, applies himself to God, prays earnestly to him, to remove the frogs, v. 12. Note, We must pray for our enemies and persecutors, even the worst, as Christ did. In consequence of the application of Moses, the frogs that came up one day, perished the next, or the next but one. They all died; (v. 13.) and that it might appear that they were real frogs, their dead bodies were left to be raked together in heaps, so that the smell of them became offensive, v. 14. Note, The great Sovereign of the world makes what use he pleases of the lives and deaths of his creatures; and he that gives a being, to serve one purpose, may without wrong to his justice, call for it again immediately, to serve another purpose.

VI. What was the issue of this plague, v. 15. *When Pharaoh saw there was a respite,* without considering either what he had lately felt, or what he had reason to fear, he hardened his heart. Note, 1. Till the heart is renewed by the grace of God, the impressions, made by the force of affliction, do not abide; the convictions wear off, and the promises that were extorted, are forgotten. Till the disposition of the air is changed, what thaws in the sun, will freeze again in the shade. 2. God's patience is shamefully abused by impenitent sinners. The respite he gives them, to lead them to repentance, they are hardened by, and while he graciously allows them a truce, in order to the making of their peace, they take that opportunity to rally again the baffled forces of an obstinate infidelity. See Eccl. 8. 11. Ps. 78. 34, &c.

16. And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice

throughout all the land of Egypt. 17. And they did so: for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 18. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man and upon beast. 19. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, *This is the finger of God*: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Here is a short account of the plague of lice. It does not appear that any warning was given of it before. Pharaoh's abuse of the respite granted to him, might have been a sufficient warning to him to expect another plague: for if the removal of an affliction harden us, and so deprive us of the benefit of it, we may conclude it goes away with a purpose to return, or to make room for a worse.

Observe, I. How this plague of lice was inflicted on the Egyptians, *v. 16, 17*. The frogs were produced out of the *waters*, but these lice out of the *dust of the earth*; for out of any part of the creation God can fetch a scourge, with which to correct those that rebel against him. He has many arrows in his quiver. Even the *dust of the earth* obeys him. "*Fear not then, thou worm Jacob, for God can use thee as a threshing instrument, if he pleases*;" *Isa. 41, 14, 15*. These lice, no doubt, were extremely vexatious, as well as scandalous, to the Egyptians. Though they had respite, they had respite but a while, *Rev. 11, 14*. The second woe was past, but, behold, the third woe came very quickly.

II. How the magicians were baffled by it, *v. 18*. They attempted to imitate it, but they could not; when they failed in that, it should seem they attempted to remove it; for it follows, *So there were lice upon man and beast, in spite of them*. This forced them to confess themselves overpowered; *This is the finger of God, v. 19*. that is, "This check and restraint put upon us, must needs be from a divine power." Note, (1.) God has the devil in a chain, and limits him, both as a deceiver and as a destroyer; *hitherto he shall come, but no further*. The devil's agents, when God permitted them, could do great things; but when he laid an embargo upon them, though but with his finger, they could do nothing. The magicians' inability, in this lesser instance, showed whence they had their ability in the former instances, which seemed greater, and that they had no power against Moses but what was given them from above. (2.) Sooner or later, God will extort, even from his enemies, an acknowledgment of his own sovereignty and overruling power. It is certain they must all (as we say) knock under at last, as Julian the apostate did, when his dying lips confessed, *Thou hast overcome me, O thou Galilean!* God will not only be too hard for all opposers, but will force them to own it.

III. How Pharaoh, notwithstanding this, was made more and more obstinate; (*v. 19*.) even those that had deceived him, now said enough to deceive him, and yet he grew more and more obstinate. Even the miracles and the judgments were to him a savour of death unto death. Note, Those that are not made better by God's word and providences, are commonly made worse by them.

20. And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand be-

fore Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me: 21. Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of *flies* upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of *flies*, and also the ground whereupon they are. 22. And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of *flies* shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23. And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to-morrow shall this sign be. 24. And the LORD did so: and there came a grievous swarm of *flies* into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt; the land was corrupted by reason of the swarms of *flies*. 25. And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. 26. And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? 27. We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us. 28. And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me. 29. And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat the LORD that the swarms of *flies* may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD. 30. And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD. 31. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of *flies* from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people: there remained not one. 32. And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

Here is the story of the plague of flies, in which we are told,

I. How it was threatened; like that of frogs, before it was inflicted. Moses is directed (*v. 20*.) to rise early in the morning, to meet Pharaoh when he came forth to the water, and there to repeat his demands. Note, 1. Those that would bring great things to pass for God and their generation must rise early, and redeem time in the morning. Pharaoh was early up at his superstitious devotions to the river; and shall we be for more sleep and more slumber, when any service is to be done, which

would pass well in our account in the great day? 2. Those that would approve themselves God's faithful servants must not be afraid of the face of man. Moses must *stand before Pharaoh*, proud as he was, and tell him that which was in the highest degree humbling, must challenge him (if he refused to release his captives) to engage with an army of flies, which would obey God's orders if Pharaoh would not. See a like threatening, Is. 7. 18, *The Lord will hiss (or whistle) for the fly and the bee, to come and serve his purposes.*

II. How the Egyptians and the Hebrews were to be remarkably distinguished in this plague, v. 22, 23. It is probable that this distinction had not been so manifest and observable in any of the foregoing plagues, as it was to be in this. Thus, as the plague of ice was made more convincing than any before it, by running the magicians aground, so was this, by the distinction made between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. Pharaoh must be made to know that *God is the Lord in the midst of the earth*; and by this it will be known beyond dispute. 1. Swarms of flies, which seem to us to fly at random, shall be manifestly under the conduct of an intelligent mind, while they are above the direction of any man. "Hither they shall go," says Moses, "and thither they shall not come;" and the performance is punctually according to this appointment, and both, compared, amount to a demonstration that he that said it, and he that did it, was the same, even a Being of infinite power and wisdom. 2. The servants and worshippers of the great Jehovah shall be preserved from sharing in the common calamities of the place they live in; so that the plague which annoys all their neighbours, shall not approach them, and this shall be an incontestable proof, that God is *the Lord in the midst of the earth*. Put both these together, and it appears that *the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth*, and through the air too, to direct that which to us seems most casual, to serve some great and designed end, that he may *show himself strong on the behalf of those whose hearts are upright with him*, 2 Chron. 16. 9.

Observe how it is repeated, (v. 23.) *I will put a division between my people and thy people.* Note, The Lord knows them that are his, and will make it appear, *perhaps* in this world, *certainly* in the other, that he has set them apart for himself. A day will come, when ye shall *return and discern between the righteous and the wicked*, (Mal. 3. 18.) *the sheep and the goats*, (Matt. 25. 32. Ezek. 34. 17.) though now intermixed.

III. How it was inflicted, the day after it was threatened; *there came a grievous swarm of flies*, (v. 24.) flies of divers sorts, and such as devoured them, Ps. 78. 45. The prince of the power of the air has gloried in being *Beel-zebub, the god of flies*; but here it is proved that even *that*, he is a pretender, and an usurper, for even with swarms of flies God fights against his kingdom, and prevails.

IV. How Pharaoh upon this attack, sounded a parley, and entered into a treaty with Moses and Aaron about a surrender of his captives: but observe with what reluctance he yields.

1. He is content they should sacrifice to their God, provided they would do it *in the land of Egypt*, v. 25. Note, God can extort a toleration of his worship, even from those that are really enemies to it. Pharaoh, under the smart of the rod, is content they should do sacrifice, and will allow liberty of conscience to God's Israel, even in his own land.

But Moses will not accept his concession, he cannot do it, v. 26. It would be an abomination to God, should they offer the Egyptians sacrifices, and it would be an abomination to the Egyptians, should they offer to God their own sacrifices, as they ought;

so that they could not sacrifice in the land, without incurring the displeasure, either of their God or of their task-masters; therefore he insists upon it, (v. 27.) *We will go three days' journey into the wilderness.* Note, Those that would offer acceptable sacrifice to God, must, (1.) Separate themselves from the wicked and profane, for we cannot have fellowship both with the Father of lights, and with the works of darkness, both with Christ and with Belial, 2 Cor. 6. 14, &c. Ps. 26. 4, 6. (2.) They must retire from the distractions of the world, and get as far as may be from the noise of it. Israel cannot keep the feast of the Lord, either among the brick-kilns, or among the flesh-pots of Egypt; no, *We will go into the wilderness*, Hcs. 2. 14. Cant. 7. 11. (3.) They must observe the divine appointment: "We will sacrifice as God shall command us, and not otherwise." Though they were in the utmost degree of slavery to Pharaoh, yet, in the worship of God, they must observe his commands, and not Pharaoh's.

2. When this proposal is rejected, he consents for them to go into the wilderness, provided they do not go *very far away*, not so far but that he might fetch them back again, v. 28. It is probable that he had heard of the design upon Canaan, and suspected that if once they left Egypt, they would never come back again; and therefore when he is forced to consent that they shall go, (the swarms of flies buzzing the necessity in his ears,) yet he is not willing that they should go out of his reach. Thus some sinners who, in a pang of conviction, part with their sins, yet are loath they should go very far away, for when the fight is over, they will return to them again. We observe here a struggle between Pharaoh's convictions and his corruptions; his convictions said, "Let them go;" his corruptions said, "Yet not very far away;" but he sided with his corruptions against his convictions, and it was his ruin.

This proposal Moses so far accepted, as that he promised the removal of this plague upon it, v. 29. See here,

(1.) How ready God is to accept sinners' submissions. Pharaoh does but say, *Entreat for me*, (though it is with regret that he humbles so far,) and Moses promises immediately, *I will entreat the Lord for thee*; that he might see what the design of the plague was, not to bring him to ruin, but to bring him to repentance. With what pleasure did God say, (1 Kings 21. 29.) *Seest thou how Ahab humbles himself?*

(2.) What need we have to be admonished that we be sincere in our submission; *But let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more.* Those that deal deceitfully are justly suspected, and must be cautioned not to return again to folly, after God has once more spoken peace. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*; if we think to put a cheat upon God by a counterfeit repentance, and a fraudulent surrender of ourselves to him, we shall prove, in the end, to have put a fatal cheat upon our own souls.

Lastly, The issue of all, was, that God graciously removed the plague, (v. 30, 31.) but Pharaoh perfidiously returned to his hardness, and *would not let the people go*, v. 32. His pride would not let him part with such a flower of his crown as his dominion over Israel was, nor his covetousness, with such a branch of his revenue as their labours were. Note, Reigning lusts break through the strongest bonds, and make men impudently presumptuous and scandalously perfidious. Let not sin therefore reign, for if it do, it will betray and hurry us to the grossest absurdities.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter we have an account of three more of the plagues of Egypt. I. Murrain among the cattle, which

was fatal to them, v. 1. . 7. II. Boils upon man and beast, v. 8. . 12. III. Hail with thunder and lightning. 1. Warning is given of this plague, v. 13. . 21. 2. It is inflicted to their great terror, v. 22. . 26. 3. Pharaoh in a fright renews his treaty with Moses, but instantly breaks his word, v. 27. . 35.

1. **THEN** the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 2. For if thou refuse to let *them* go, and wilt hold them still, 3. Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which *is* in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: *there shall be* a very grievous murrain. 4. And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all *that is* the children's of Israel. 5. And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To-morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. 6. And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. 7. And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Here is,

1. Warning given of another plague, namely, The murrain of beasts. When Pharaoh's heart was hardened, after he had seemed to relent under the former plague, then Moses is sent to tell him there is another coming, to try what that would do toward reviving the impressions of the former plagues. Thus is the *wrath of God revealed from heaven*, both in his word, and in his works, *against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*. 1. Moses puts Pharaoh in a very fair way to prevent it; *Let my people go*, v.

1. This was still the demand, God will have Israel released; Pharaoh opposes it, and the trial is, *whose word shall stand*. See how jealous God is for his people; when *the year of his redeemed is come*, he will give *Egypt for their ransom*; that kingdom shall be ruined, rather than Israel shall not be delivered. See how reasonable God's demands are; whatever he calls for, it is but his own, They are *my people*, therefore *let them go*. 2. He describes the plague that should come, if he refused, v. 2, 3. *The hand of the Lord* immediately, without the stretching out of Aaron's hand, *is upon the cattle*, many of which, some of all kinds, should die by a sort of pestilence. This was greatly to the loss of the owners: they had made Israel poor, and now God would make them poor. Note, The hand of God is to be acknowledged even in the sickness and death of cattle or other damage sustained in them, for a *sparrow falls not to the ground without our Father*. 3. As an evidence of the special hand of God in it, and of his particular favour to his own people, he foretells that none of their cattle should die, though they breathed in the same air, and drank of the same water, with the Egyptians' cattle; (v. 4.) *The Lord shall sever*. Note, When God's judgments are abroad, though they may fall both on the righteous and the wicked, yet God makes such a distinction, that they are not the same to the one that they are to the other. See Isa. 27.

7. The providence of God is to be acknowledged with thankfulness in the life of the cattle, for he preserveth man and beast, Ps. 36. 6. 4. To make the warning the more remarkable, the time is fixed; (v. 5.) *To-morrow* it shall be done; we know not what any day will bring forth, and therefore cannot say what we will do to-morrow, but God can.

II. The plague itself inflicted. The cattle died, v. 6. Note, The creature is made subject to vanity by the sin of man, being liable, according to its capacity, both to serve his wickedness, and to share in his punishment, as in the universal deluge, Rom. 8. 20, 22. Pharaoh and the Egyptians sinned; but the *sheep, what had they done?* Yet they are plagued. See Jer. 12. 4. For the *wickedness of the land, the beasts are consumed*. The Egyptians, afterward, and, some think, now, worshipped their cattle; it was among them that the Israelites learned to make a god of a calf, in this animal therefore the plague, here spoken of, meets with them. Note, What we make an idol of, it is just with God to remove from us, or immiter to us. See Isa. 19. 1.

III. The distinction put between the cattle of the Egyptians and the Israelites' cattle, according to the word of God; not *one of the cattle of the Israelites died*, v. 6, 7. Does God take care for oxen? Yes, he does; his providence extends itself to the meanest of his creatures. But it is written also for our sakes, that, trusting in God, and making him our refuge, we may not be *afraid of the pestilence that walketh in darkness*, no not though *thousands fall at our side*, Ps. 91. 6, 7. Pharaoh sent to see if the cattle of the Israelites were infected, not to satisfy his conscience, but only to gratify his curiosity, or with design, by way of reprisal, to repair his own losses out of their stocks. And having no good design in the inquiry, the report brought him made no impression upon him, but, on the contrary, his heart was hardened. Note, To those that are wilfully blind, even those methods of conviction which are ordained to life, prove a saviour of death unto death.

8. And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. 9. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. 10. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven: and it became a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man and upon beast. 11. And the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. 12. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

Observe here, concerning the plague of boils and blains,

1. That when they were not wrought upon by the death of their cattle, God sent a plague that seized their own bodies, and touched them to the quick. If lesser judgments do not do their work, God will send greater. Let us therefore humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and go forth to meet him in the way of his judgments, that his anger may be turned away from us.

2. The signal given by which this plague was summoned, was the sprinkling of warm ashes, from the *furnace, toward heaven*, (v. 8, 10.) which was to signify the heating of the air with such an infection, as should produce in the bodies of the Egyptians sore boils, which would be both noisome and painful. Immediately upon the scattering of the ashes, a scalding dew came down out of the air, which blistered wherever it fell. Note, Sometimes God shows men their sin in their punishment; they had oppressed Israel in the furnaces, and now the ashes of the furnace are made as much a terror to them, as ever their task-masters had been to the Israelites.

3. The plague itself was very grievous; a common eruption would be so, especially to the nice and delicate, but these eruptions were inflammations, like Job's. This is afterwards called the *botch of Egypt*, (Deut. 28. 27.) as if it were some new disease, never heard of before, and known ever after by that name. Note, Sores in the body are to be looked upon as the punishments of sin, and to be hearkened to as calls to repentance.

4. The magicians themselves were struck with these boils, v. 11. (1.) Thus they were *punished*, both, [1.] For helping to harden Pharaoh's heart, as Elymas for seeking to *hervert the right ways of the Lord*; God will severely reckon with those that strengthen the hands of the wicked in their wickedness. As also, [2.] For pretending to imitate the former plagues, and making themselves and Pharaoh sport with them. They that would produce lice, shall, against their wills, produce boils. Note, It is ill jesting with God's judgments, and more dangerous than playing with fire. *Be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong.* (2.) Thus they were *shamed* in the presence of their admirers. How weak were their enchantments, which could not so much as secure themselves! The devil can give no protection to those that are in confederacy with him. (3.) Thus they were driven the field. Their power was restrained before, (ch. 8. 18.) but they continued to confront Moses, and confirm Pharaoh in his unbelief, till now, at length, they were forced to retreat, and could not stand before Moses, to which the apostle refers, (2 Tim. 3. 9.) when he says, that their *folly was made manifest unto all men*.

5. Pharaoh continued obstinate, for now the Lord *hardened his heart*, v. 12. Before, he had *hardened his own heart*, and resisted the grace of God; and now, God justly gave him up to his own heart's lusts, to a reprobate mind, and strong delusions, permitting Satan to blind and harden him, and ordering every thing, from henceforward, so as to make him more and more obstinate. Note, *Wilful* hardness is commonly punished with *judicial* hardness. If men shut their eyes against the light, it is just with God to close their eyes. Let us dread this as the sorest judgment a man can be under, on this side hell.

13. And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that *there is none like me in all the earth*. 15. For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. 16. And in very deed for this *cause* have I

raised thee up, for to show *in thee* my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. 17. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? 18. Behold, to-morrow about this time, I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now. 19. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. 20. He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: 21. And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.

Here is,

I. A general declaration of the wrath of God against Pharaoh for his obstinacy. Though God has hardened his heart, (v. 12.) yet Moses must repeat his applications to him; God suspends his grace, and yet demands obedience, to punish him for requiring bricks of the children of Israel, when he denied them straw. God would likewise show forth a pattern of long-suffering, and how he waits to be gracious to a *rebellious and gainsaying people*. Six times the demand had been made in vain, yet Moses must make it the seventh time, *Let my people go*, v. 13.

A most dreadful message Moses is here ordered to deliver to him, whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear. 1. He must tell him that he is marked for ruin; that he now stands as the butt at which God would shoot all the arrows of his wrath; (v. 14, 15.) Now I will send *all my plagues*. Now that no place is found for repentance in Pharaoh, nothing can prevent his utter destruction, for that only would have prevented it. Now that God begins to *harden his heart*, his case is desperate. "I will send my plagues upon *thy heart*, not only temporal plagues upon thy body, but spiritual plagues upon thy soul." Note, God can send plagues upon the heart, either by making it senseless, or by making it hopeless—and those are the worst plagues. Pharaoh must now expect no respite, no cessation of arms, but to be followed with plague upon plague, till he is utterly consumed. Note, When God judges, he will overcome; none ever hardened his heart against him, and prospered. 2. He must tell him, that he is to remain in history, a standing monument of the justice and power of God's wrath; (v. 16.) "*For this cause have I raised thee up to the throne at this time, and made thee to stand the shock of the plagues hitherto, to show in thee my power.*" Providence ordered it so, that Moses should have a man of such a fierce and stubborn spirit as he was, to deal with; and every thing was so managed in this transaction, as to make it a most signal and memorable instance of the power God has, to humble and bring down the proudest of his enemies. Every thing concurred to signalize this, that God's name, that is, his incontestable sovereignty, his irresistible power, and his inflexible justice, might be declared throughout all the earth, not only to all places, but through all ages while the earth remains. Note, God sometimes raises up very bad men to honour and power

spares them long, and suffers them to grow insufferably insolent, that he may be so much the more glorified in their destruction at last. See how the neighbouring nations, at that time, improved the ruin of Pharaoh to the glory of God; (*ch.* 18. 11.) Jethro said upon it, *Now know I that the Lord is greater than all gods.* The apostle illustrates the doctrine of God's sovereignty with this instance, *Rom.* 9. 17. To justify God in these resolutions, Moses is bid to ask him, (*v.* 17.) *As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people?* Pharaoh was a great king, God's people were poor shepherds at the best, and now poor slaves, and yet Pharaoh should be ruined, if he exalt himself against them, for it is considered as exalting himself against God. This was not the first time he reproved kings for their sakes, and let them know that he would not suffer his people to be trampled upon and insulted, no, not by the most powerful of them.

II. Here is a particular prediction of the plague of hail, (*v.* 18.) and a gracious advice to Pharaoh and his people to send for their servants and cattle out of the field, that they might be sheltered from the hail, *v.* 19. Note, When God's justice threatens ruin, his mercy, at the same time, shows us a way of escape from it, so unwilling is he that any should perish. See here what care God took, not only to distinguish between Egyptians and Israelites, but between some Egyptians and others. If Pharaoh will not yield, and so prevent the judgment itself, yet an opportunity is given to those that had any dread of God and his word, to save themselves from sharing in the judgment. Note, Those that will take warning, may take shelter; and those that will not, may thank themselves if they fall by the overflowing scourge, and the hail which will sweep away the refuge of lies, *Isa.* 28. 17. See the different effect of this warning. 1. *Some believed the things which were spoken, and they feared,* and housed their servants and cattle, *v.* 20. like Noah; (*Heb.* 11. 7.) and it was their wisdom. Even among the servants of Pharaoh there were some that trembled at God's word; and shall not the sons of Israel dread it? But, 2. Others believed not; though, whatever plague Moses hath hitherto foretold, the event exactly answered to the prediction: and though, if they had had any reason to question this, it would have been no great damage to them to have kept their cattle in the house for one day, and so, supposing it a doubtful case, to have chosen the surer side; yet they were so fool-hardy as in defiance to the truth of Moses, and the power of God, (of both which they had already had experience enough to their cost,) to leave their cattle in the field. Pharaoh himself, it is probable, giving them an example of the presumption, *v.* 21. Note, Obstinate infidelity is deaf to the fairest warnings and the wisest counsels, which leaves the blood of them that perish upon their own heads.

22. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. 23. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground: and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. 24. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it

became a nation. 25. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. 26. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. 27. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. 28. Entreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. 29. And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD's. 30. But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God. 31. And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolted.* 32. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten; for they were not grown up. 33. And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD; and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. 34. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

The threatened plague of hail is here summed up by the powerful hand and rod of Moses, (*v.* 22, 23.) and it obeys the summons, or rather the divine command; for *fire and hail fulfil God's word*, *Is.* 148. 8. And here we are told,

I. What desolations it made upon the earth; the thunder and fire from heaven (or lightning,) made it both the more dreadful, and the more destroying, *v.* 23, 24. Note, God makes the clouds not only his storehouses whence he drops fitness on his people, but his magazines whence, when he pleases, he can draw out a most formidable train of artillery, with which to destroy his enemies. He himself speaks of the *treasures of hail which he hath reserved against the day of battle and war*, *Job.* 38. 22, 23. Woful havoc this hail made in the land of Egypt. It killed both men and cattle, and battered down, not only the herbs, but the trees, *v.* 25. The corn that was above ground, was destroyed, and that only preserved, which as yet was not come up, *v.* 31, 32. Note, God has many ways of *taking away the corn in the season the roof*, (*Hos.* 2. 9.) either by a secret blasting, or a noisy hail. In this plague, the *hot thunderbolts*, as well as the hail, are said to destroy their flocks, *Ps.* 78. 47, 48, and see *Ps.* 105. 32, 33. Perhaps David alludes to this, when alluding to God's glorious appearances for the dis-

comfiture of his enemies, he speaks of the hail stones and coals of fire he threw among them, Ps. 18. 12, 13. And there is a plain reference to it, on the pouring out of the seventh vial, Rev. 16. 21. Notice is here taken, (v. 26.) of the land of Goshen's being preserved from receiving any damage by this plague. God has the directing of the pregnant clouds, and causes it to rain or had on one city and not on another, either in mercy or in judgment.

II. What a consternation it put Pharaoh in; see what effect it had upon him; 1. He humbled himself to Moses in the language of a penitent, v. 27, 28. No man could have spoken better. He owns himself on the wrong side in his contest with the God of the Hebrews; "*I have sinned*" in standing it out so long;" he owns the equity of God's proceedings against him; *The Lord is righteous*, and must be justified when he speaks, though he speaks in thunder and lightning: he condemns himself and his land; "*I and my people are wicked*, and deserve what is brought upon us;" he begs the prayers of Moses; "*Entreat the Lord for me*, that this direful plague may be removed." And, *lastly*, he promises to yield up his prisoners; *I will let you go*. What could one desire more? And yet his heart was hardened all this while. Note, The terror of the rod often extorts penitent acknowledgments from those who have no penitent affections; under the surprise and smart of affliction, they start up, and say that which is adapted and important; not because they are deeply affected, but because they know that they should be, and that *it is meet to be said*. 2. Moses hereupon becomes an intercessor for him with God. Though he had all the reason in the world to think that he would immediately repent of his repentance, and told him so, (v. 30.) yet he promises to be his friend in the court of Heaven. Note, Even those whom we had little hopes of, yet we should continue to pray for, and to admonish, 1 Sam. 12. 23. Observe, (1.) The place Moses chose for his intercession, he went *out of the city*, (v. 33.) not only for privacy in his communion with God, but to show that he durst venture abroad into the field, notwithstanding the hail and lightning which kept Pharaoh and his servants within doors; knowing that every hailstone had its direction from his God, who meant him no hurt. Note, Peace with God makes men thunder-proof, for it is the voice of their Father. (2.) The gesture; he *spread abroad his hands unto the Lord*; an outward expression of earnest desire and humble expectation: those that come to God for mercy, must stand ready to receive it. (3.) The end Moses aimed at in interceding for him, *That thou mayest know*, and be convinced, *that the earth is the Lord's*, (v. 29.) that is, that God has a sovereign dominion over all the creatures, that they all are ruled by him, and therefore that thou oughtest to be so. See what various methods God uses to bring men to their proper senses. Judgments are sent, and judgments removed, and all for the same end, to make men know that the Lord reigns. (4.) The success of it. [1.] He prevailed with God, v. 33. But, [2.] He could not prevail with Pharaoh; *he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart*, v. 34, 35. The prayer of Moses opened and shut heaven, like Elias's, (Jas. 5. 17, 18.) and such is the power of God's two witnesses; (Rev. 11. 6.) yet neither Moses nor Elias, nor those two witnesses, could subdue the hard hearts of men. Pharaoh was frightened to a compliance by the tremendous judgment, but when it was over, his convictions vanished, and his fair promises were forgotten. Note, Little credit is to be given to confessions upon the rack. Nay, Those that are not bettered by judgments and mercies, are commonly made worse.

CHAP. X.

The eighth and ninth of the plagues of Egypt, that of locusts, and that of darkness, are recorded in this chapter. 1. Concerning the plague of locusts. 1. God instructs Moses in the meaning of these amazing dispensations of his providence, v. 1, 2. 2. He threatens the locusts, v. 3. 3. 6. 3. Pharaoh, at the persuasion of his servants, is willing to treat again with Moses; (v. 7. . 9.) but they cannot agree, v. 10, 11. 4. The locusts come, v. 12. . 15. 5. Pharaoh cries *Peccavi—I have offended*; (v. 16, 17.) whereupon Moses prays for the removal of the plague, and it is done; but Pharaoh's heart is still hardened, v. 18. . 20. II. Concerning the plague of darkness, 1. It is inflicted, v. 21. . 23. 2. Pharaoh again treats with Moses about a surrender, but the treaty breaks off in a heat, v. 24. . 29.

1. **A**ND the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him: 2. And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I *am* the LORD. 3. And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. 4. Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to-morrow will I bring the locusts unto thy coast: 5. And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field: 6. And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh. 7. And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? 8. And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: *but who are they that shall go?* 9. And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go: for we *must hold* a feast unto the LORD. 10. And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look *to it*; for evil is before you. 11. Not so: go now ye *that are* men, and serve the LORD; for that you did desire.

And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

Here,

I. Moses is instructed; we may well suppose that he, for his part, was much astonished both at Pharaoh's obstinacy and at God's severity, and could not but be compassionately concerned for the desolations of Egypt, and at a loss to conceive what this contest would come to at last. Now here God tells him what he designed; not only Israel's release, but the magnifying of his own name, *That thou mayest tell in thy writings, which shall continue to the world's end, what I have wrought in Egypt, v. 1.* 2. The ten plagues of Egypt must be inflicted, that they may be recorded for the generations to come as undeniable proofs, 1. Of God's overruling power in the kingdom of nature, his dominion over all the creatures, and his authority to use them either as servants to his justice, or sufferers by it, according to the council of his will. 2. Of God's victorious power over the kingdom of Satan, to restrain the malice, and chastise the insolence, of his and his church's enemies. These plagues are standing monuments of the greatness of God, the happiness of the church, and the sinfulness of sin; and standing monitors to the children of men in all ages, not to *provoke the Lord to jealousy*, nor to *strive with their Maker*. The benefit of these instructions to the world sufficiently balances the expense.

II. Pharaoh is reproved, (v. 3.) *Thus saith the Lord God of the poor despised persecuted Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?* Note, It is justly expected from the greatest of men, that they humble themselves before the great God, as it is at their peril if they refuse to do it. This has more than once been God's quarrel with princes; Belshazzar did not humble his heart, Dan. 5. 22. Zedekiah humbled not himself before Jeremiah, 2 Chron. 36. 12. These that will not humble themselves, God will humble. Pharaoh had sometimes pretended to humble himself, but no account was made of it, because he was neither sincere nor constant in it.

III. The plague of locusts is threatened, v. 4. 6. The hail had *broken down* the fruits of the earth, but these locusts should come and *devour* them; and not only so, but they should fill their houses, whereas the former inroads of these insects had been confined to their lands. This should be much worse than all the calamities of that kind which had ever been known. Moses, when he had delivered his message, not expecting any better answer than he had formerly, *turned himself and went out from Pharaoh, v. 6.* Thus Christ appointed his disciples to depart from those who would not receive them, and to *shake off the dust off their feet for a testimony against them*; and ruin is not far off from those who are thus justly abandoned by the Lord's messengers, 1 Sam. 15. 27. &c.

IV. Pharaoh's attendants, his ministers of state, or privy counsellors, interpose, to persuade him to come to some terms with Moses, v. 7. They, as in duty bound, represent to him the deplorable condition of the kingdom, (*Egypt is destroyed*), and advise him by all means to release his prisoners; (*Let the men go*;) for Moses, they found, would be a snare to them till it was done, and it were better to consent at first than to be compelled at last; the Israelites were become a burthensome stone to the Egyptians, and now, at length, the princes of Egypt were willing to be rid of them, Zech. 12. 3. Note, It is a thing to be regretted, (and prevented, if possible,) that a whole nation should be ruined for the pride and obstinacy of its princes, *Salus populi su-*

prema lex—To consult the welfare of the people is the first of laws.

V. A new treaty is, hereupon, set on foot between Pharaoh and Moses, in which Pharaoh consents for the Israelites to go into the wilderness to do sacrifice; but the matter in dispute was, who should go, v. 8. 1. Moses insists upon it, that they should take their whole families, and all their effects, along with them, v. 9. Note, Those that serve God, must serve him with all they have. Moses pleads, "We must hold a feast, therefore we must have our families to feast with, and our flocks and herds to feast upon, to the honour of God." 2. Pharaoh will by no means grant this: he will allow the men to go, pretending that this was all they desired, though this matter was never yet mentioned in any of the former treaties; but, for the *little ones*, he resolves to keep them as hostages, to oblige them to return, v. 10, 11. More than this, he grows wroth, and swears that they shall not remove the *little ones*, assuring them it was at their peril, if they did. Note, Satan does all he can, to hinder those that serve God themselves, from bringing their children in to serve him. He is a sworn enemy to early piety, knowing how destructive it is to the interests of his kingdom: whatever would put us from engaging our children to the utmost in God's service, we have reason to suspect the hand of Satan in it. 3. The treaty, hereupon, breaks off abruptly; they that *went* out from Pharaoh's presence, (v. 6.) were now *driven out*. Those will quickly hear their doom, that cannot bear to hear their duty. See 2 Chron. 25. 16. *Quos Deus destruet, eos dementes—Whom God intends to destroy, he delivers up to infatuation.* Never was man so infatuated to his own ruin as Pharaoh was.

12. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, *even* all that the hail hath left. 13. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all *that* night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous *were they*; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. 15. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt. 16. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste: and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. 17. Now, therefore, forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only. 18. And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD. 19. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind,

which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. 20. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

Here is,

I. The locusts' invasion of the land; *God's great army*, Joel 2. 11. God bids *Moses stretch out his hand*, (v. 12.) to beckon them, as it were, for they came at a call, and he *stretched forth his rod*, v. 13. Compare *ch.* 9. 22, 23. Moses ascribes it to the stretching out, not of *his own hand*, but of the *rod of God*, the instituted sign of God's presence with him. The locusts obey the summons, and fly upon the wings of the wind, the east wind, and *caterpillars*, *without number*, as we are told, Ps. 105. 34, 35. A formidable army of horse and foot might more easily have been resisted than this host of insects; who then is able to stand before the great God?

II. The desolations they made in it; (v. 15.) *They covered the face of the earth, and ate up the fruit of it*. The earth God has *given to the children of men*; yet, when God pleases, he can disturb their possession, and send locusts and caterpillars to force them out. Herbs grow *for the service of man*; yet, when God pleases, those contemptible insects shall not only be fellow-commoners with him, but shall plunder him, and eat the bread out of his mouth. Let our labour be, not for the habitation and meat which thus lie exposed, but for those which *endure to eternal life*, which cannot be thus invaded, nor thus corrupted.

III. Pharaoh's submission hereupon, v. 16, 17. He had driven Moses and Aaron from him, (v. 11.) telling them (it is likely) he would have no more to do with them. But now he calls for them again in all haste, and makes court to them with as much respect as before he had dismissed them with disdain. Note, The day will come, when those who set at nought their counsellors, and despise all their reproofs, will be glad to make an interest in them, and engage their intercessions for them. The foolish virgins court the wise to *give them of their oil*; and see Ps. 141. 6.

1. Pharaoh confesses his fault; *I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you*. He now sees his own folly in the slights and affronts he had put on God and his ambassadors, and *seems*, at least, to repent of it. When God convinces men of sin, and humbles them for it, their contempt of God's ministers, and the word of the Lord in their mouths, will certainly come into the account, and lie heavy upon their consciences. Some think that when Pharaoh said, "*THE LORD your God*," he did, in effect, say, "*THE LORD shall not be my God*." Many treat with God as a potent Enemy, whom they are willing not to be at war with, but care not for treating with him as their rightful Prince, whom they are willing with loyal affection to submit to. True penitents lament sin as committed *against God*, even *their own God*, to whom they stand obliged.

2. He begs pardon, not of God, as penitents ought, but of Moses, which was more excusable in him, because, by a special commission, Moses was made a *god to Pharaoh*, and *whosoever sins he remitted*, they were forgiven; when he prays, *Forgive this once*, he, in effect, promises not to offend in like manner any more, yet seems loath to express that promise, nor does he say any thing particularly of *letting the people go*. Note, Counterfeit repentance commonly cheats men with general promises, and is loath to covenant against particular sins.

3. He employs Moses and Aaron to pray for him. There are those, who, in distress, implore the help of other persons' prayers, but have no mind to pray for themselves, showing thereby that they have no true love to God, nor any delight in communion with him. Pharaoh desires their prayers, that *this death only might be taken away*, not *this sin*: he deprecates the plague of locusts, not the plague of a hard heart, which yet was much the more dangerous.

IV. The removal of the judgment, upon the prayer of Moses, v. 18, 19. This was, 1. As great an instance of the power of God as the judgment itself. An east wind brought the locusts, and now a west wind carried them off. Note, Whatever point of the compass the wind is in, it is *fulfilling God's word*, and turns about by his counsel. *The wind bloweth where it listeth*, as it respects any control of ours; not so as it respects the control of God; he *directeth it under the whole heaven*. 2. It was as great a proof of the authority of Moses, and as firm a ratification of his commission and his interest in that God who both *makes peace and creates evil*, Isa. 45. 7. Nay, hereby he not only commanded the respect, but recommended himself to the good affections, of the Egyptians, inasmuch as, while the judgment came, in obedience to his summons, the removal of it was an answer to his prayers; he never desired the woful day, though he threatened it; his commission indeed ran *against* Egypt, but his intercession was *for* it, which was a good reason why they should love him, though they feared him. 3. It was also as strong an argument for their repentance as the judgment itself; for by this it appeared that God is ready to forgive, and swift to show mercy. If he turn away a particular judgment, as he did often from Pharaoh, or defer it, as in Ahab's case, upon the profession of repentance, and the outward tokens of humiliation; what will he do, if we be sincere, and how welcome will true penitents be to him! O that this goodness of God might lead us to repentance!

V. Pharaoh's return to his impious resolution again not to let the people go, (v. 20.) through the righteous hand of God upon him, *hardening his heart*, and confirming him in his obstinacy. Note, Those that have often baffled their convictions, and stood it out against them, forfeit the benefit of them, and are justly given up to these lusts of their own hearts, which (how strong see or their convictions) prove too strong for them.

21. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness *which* may be felt. 22. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. 24. And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. 25. And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God. 26. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the LORD

our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD until we come thither. 27. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. 28. And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more: for in *that* day thou seest my face thou shalt die. 29. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well; I will see thy face again no more.

Here is,

1. The plague of darkness brought upon Egypt, and a most dreadful plague it was, and therefore is put *first* of the ten, (Ps. 105. 28.) though it was one of the *last*; in the destruction of the spiritual Egypt it is produced by the *fifth* vial, which is poured out upon the *seat of the beast*, Rev. 16. 10, *His kingdom was full of darkness*. Observe particularly concerning this plague,

1. That it was a total darkness; we have reason to think, not only that the lights of heaven were clouded, but that all their fires and candles were put out by the damps or clammy vapours which were the cause of this darkness; for it is said, (v. 23.) *They saw not one another*. It is threatened to the wicked, (Job 18. 5, 6.) that the *spark of his fire shall not shine*, (even the sparks of his own kindling, as they are called, Isa. 50. 11.) and that the *light shall be dark in his tabernacle*. Hell is *utter darkness*; the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in there, Rev. 18. 23.

2. That it was darkness which *might be felt*, (v. 21.) felt in its *causes* by their fingers' ends, (so thick were the fogs,) felt in its *effects*, some think, by their eyes, which were pricked with pain, and made the more sore by their rubbing of them. Great pain is spoken of as the effect of that darkness, (Rev. 16. 10.) which alludes to this.

3. No doubt it astonished and terrified them. The cloud of locusts, which had *darkened the land*, (v. 15.) was nothing to this. The tradition of the Jews is, that in this darkness they were terrified by the apparitions of evil spirits, or rather by dreadful sounds and murmurs which they made, or (which is no less fruitful) by the horrors of their own consciences; and this is the plague which some think is intended, (for, otherwise, it is not mentioned at all there,) Ps. 78. 49, *He poured upon them the fierceness of his anger, by sending evil angels among them*, for to those to whom the Devil has been a deceiver, he will, at length, be a terror.

4. It continued three days; *six nights* (says Bishop Hall) *in one*; so long they were imprisoned by these *chains of darkness*, and the most lightsome palaces were perfect dungeons. No man rose from his palace, v. 23. They were all confined to their houses; and such a terror seized them, that few of them had the courage to go from the chair to the bed, or from the bed to the chair. Thus were they *silent in darkness*, 1 Sam. 2. 9. Now Pharaoh had time to consider, if he would have improved it. Spiritual darkness is spiritual bondage; while Satan blinds men's eyes that they see not, he binds their hands and feet, that they work not for God, nor move toward heaven. *They sit in darkness*.

5. It was a righteous thing with God thus to punish them: Pharaoh and his people had rebelled against the light of God's word, which Moses spake to them; justly therefore are they punished with darkness, for they loved it, and chose it rather. The blindness of their minds brings upon them this darkness of the air; never was mind so blinded as Pharaoh's, never was air so darkened as Egypt's. The Egyptians by their cruelty would have extinguished

the lamp of Israel, and quenched their coal; justly therefore does God put out their lights; compare it with the punishment of the Sodomites, Gen. 19. 11. Let us dread the consequences of sin; if three days' darkness was so dreadful, what will everlasting darkness be?

6. The children of Israel, at the same time, had *light in their dwellings*, (v. 23.) not only in the land of Goshen, where most of them dwelt, but in the habitations of those who were dispersed among the Egyptians. That some of them were thus dispersed, appears from the distinction afterward appointed to be put on their door-posts, ch. 12. 7. This is an instance, (1.) Of the power of God above the ordinary power of nature; we must not think that we share in common mercies, as a matter of course, and therefore that we owe no thanks to God for them; he could distinguish, and withhold that from us, which he grants to others. He does indeed ordinarily make his sun to shine on the just and the unjust, but he could make a difference, and we must own ourselves indebted to his mercy that he does not. (2.) Of the particular favour he bears to his people; they *walk in the light*, when others *wander endlessly in thick darkness*; wherever there is an Israelite indeed, though in this dark world, there is light, there is a *child of light*, one for whom *light is sown*, and whom the *day-spring* from on high visits. When God made this difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians, who would not have preferred the poorest cottage of an Israelite to the finest palace of an Egyptian? There is still a real difference, though not so discernible a one, between the *house of the wicked*, which is under a *curse*, and the habitation of the just, which is *blessed*, Prov. 3. 33. We should believe in that difference, and govern ourselves accordingly. Upon Ps. 105. 28, *He sent darkness and made it dark, and they rebelled not against his word*, some ground a conjecture, that during these three days of darkness the Israelites were circumcised, in order to their celebrating of the passover which was now approaching; and that *that* was the word against which they rebelled not; for their circumcision, when they entered Canaan, is spoken of as a second general circumcision, Josh. 5. 2. However, during these three days of darkness to the Egyptians, if God had so pleased, the Israelites, by the light which they had, might have made their escape, and without asking leave of Pharaoh; but God would bring them out *with a high hand*, and not by stealth, or in haste, Isa. 52. 12.

II. Here is the impression made upon Pharaoh by this plague, much like that of the foregoing plagues.

1. It awakened him so far, that he renewed the treaty with Moses and Aaron, and now, at length, consented that they should take their little ones with them, only he would have their cattle left in pawn, v. 24. It is common for sinners thus to bargain with God Almighty; some sins they will leave, but not all, they will leave their sins for a time, but they will not bid them a final farewell. They will allow him some share in their hearts, but the world and the flesh must share with him: thus they mock God, but they deceive themselves. Moses resolves not to abate in his terms; *Our cattle shall go with us*, v. 26. Note, the terms of reconciliation are so fixed, that, though men dispute them ever so long, they cannot possibly alter them, nor bring them lower. We must come up to the demands of God's will, for we cannot expect he should condescend to the provisos of our lusts. God's messengers must always be bound up by that rule, (Jer. 15. 19.) *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them*. Moses gives a very good reason why they must take their cattle with them, they must go to do sacrifice, and therefore they must take where-

withal. What numbers and kinds of sacrifices would be required, they did not yet know, and therefore they must take all they had. Note, With ourselves, and our children, we must devote all our worldly possessions to the service of God, because we know not what use God will make of what we have, nor in what way we may be called upon to honour God with it.

2. Yet it exasperated him so far, that, when he might not make his own terms, he broke off the conference abruptly, and took up a resolution to treat no more; wrath now came upon him to the utmost, and he became outrageous beyond all bounds, v. 28. Moses is dismissed in anger, forbidden the court upon pain of death, forbidden so much as to meet Pharaoh any more, as he had been used to do by the river's side; *In that day thou seest my face, thou shalt die.* Prodigious madness! Had not he found that Moses could plague him without seeing his face? Or, had he forgotten how often he had sent for him as his physician to heal him, and ease him of his plagues; and must he now be bid to come near him no more? Impotent malice! To threaten him with death, who was armed with such a power, and at whose mercy he had so often laid himself. What will not hardness of heart, and contempt of God's word and commandments, bring men to?

Moses takes him at his word; (v. 29.) *I will see thy face no more*, that is, "after this time;" for this conference did not break off till ch. 11. 8.* when Moses went out *in a great anger*, and told Pharaoh how soon he would change his mind, and his proud spirit would come down; which was fulfilled, (ch. 12. 31.) when Pharaoh became an humble suppliant to Moses to depart. So that, after this interview, Moses came no more, till he was sent for. Note, When men drive God's word from them, he justly permits their delusions, and answers them according to the multitude of their idols. When the Gadarenes desired Christ to depart, he left them presently.

CHAP. XI.

Pharaoh had bid Moses to get out of his presence, (ch. 10. 28.) and Moses had promised this should be the last time he would trouble him, yet he resolves to say out what he had to say, before he left him; accordingly, we have, in this chapter, I. The instructions God had given to Moses, which he was now to pursue, (v. 1, 2.) together with the interest Israel and Moses had in the esteem of the Egyptians, v. 3. II. The last message Moses delivered to Pharaoh, concerning the death of the first-born, v. 4. . 8. III. A repetition of the prediction of Pharaoh's hardening his heart, (v. 9.) and the event answering to it, v. 10.

1. **AND** the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. 2. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. 3. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

Here is,

1. The high favour Moses and Israel were in, with God; (1.) Moses was a favourite of Heaven; for

* Accordingly, some read the three verses of the eleventh chapter as a parenthesis.—Ed.

God will not hide from him the thing he will do. God not only makes him his messenger to deliver his errands, but communicates to him, as the man of his council, his purpose, that he would bring one plague more, and but one, upon Pharaoh, by which he would complete the deliverance of Israel, v. 1. Moses longed to see an end of this dreadful work, to see Egypt no more plagued, and Israel no more oppressed; "Well," says God, "now it is near an end, the warfare shall shortly be accomplished, the point gained; Pharaoh shall be forced to own himself conquered, and to give up the cause." After all the rest of the plagues, God says, *I will bring one more.* Thus, after all the judgments executed upon sinners in this world, still there is one more reserved to be brought on them in the other world, which will completely humble those whom nothing else would humble. (2.) The Israelites were favourites of Heaven, for God himself espoused their injured cause, and takes care to see them paid for all their pains in serving the Egyptians. This was the last day of their servitude, they were about to go away, and their masters, who had abused them in their work, would now have defrauded them of their wages, and have sent them away empty; while the poor Israelites were so fond of liberty, that they would be satisfied with that, without pay, and would rejoice to get that upon any terms: but he that *executeth righteousness and judgment for the oppressed*, provided that the labourers should not lose their hire, and ordered them to demand it now at their departure, (v. 2.) *in jewels of silver and jewels of gold*; to prepare for which, God, by the plagues, had now made the Egyptians as willing to part with them upon any terms, as, before, the Egyptians, by their severities, had made them willing to go upon any terms. Though the patient Israelites were content to lose their wages, yet God would not let them go without them. Note, One way or other, God will right the injured, who in humble silence commit their cause to him; and he will see to it, that none be losers at last by their patient suffering, any more than by their services.

The high favour Moses and Israel were in, with the Egyptians, v. 3. (1.) Even the people that had been hated and despised, now came to be respected; the wonders wrought on their behalf put an honour upon them, and made them considerable. How great do they become for whom God thus fights! Thus *the Lord gave them favour* in the sight of the Egyptians, by making it appear how much he favoured them: he also changed the spirit of the Egyptians toward them, and made them to be pitied of their oppressors, Ps. 106. 46. (2.) *The man Moses was very great.* How could it be otherwise, when they saw what power he was clothed with, and what wonders were wrought by his hand? Thus the apostles, though otherwise despicable men, came to be magnified, Acts, 5. 13. Those that honour God, he will honour; and with respect to those that approve themselves faithful to him, how meanly soever they may pass through this world, there is a day coming when they will look great, very great, in the eyes of all the world, even their's who now look upon them with the utmost contempt. Observe, Though Pharaoh hated Moses, there were those of Pharaoh's servants that respected him. Thus, in Cæsar's household, even Nero's, there were some that had an esteem for blessed Paul, Phil. 1. 13.

4. And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: 5. And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne

even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill : and all the first-born of beasts. 6. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. 7. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast; that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. 8. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee : and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger. 9. And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. 10. And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh : and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

Warning is here given to Pharaoh of the last and conquering plague which was now to be inflicted, which was the *death of all the first-born* in Egypt at once. This had been first threatened, (*ch. 4. 23. I will slay thy son, thy first-born*;) but is last executed; lesser judgments were tried, which, if they had done the work, would have prevented this. See how slow God is to wrath; and how willing to be met with in the way of his judgments, and to have his anger turned away, and particularly how precious the lives of men are in his eyes: if the death of their cattle would have humbled and reformed them, their children had been spared; but if men will not improve the gradual advances of divine judgments, they must thank themselves, if they find, in the issue, that the worst was reserved for the last.

1. The plague itself is here particularly foretold, *v. 4. 5. 6.* The time is fixed, about midnight; the very next midnight, the dead time of the night, when they were all asleep, all their first-born should sleep the sleep of death, not silently and insensibly, so as not to be discovered till morning, but so as to rouse the families at midnight to stand by and see them die. The extent of this plague is described, *v. 5.* The prince that was to succeed in the throne was not too high to be reached by it, nor the slaves at the mill too low to be taken notice of. Moses and Aaron were not ordered to summon this plague, no, *I will go out, saith the Lord, v. 4. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; what is it to die but that?*

2. The special protection which the children of Israel should be under, and the manifest difference that should be put between them and the Egyptians; while the Egyptians drew their swords against the Egyptians, there should not so much as a dog bark at any of the children of Israel, *v. 7.* An earnest was hereby given of the difference which shall be put in the great day between God's people and his enemies: did men know what a difference God puts, and will put to eternity, between those that serve him and those that serve him not, religion would not seem to them such an indifferent thing as they make it, nor would they act in it with so much indifference as they do.

3. The humble submission which Pharaoh's ser-

vants should make to Moses, and how submissively they should request him to go; (*v. 8.*) *They shall come down, and bow themselves.* Note, The proud enemies of God and his Israel shall be made to fall under at last, (*Rev. 3. 9.*) and shall be found liars to them, *Deut. 33. 29.* When Moses had thus delivered his message, it is said, *He went out from Pharaoh in a great anger*, though he was the meekest of all the men of the earth. Probably he expected that the very threatening of the death of the first-born would have induced Pharaoh to comply, especially as Pharaoh had complied so far already, and had seen how exactly all Moses's predictions hitherto were fulfilled. But it had not that effect; his proud heart would not yield, no, not to save all the first-born of his kingdom: no marvel that men are not deterred from vicious courses by the prospects given them of eternal misery in the other world, when the imminent peril they run of the loss of all that is dear to them in this world will not frighten them. Moses, hereupon, was provoked to a holy indignation, being grieved, as our Saviour afterward, for the *hardness of his heart*, *Mark. 3. 5.* Note, It is a great vexation to the spirits of good ministers, to see people deaf to all the fair warnings given them, and running headlong upon ruin, notwithstanding all the kind methods taken to prevent it. Thus Ezekiel went in the *bitterness of his spirit*, (*Ezek. 3. 14.*) because God had told him that the house of Israel would not hearken unto him, *v. 7.* To be angry at nothing but sin, is the way not to sin in anger.

Moses, having thus adverted to the disturbance which Pharaoh's obstinacy gave him, (1.) Reflects upon the previous notice God had given him of this; (*v. 9.*) *The Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken to you.* The scripture has foretold the incredulity of these who should hear the gospel, that it might not be a surprise or stumbling-block to us, *John 12. 37, 38. Rom. 10. 16.* Let us think never the worse of the gospel of Christ, for the slights men generally put upon it, for we were told before what cold entertainment it would meet with (2.) He recapitulates all he had said before to this purport, (*v. 10.*) that Moses did all these wonders, as they are here related, before Pharaoh, (he himself was an eye-witness of them,) and yet he could not prevail, which was a certain sign that God himself had, in a way of righteous judgment, hardened his heart. Thus the Jews' rejection of the gospel of Christ was so gross an absurdity, that it might easily be inferred from it, that *God had given them the spirit of slumber*, *Rom. 11. 8.*

CHAP. XII

This chapter gives an account of one of the most memorable ordinances, and one of the most memorable providences, of all that are recorded in the Old Testament. 1. Not one of all the ordinances of the Jewish church was more eminent than that of the passover, nor is any one more frequently mentioned in the New Testament; and we have here an account of the institution of it. The ordinance consisted of three parts. 1. The killing and eating of the paschal lamb, *v. 1. 6. 8. 11.* 2. The sprinkling of the blood upon the door-posts, spoken of as a distinct thing, (*Heb. 11. 28.*) and peculiar to this first passover, (*v. 7.*) with the reason for it, *v. 13.* 3. The feast of unleavened bread for seven days following; this points rather at what was to be done afterward, in the observance of this ordinance, *v. 11. 26.* This institution is communicated to the people, and they are instructed in the observance, (1.) Of this first passover, *v. 21. 23.* (2.) Of the after passovers, *v. 24. 27.* And the Levites' obedience to these orders, *v. 28. 31.* Not one of all the providences of God concerning the Jewish church was more illustrious, or is more frequently mentioned, than the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt. 1. The first-born of the Egyptians are slain, *v. 29. 30.* 2. Orders are given immediately for their discharge, *v. 31. 33.* 3. They begin their march. (1.)

Loaded with their own effects, v. 34. (2.) Enriched with the spoils of Egypt, v. 35, 36. (3.) Attended with a mixed multitude, v. 37, 38. (4.) Put to their shifts for present supply, v. 39. This event is dated, v. 40..42. Lastly, A recapitulation in the close, (1.) Of this memorable ordinance, with some additions, v. 43..49. (2.) Of this memorable providence, v. 50, 51.

1. **AND** the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2. This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. 3. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for a house: 4. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take *it*, according to the number of the souls: every man, according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb. 5. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats: 6. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. 7. And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the two side-posts and on the upper door-post of the houses wherein they shall eat it. 8. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. 9. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast *with* fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. 10. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. 11. And thus shall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; *it is* the LORD's passover. 12. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: *I am* the LORD. 13. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you *are*: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt. 14. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. 15. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day

until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. 16. And in the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save *that* which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. 17. And ye shall observe *the feast of* unleavened bread; for in this self-same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. 18. In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. 19. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. 20. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

Moses and Aaron here *receive of the Lord* what they were afterward to *deliver to the people*, concerning the ordinance of the passover, to which is prefixed an order for a new style to be observed in their months; (v. 1, 2.) *This shall be to you the beginning of months.* They had hitherto begun their year from the middle of September, but henceforward they were to begin it from the middle of March, at least in all their ecclesiastical computations. Note, It is good to begin the day, and begin the year, especially to begin our lives, with God. This new calculation began the year with the spring, which *reneweth the face of the earth*, and was used as a figure of the coming of Christ, Cant. 2. 11, 12.

We may suppose, that, while Moses was bringing the ten plagues upon the Egyptians, he was directing the Israelites to prepare for their departure at an hour's warning. Probably, he had by degrees brought them near together from their dispersions, for they are here called *the congregation of Israel*; (v. 3.) and to them as a congregation orders are here sent. Their amazement and hurry, it is easy to suppose, were great; yet now they must apply themselves to the observance of a sacred rite, to the honour of God. Note, When our heads are fullest of care, and our hands of business, yet we must not forget our religion, nor suffer ourselves to be indisposed for acts of devotion.

I. God appointed, that, on the night wherein they were to go out of Egypt, they should, in each of their families, *kill a lamb*, or that two or three families, if they were small, should join for a lamb. The lamb was to be got ready four days before, and that afternoon they were to *kill it*, (v. 6.) as a sacrifice; not strictly, for it was not offered *upon the altar*, but as a religious ceremony, acknowledging God's goodness to them, not only in preserving them from, but in delivering them by, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. See the antiquity of family religion; and see the convenience of the joining of small families together for religious worship, that it may be made the more solemn.

II. The lamb so slain they were to eat, roasted, (we may suppose, in its several quarters,) with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, because they

were to eat it *in haste*, (v. 11.) and to leave none of it until the morning; for God would have them to depend upon him for their daily bread, and not to take thought for the morrow. He that led them, would feed them.

III. Before they ate the flesh of the lamb, they were to *sprinkle the blood* upon the door-posts, v. 7. By this their houses were to be distinguished from the houses of the Egyptians, and so their first-born secured from the sword of the destroying angel, v. 12, 13. Dreadful work was to be made this night in Egypt; all the first-born both of man and beast were to be slain, and judgment executed upon the *gods of Egypt*. Moses does not mention the fulfilment, in this chapter, yet he speaks of it, Numb. 33. 4. It is very probable that the idols which the Egyptians worshipped were destroyed, those of metal melted, those of wood consumed, and those of stone broken to pieces; whence Jethro infers, (ch. 18. 11.) *The Lord is greater than all gods*. The same angel that destroyed their first-born, demolished their idols, which were no less dear to them. For the protection of Israel from this plague, they were ordered to sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon the door-posts, their doing of which would be accepted as an instance of their faith in the divine warnings, and their obedience to the divine precepts. Note, 1. In times of common calamity, God will secure his own people, and set a mark upon them, they shall be hidden either in heaven or under heaven; preserved either from the stroke of judgments, or, at least, from the sting of them. 2. The blood of sprinkling is the saints' security, in times of common calamity; that is it that marks them for God, pacifies conscience, and gives them boldness of access to the throne of grace, and so becomes a wall of protection round them, and a wall of partition between them and the children of this world.

IV. This was to be annually observed as a feast of the Lord in their generations, to which the *feast of unleavened bread* was annexed, during which, for seven days, they were to eat no bread but what was unleavened, in remembrance of their being confined to such bread, of necessity, for many days after they came out of Egypt, v. 14. 20. The appointment is inculcated for their better direction, and that they might not mistake concerning it, and to awaken those, who perhaps in Egypt were grown generally very stupid and careless in the matters of religion, to a diligent observance of the institution.

Now, without doubt, there was much of the gospel in this ordinance; it is often referred to in the New Testament, and, in it, to us is *the gospel preached*, and not to them only who could not steadfastly look to the end of these things, Heb. 4. 2. 2 Cor. 3. 13.

1. The paschal lamb was typical; Christ is our *Paschover*, 1 Cor. 5. 7. (1.) It was to be a *lamb*; and Christ is the *Lamb of God*, (John, 1. 29.) often in the Revelation called the *Lamb*, meek and innocent as a lamb, dumb before the shearers, before the butchers. (2.) It was to be a *male of the first year*, (v. 5.) in its prime; Christ offered up himself in the midst of his days, not in infancy with the babes of Bethlehem. It denotes the strength and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, on whom our help was laid. (3.) It was to be *without blemish*, (v. 5.) denoting the purity of the Lord Jesus, a *Lamb without spot*, 1 Pet. 1. 19. The judge that condemned him, (as if his trial were only like the scrutiny that was made concerning the sacrifices, whether they were without blemish or no,) pronounced him innocent. (4.) It was to be set apart four days before, (v. 3. 6.) denoting the designation of the Lord Jesus to be a Saviour, both in the purpose and in

the promise. It is very observable, that, as Christ was crucified at the passover, so he solemnly entered into Jerusalem four days before the very day that the paschal lamb was set apart. (5.) It was to be *slain*, and *roasted with fire*, (v. 6. 9.) denoting the exquisite sufferings of the Lord Jesus, even unto death, the death of the cross. The wrath of God is as fire, and Christ was made a curse for us. (6.) It was to be killed by the whole congregation between the two evenings, that is, between three o'clock and six. Christ suffered at the *end of the world*, (Heb. 9. 26.) by the hand of the Jews, the whole multitude of them, (Like, 23. 18.) and for the good of all his spiritual Israel. (7.) *Not a bone of it must be broken*, (v. 46.) which is expressly said to be fulfilled in Christ, (John, 19. 33, 36.) denoting the unbroken strength of the Lord Jesus.

2. The *sprinkling of the blood* was typical. (1.) It was not enough that the blood of the lamb was shed, but it must be *sprinkled*, denoting the application of the merits of Christ's death to our souls; we must *receive the atonement*, Rom. 5. 11. (2.) It was to be sprinkled with a *bunch of hyssop*, (v. 22.) *dip in the basin*. The everlasting covenant, like the basin, is the conservatory of this blood, the benefits and privileges purchased by it are laid up for us there; faith is the bunch of hyssop by which we apply the promises to ourselves, and the benefits of the blood of Christ laid up in them. (3.) It was to be sprinkled upon the *door-posts*, denoting the open profession we are to make of faith in Christ, and obedience to him, as those that are not ashamed to own our dependence upon him. The mark of the *Beast* may be received in the *forehead*, or in the *right-hand*, but the seal of the *Lamb* is always in the *forehead*, Rev. 7. 3. There is a back-way to hell, but no back-way to heaven; no, that is a high-way, Isa. 35. 8. (4.) It was to be sprinkled upon the *lintel* and the *side-posts*, but not upon the *threshold*; (v. 7.) which cautions us to take heed of *trampling under foot* the blood of the covenant, Heb. 10. 29. It is precious blood, and must be precious to us. (5.) The blood, thus sprinkled, was a means of the preservation of the Israelites from the destroying angel, who had nothing to do there where the blood was. If the blood of Christ be sprinkled upon our consciences, it will be our protection from the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the damnation of hell, Rom. 8. 1.

3. The solemn *eating of the lamb* was typical of our gospel-duty to Christ. (1.) The paschal lamb was killed, not to be looked upon only, but to be fed upon; so we must by faith make Christ our's, as we do that which we eat, and we must receive spiritual strength and nourishment from him, as from our food, and have delight and satisfaction in him, as we have in eating and drinking, when we are hungry or thirsty: see John, 6. 53-55. (2.) It was to be all eaten; those that by faith feed upon Christ, must feed upon a whole Christ; they must take Christ and his yoke, Christ and his cross, as well as Christ and his crown. *Is Christ divided?* Those that gather much of Christ will have *nothing over*. (3.) It was to be eaten immediately, not deferred till morning, v. 10. *To-day* Christ is offered, and is to be accepted while it is called *to-day*, before we sleep the sleep of death. (4.) It was to be eaten *with bitter herbs*, (v. 8.) in remembrance of the bitterness of their bondage in Egypt; we must feed upon Christ with sorrow and brokenness of heart, in remembrance of sin; this will give an admirable relish to the paschal lamb; Christ will be sweet to us, if sin be bitter. (5.) It was to be eaten in a departing posture; (v. 11.) when we feed upon Christ by faith, we must absolutely forsake the rule and dominion of sin, shake off Pharaoh's yoke; and we must sit loose to the world, and every

thing in it, forsake all for Christ, and reckon it no bad bargain. Heb. 13. 13, 14.

4. The feast of unleavened bread was typical of the Christian life, 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. Having received Christ Jesus the Lord, (1.) We must keep a feast, in holy joy, continually delighting ourselves in Christ Jesus; *no manner of work must be done*, (v. 16.) no care admitted and indulged inconsistent with, or prejudicial to, this holy joy: if true believers have not a continual feast, it is their own fault. (2.) It must be a feast of unleavened bread, kept in charity, without the leaven of malice, and in sincerity, without the leaven of hypocrisy. The law was very strict as to the passover, and the Jews were so in their usages, that no leaven should be found in their houses, v. 19. All the old leaven of sin must be put far from us, with the utmost caution and abhorrence, if we would keep the feast of a holy life to the honour of Christ. (3.) It was by an ordinance for ever; (v. 17.) as long as we live we must continue feeding upon Christ, and rejoicing in him always, with thankful mention of the great things he has done for us.

21. Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you a lamb, according to your families, and kill the passover. 22. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. 23. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. 24. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. 25. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. 26. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? 27. That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head, and worshipped. 28. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

I. Moses is here, as a faithful steward in God's house, teaching the children of Israel to observe all things which God had commanded him; and no doubt he gave the instructions as largely as he received them, though they are not so largely recorded. It is here added,

1. That this night, when the first-born were to be destroyed, no Israelite must stir out of doors till morning, that is, till toward morning, when they would be called for to march out of Egypt, v. 22. Not but that the destroying angel could have known an Israelite from an Egyptian in the street, but God would intimate to them that their safety was owing

to the blood of sprinkling; if they put themselves from under the protection of that, it was at their peril: also, that those whom God has marked for himself must not mingle themselves with evil-doers: see Isa. 26. 20, 21. They must not go out of the doors, lest they should straggle and be out of the way when they should be summoned to depart: they must stay within, to wait for the salvation of the Lord, and it is good to do so.

2. That hereafter they should carefully teach their children the meaning of this service, v. 26, 27. Observe, (1.) The question which the children would ask concerning this solemnity, (which they would soon take notice of in the family,) "*What mean ye by this service?*" What is the meaning of all this care and exactness about eating this lamb, and this unleavened bread, more than about common food? Why such a difference between this meal and other meals? Note, [1.] It is a good thing to see children inquisitive about the things of God; it is to be hoped that they who are careful to ask for the way will find it. Christ himself, when a Child, heard and asked questions, Luke, 2. 46. [2.] It concerns us all rightly to understand the meaning of those holy ordinances wherein we worship God; what is the nature, and what the end, of them: what is signified, and what intended; what is the duty expected from us in them, and what the advantages to be expected by us. Every ordinance has a meaning; some ordinances, as sacraments, have not their meaning so plain and obvious as others have; therefore we are concerned to search, that we may not offer the blind for sacrifice, but may do a reasonable service. If either we are ignorant of, or mistaken about, the meaning of holy ordinances, we can neither please God nor profit ourselves. (2.) The answer which the parents were to return to this question; (v. 27.) Ye shall say, *It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover*, that is, "By the killing and sacrificing of this lamb, we keep in remembrance that work of wonder and grace which God did for our fathers when," [1.] "To make way for our deliverance out of bondage, he slew the first-born of the Egyptians, so compelling them to sign our discharge;" and, [2.] "Though there were with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God, for which the destroying angel, when he was abroad doing execution, might justly have destroyed our first-born too, yet God graciously appointed and accepted the family-sacrifice of a lamb instead of the first-born, as, of old, the ram instead of Isaac; and in every house where the lamb was slain the first-born were saved." The repetition of this solemnity in the return of every year was designed.

First, To look backward as a memorial, that in it they might remember what great things God had done for them and their fathers. The word *pesach* signifies a leap or transition: it is a passing over; for the destroying angel passed over the houses of the Israelites, and did not destroy their first-born. When God brings utter ruin upon his people, he says, *I will not pass by them any more*, (Amos, 7. 8.—8. 2.) intimating how often he had passed by them, as now when the destroying angel passed over their houses. Note, 1. Distinguishing mercies lay under peculiar obligations. When a thousand fall at our side and ten thousand at our right hand, and yet we are preserved, and have our lives given us for a prey, this should greatly affect us, Ps. 91. 7. In war or pestilence, if the arrow of death has passed by us, passed over us, hit the next to us, and just missed us, we must not say it was by chance that we are preserved, but by the special providence of our God. 2. Old mercies, to ourselves or to our fathers, must not be forgotten, but be had in everlasting remembrance, that God may

be praised, our faith in him encouraged, and our hearts enlarged in his service.

Secondly, It was designed to *look forward* as an earnest of the great sacrifice of the *Lamb of God* in the fulness of time, instead of us and our first-born; we were obnoxious to the sword of the destroying angel, but *Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us*, his death was our life, and thus he was the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, from the foundation of the Jewish church: Moses kept the passover by faith in Christ, for Christ was the end of the law for righteousness.

The people received these instructions with reverence and ready obedience. 1. They bowed the head and worshipped; (v. 27.) they hereby signified their submission to this institution as a law, and their thankfulness for it as a favour and privilege. Note, When God gives law to us, we must give honour to him; when he speaks, we must bow our heads and worship. 2. They went away and did as they were commanded, v. 23. Here was none of that discontent and murmuring among them which we read of, ch. 5. 20, 21. The plagues of Egypt had done them good, and raised their expectations of a glorious deliverance, which before they despaired of; and now they went forth to meet it in the way appointed. Note, The perfecting of God's mercies to us must be waited for in a humble observance of his institutions.

29. And it came to pass, that at midnight, the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. 30. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. 31. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both you and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. 32. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. 33. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. 34. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. 35. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: 36. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required: and they spoiled the Egyptians.

Here is,

I. The Egyptians' sons, even their first-born, slain, v. 29, 30. If Pharaoh would have taken the warning which was given him of this plague, and would thereupon have released Israel, what a great many dear and valuable lives might have been preserved! But see what obstinate infidelity brings up-

on men. Observe, 1. The time when this blow was given; it was at midnight, which added to the terror of it: the three preceding nights were made dreadful by the additional plague of darkness, which might be felt, and doubtless disturbed their repose; and now, when they hoped for one quiet night's rest, at midnight was the alarm given: when the destroying angel drew his sword against Jerusalem, it was in the day-time, (2 Sam. 24. 15.) which made it the less frightful; but the destruction of Egypt was by a pestilence walking in darkness, Ps. 91. 6. Shortly there will be an alarming cry at midnight, Behold, the bridegroom cometh. 2. On whom the plague fastened; on their first-born, the joys and hopes of their respective families. They had slain the Hebrews' children, and now God slew their's. Thus he visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children; and he is not unrighteous who taketh vengeance. 3. How far it reached; from the throne to the dungeon: prince and peasant stand upon the same level before God's judgments, for there is no respect of persons with him: see Job, 34. 19, 20. Now the slain of the Lord were many; multitudes, multitudes fall in this valley of decision, when the controversy between God and Pharaoh was to be determined. 4. What an outcry was made upon it; there was a great cry in Egypt, universal lamentation for their only sons, (with many,) and with all for their first-born. If any be suddenly taken ill in the night, we are wont to call up neighbours; but the Egyptians could have no help, no comfort, from their neighbours, all being involved in the same calamity. Let us learn hence, (1.) To tremble before God, and to be afraid of his judgments; Ps. 119. 120. Who is able to stand before him, or dares resist him? (2.) To be thankful to God for the daily preservation of ourselves and our families: lying so much exposed, we have reason to say, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

II. God's sons, even his first-born, released; this judgment conquered Pharaoh, and obliged him to surrender at discretion, without capitulating. Men had better come up to God's terms at first, for he will never come down to their's, let them object as long as they will. Now Pharaoh's pride is abased, and he yields to all that Moses had insisted on; Serve the Lord as ye have said. (v. 31.) and take your flocks as ye have said, v. 32. Note, God's word will stand, and we shall get nothing by disputing it, or delaying to submit to it. Hitherto the Israelites were not permitted to depart, but now things were come to the last extremity, in consequence of which, 1. They are commanded to depart; (v. 31.) Rise up, and get you forth. Pharaoh had told Moses he should see his face no more; but now he sent for him: those will seek God early in their distress who before had set him at defiance. Such a fright he was now in, that he gave orders by night for their discharge, fearing lest, if he delayed any longer, he himself should fall next; and that he sent them out, not as men hated, (as the pagan historians have represented this matter,) but as men feared, is plainly discovered by his humble request to them; (v. 32.) Bless me also; Let me have your prayers, that I may not be plagued for what is passed, when you are gone." Note, Those that are enemies to God's church are enemies to themselves, and sooner or later they will be made to see it. 2. They are hired to depart by the Egyptians; they cried out, (v. 33.) We be all dead men. Note, When death comes into our houses, it is seasonable for us to think of our own mortality. Are our relations dead? It is easy to infer thence that we are dying, and, in effect, already dead, men. Upon this consideration, they were urgent with the Israelites to be gone, which gave great advantage to the

Israelites in borrowing their jewels, *v.* 35, 36. When the Egyptians urged them to be gone, it was easy for them to say that the Egyptians had kept them poor, that they could not undertake such a journey with empty purses, but that, if they would give them wherewithal to bear their charges, they would be gone. And this the Divine Wisdom designed, in suffering things to come to this extremity, that they, becoming formidable to the Egyptians, might have what they would for asking; the Lord also, by the influence he has on the minds of people, inclined the hearts of the Egyptians to furnish them with what they desired, they probably intending thereby to *make atonement*, that the plagues might be staid, as the Philistines, when they returned the ark, sent a present with it for a trespass-offering, having an eye to this precedent, 1 Sam. 6. 3.-6. The Israelites might receive and keep what they thus borrowed, or rather required, of the Egyptians, (1.) As justly as *servants* receive wages from their masters for work done, and sue for it, if it be detained. (2.) As justly as *conquerors* take the spoils of their enemies whom they have subdued; Pharaoh was in rebellion against the *God of the Hebrews*, by which all that he had was forfeited. (3.) As justly as *subjects* receive the estates granted them by their prince. God is the sovereign Proprietor of the earth, and the fulness thereof; and if he take from one, and give to another, who may say unto him, *What doest thou?* It was by God's special order and appointment that the Israelites did what they did, which was sufficient to justify them and bear them out; but what they did will by no means authorize others (who cannot pretend to any such warrant) to do the same. Let us remember, [1.] That the King of kings can do no wrong. [2.] That he will do right to those whom men injure, Ps. 146. 7. Hence it is that the *wealth of the sinner* often proves to be *laid up for the just*, Prov. 13. 22. Job, 27. 16, 17.

37. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot *that were* men, besides children. 38. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks and herds, *even* very much cattle. 39. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. 40. Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, *was* four hundred and thirty years. 41. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. 42. *It is* a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: *this is* that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

Here is the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt: having obtained their dismissal, they set forward without delay, and did not defer till a more convenient season. Pharaoh was now in a good mind; but they had reason to think he would not long continue so, and therefore it was no time to linger. We have here an account,

1. Of their number, about *six hundred thousand men*, (*v.* 37.) beside women and children, which, I think, we cannot suppose to make less than twelve hundred thousand more. What a vast increase was this, to arise from seventy souls in little more than two hundred years' time! See the power and efficacy of that blessing, when God commands it, *Be fruitful and multiply*. This was typical of the multitudes that were brought into the gospel-church when it was first founded; so *mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed*.

2. Of their retinue; (*v.* 38.) *a mixed multitude went up with them*, hangers on to that great family: some, perhaps, willing to leave their country, because it was laid waste by the plagues, and to seek their fortune, as we say, with the Israelites; others went out of curiosity, to see the solemnities of Israel's sacrifice to their God, which had been so much talked of, and expecting to see some glorious appearances of their God to them in the wilderness, having seen such glorious appearances of their God for them in the field of Zoan, Ps. 78. 12. Probably the greatest part of this mixed multitude were but a rude unthinking mob, that followed the crowd they knew not why; we afterwards find that they proved a snare to them; (Numb. 11. 4.) and it is probable that when, soon afterward, they understood that the children of Israel were to continue forty years in the wilderness, they quitted them, and returned to Egypt again. There were always those among the Israelites that were not Israelites; and there are still hypocrites in the church, who make a deal of mischief, but will be shaken off at last.

3. Of their effects. They had with them *flocks and herds, even very much cattle*. This is taken notice of, because it was long before Pharaoh would give them leave to remove their effects, which were chiefly cattle, Gen. 46. 32.

4. Of the provisions made for the camp, which was very poor and slender. They brought some dough with them out of Egypt in their knapsacks, *v.* 34. They had prepared to bake the next day, in order to their removal, understanding it was very near; but, being hastened away sooner than they thought of by some hours, they took the dough as it was, unleavened, and when they came to Succoth, their first stage, they baked unleavened cakes, and though they were, of course, insipid, yet the liberty they were brought into made it the most joyful meal they had ever eaten in their lives. Note, The servants of God must not be slaves to their appetites, nor solicitous to wind up all the delights of sense to their highest pitch. We should be willing to take up with dry bread, nay, with unleavened bread, rather than neglect or delay any service we have to do for God, as these whose meat and drink it is to do his will.

5. Of the date of this great event; it was just *four hundred and thirty years* from the promise made to Abraham (as the apostle explains it, Gal. 3. 17.) at his first coming into Canaan, during all which time *the children of Israel*, that is, the Hebrews, the distinguished chosen seed, were sojourners in a land that was not their's, either Canaan or Egypt. So long the promise God made to Abraham of a settlement lay dormant and unfulfilled, but now at length it revived, and things began to work toward the accomplishment of it. The first day of the march of Abraham's seed toward Canaan was just four hundred and thirty years (it should seem to a day) from the promise made to Abraham, (Gen. 12. 2.) *I will make of thee a great nation*. See how punctual God is to his time: though his promises be not performed quickly, they will be accomplished in their season.

6. Of the memorableness of it; (*v.* 42.) *It is a night to be much observed*. (1.) The providences of that first night were very observable; memora-

ble was the destruction of the Egyptians, and the deliverance of the Israelites by it; God herein made himself taken notice of. (2.) The ordinances of that night, in the annual return of it, were to be carefully observed; *This is that night of the Lord*, that remarkable night, to be celebrated in all generations. Note, the great things God does for his people are not to be only a nine days' wonder, as we say, but the remembrance of them is to be perpetuated throughout all ages; especially the work of our redemption by Christ: this *first* passover-night was a night of the Lord, *much to be observed*; but the *last* passover-night, in which Christ was betrayed, (and in which the first passover, with the rest of the ceremonial institutions, was superseded and abolished,) was a night of the Lord, *much more to be observed*, when a yoke, heavier than that of Egypt, was broken from off our necks, and a land, better than that of Canaan, set before us. That was a temporal deliverance to be celebrated *in their generations*; this an eternal redemption to be celebrated in the praises of glorious saints, *world without end*.

43. And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, *This is the ordinance of the passover*: There shall no stranger eat thereof: 44. But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. 45. A foreigner and a hired servant shall not eat thereof. 46. In one house shall it be eaten: thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. 47. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. 48. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. 49. One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. 50. Thus did all the children of Israel: as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. 51. And it came to pass, the self-same day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

Some further precepts are here given concerning the passover, as it should be observed in times to come.

1. *All the congregation of Israel must keep it*, v. 47. All that share in God's mercies should join in thankful praises for them. Though it was observed in families apart, yet it is looked upon as the act of the whole congregation; for the lesser communities constituted the greater. The New-Testament passover, the Lord's supper, ought not to be neglected by any who are capable of celebrating it. He is unworthy the name of an Israelite that can contentedly neglect the commemoration of so great a deliverance.

2. No stranger that was uncircumcised might be admitted to eat of it, v. 43, 45, 48. None might sit at the table but those that came in by the door; nor may any now approach to the improving ordinance of the Lord's supper who have not first submitted to the initiating ordinance of baptism. We must be

born again by the word, ere we can be nourished by it. Nor shall any partake of the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, or feast upon it, who are not first *circumcised in heart*, Coloss. 2. 11.

3. Any stranger that was circumcised might be welcomed to eat of the passover, even *servants*, v. 44. If, by circumcision, they would make themselves *debtors to the law* in its burthens, they were welcome to share in the joy of its solemn feasts, and not otherwise. Only it is intimated, (v. 48.) that those who were masters of families must not only be circumcised themselves, but have all their males circumcised too. If, in sincerity, and with that zeal which the thing requires and deserves, we give up ourselves to God, we shall, with ourselves, give up all we have to him, and do our utmost that all ours may be his too. Here is an early indication of favour to the poor Gentiles, that the stranger, if circumcised, stands upon the same level with the home-born Israelite. *One law for both*, v. 49. This was a mortification to the Jews, and taught them that it was their dedication to God, not their descent from Abraham, that entitled them to their privileges. A sincere proselyte was as welcome to the passover as a native Israelite, Isa. 56. 6, 7.

4. *In one house shall it be eaten*, (v. 46.) for good-fellowship-sake, that they might rejoice together, and edify one another in the eating of it. None of it must be carried to another place, or left to another time; for God would not have them so taken up with care about their departure, as to be indisposed to take the comfort of it, but to leave Egypt, and enter upon a wilderness, with cheerfulness, and, in token of that, to eat a good hearty meal. The Papists' carrying of their consecrated host from house to house, is not only superstitious in itself, but contrary to this typical law of the passover, which was, that no part of the lamb should be carried abroad.

The chapter concludes with a repetition of the whole matter, that the children of Israel did as they were bidden, and God did for them as he promised; (v. 50, 51.) for he will certainly be the Author of salvation to them that obey him.

CHAP. XIII.

In this chapter we have, I. The commands God gave to Israel, 1. To sanctify all the first born to him, v. 1, 2. 2. To be sure to remember their deliverance out of Egypt, (v. 3, 4.) and, in remembrance of it, to keep the feast of unleavened bread, v. 5-7. 3. To transmit the knowledge of it with all possible care to their children, v. 6-10. 4. To set apart unto God the firstlings of their cattle, (v. 11-13.) and to explain that also to their children, v. 14-16. II. The care God took of Israel, when he had brought them out of Egypt. 1. Choosing their way for them, v. 17, 18. 2. Guiding them in the way, v. 20-22. And their care of Joseph's bones, v. 19.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Sanctify unto me all the first born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: it is mine. 3. And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this *place*: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. 4. This day came ye out, in the month Abib. 5. And it shall be, when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with

milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. 6. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day *shall be* a feast to the LORD. 7. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days: and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee; neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. 8. And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. 9. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes; that the LORD's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. 10. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

Care is here taken to perpetuate the remembrance,

I. Of the preservation of Israel's first-born, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. In memory of that distinguishing favour, and in gratitude for it, the first-born, in all ages, were to be consecrated to God, as his peculiars, (v. 2.) and to be redeemed, v. 13. God, who, by the right of creation, is Proprietor and Sovereign of all the creatures, here lays claim in particular to the first-born of the Israelites, by right of protection; *Sanctify to me all the first-born*. The parents were not to look upon themselves as interested in their first-born, till they had first solemnly presented them to God, recognized his title to them, and received them back, at a certain rate, from him again. Note, 1. That which is, by special distinguishing mercy, spared to us, should be, in a peculiar manner, dedicated to God's honour; at least, some grateful acknowledgment, in works of piety and charity, should be made, when our lives have been given us for a prey, or the lives of our children. 2. God, who is the First and Best, should have the first and best, and to him we should resign that which is most dear to us, and most valuable. The first-born were the joy and hope of their families; Therefore *they shall be mine*, says God. By this it will appear that we love God best, (as we ought,) if we are willing to part with that to him, which we love best in this world. 3. It is the church of the first-born, that is sanctified to God, Heb. 12. 23. Christ is the *First-born among many brethren*; (Rom. 8. 29.) and by virtue of their union with him, all that are born again, and born from above, are accounted as first-born. There is an *excellency of dignity and power* belonging to them; and, *if children, then heirs*.

II. The remembrance of their coming out of Egypt must also be perpetuated; (v. 3.) "*Remember this day*. Remember it by a good token, as the most remarkable day of your lives, the birth-day of your nation, or the day of its coming of age, to be no longer under the rod." Thus the day of Christ's resurrection is to be remembered, for in it we were raised up with Christ out of death's house of bondage. The scripture tells us not expressly, what day of the year Christ rose, (as Moses told the Israelites what day of the year they were brought out of Egypt, that they might remember it yearly) but very particularly what day of the week it was; plainly intimating, that, as the more valuable deliverance, and of greater importance, it should be remembered weekly. Remember it, for

by strength of hand the Lord brought you out. Note, The more of God and his power appears in any deliverance, the more memorable it is. Now, that it might be remembered,

1. They must be sure to keep the *feast of unleavened bread*, v. 5. . 7. It was not enough that they remembered it, but they must celebrate the memorial of it in that way which God had appointed, and use the instituted means of preserving the remembrance of it. So, under the gospel, we must not only remember Christ, but *do this in remembrance* of him. Observe how strict the prohibition of leaven is; (v. 7.) not only, no leaven must be eaten, but none must be seen, no not in all their quarters. Accordingly, the Jews' usage was, before the feast of the passover, to cast all the leavened bread out of their houses: they either burnt it, or buried it, or broke it small, and scattered it in the wind; they searched diligently with lighted candles in all the corners of their houses, lest any leaven should remain. The care and strictness enjoined in this matter were designed, (1.) To make the feast the more solemn, and consequently the more taken notice of by their children, who would ask, "Why is so much ado made?" (2.) To teach us how solicitous we should be to put away from us all sin, 1 Cor. 5. 7.

2. They must instruct their children in the meaning of it, and relate to them the story of their deliverance out of Egypt, v. 8. Note, (1.) Care must be taken betimes to instruct children in the knowledge of God. Here is an ancient law for catechising. (2.) It is particularly of great use to acquaint children betimes with the stories of the scripture, and to make them familiar to them. (3.) It is a debt we owe to the honour of God, and to the benefit of our children's souls, to tell them of the great works God has done for his church, both those which we have seen with our eyes done in our day, and which we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us: *Thou shalt show thy son in that day*, the day of the feast, these things. When they were celebrating the ordinance, they must explain it. *Every thing is beautiful in its season*. The passover is appointed *for a sign, and for a memorial, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth*. Note, We must retain the remembrance of God's works, that we may remain under the influence of God's law. And these that have God's law in their heart, should have it in their mouth, and be often speaking of it, the more to affect themselves, and to instruct others.

11. And it shall be, when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, 12. That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males *shall be* the LORD's. 13. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the first-born of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. 14. And it shall be, when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, *What is this?* that thou shalt say unto him, *By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage*: 15. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the

LORD slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man, and the first-born of beasts: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the first-born of my children I redeem. 16. And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

Here we have,

1. Further directions concerning the dedicating of their first-born to God. (1.) The firstlings of their cattle were to be dedicated to God, as part of their possessions. Those of clean beasts, calves, lambs, and kids, if males, were to be sacrificed, Exod. 22. 30. Numb. 18. 17, 18. Those of unclean beasts, as colts, were to be redeemed with a lamb, or knocked on the head. For whatsoever is unclean, (as we all are by nature,) if it be not redeemed, will be destroyed, v. 11. 13. (2.) The first-born of their children were to be redeemed, and by no means sacrificed, as the Gentiles sacrificed their children to Moloch. The price of the redemption of the first-born was fixed by the law, (Numb. 18. 16.) *five shekels*: we were all obnoxious to the wrath and curse of God; by the blood of Christ we are redeemed, that we may be joined to the *church of the first-born*. They were to redeem their children, as well as the firstlings of the unclean beasts, for our children are by nature polluted; *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*

2. Further directions concerning the catechising of their children, and all those of the rising generation, from time to time in this matter. It is supposed that when they saw all the firstlings thus devoted, they would ask the meaning of it, and their parents and teachers must tell them the meaning of it; (v. 14. 16.) that God's special propriety in their first-born, and all their firstlings, was founded in his special preservation of them from the sword of the destroying angel. Being thus delivered, they must serve him. Note, (1.) Children should be directed and encouraged to ask their parents questions concerning the things of God, a practice which would be perhaps of all others the most profitable way of catechising; and parents must furnish themselves with useful knowledge, that they may be ready always to give an answer to their inquiries. If ever the *knowledge of God cover the earth*, as the waters do the sea, the fountains of family instruction must first be broken up. (2.) We should all be able to show cause for what we do in religion. As sacraments are sanctified by the word, so they must be explained and understood by it. God's service is reasonable, and it is then acceptable, when we perform it intelligently, knowing what we do, and why we do it. (3.) It must be observed, how often it is said in this chapter, that *by strength of hand*, (v. 3, 14, 16.) and *with a strong hand*, (v. 9.) the Lord brought them out of Egypt. The more opposition is given to the accomplishment of God's purposes, the more is his power magnified therein. It is a strong hand that conquers hard hearts. Sometimes God is said to work deliverance, *not by might or power*, (Zech. 4. 6.) not by such visible displays of his power as that recorded here. (4.) Their posterity that should be born in Canaan, are directed to say, *The Lord brought us out of Egypt*, v. 14, 16. Mercies to our fathers are mercies to us; we reap the benefit of them, and therefore must keep up a grateful remembrance of them. We stand upon the bottom of former deliverances, and were in the loins of our ancestors when they were delivered. Much more reason have we to

say, that in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we were redeemed.

17. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: 18. But God led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. 19. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you. 20. And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. 21. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. 22. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, *from before* the people.

Here is,

1. The choice God made of their way, v. 17, 18. He was their Guide, Moses gave them direction but as he received it from the Lord. Note, The way of man is not in himself, Jer. 10. 23. He may *devise his way*, and design it; but, after all, it is God that *directs his steps*, Prov. 16. 9. Man *proposes*, but God *disposes*; and in his disposal we must acquiesce, and set ourselves to follow Providence.

There were two ways from Egypt to Canaan. One was a short cut from the north of Egypt to the south of Canaan, perhaps about four or five days' journey; the other was much further about, through the wilderness, and that was the way which God chose to lead his people Israel in, v. 18.

1. There were many reasons why God led them *through the way of the wilderness of the Red-sea*. The Egyptians were to be drowned in the Red-sea, the Israelites were to be humbled and proved in the wilderness, Deut. 8. 2. God had given it to Moses for a sign, (ch. 3. 12.) *Ye shall serve God in this mountain*. They had again and again told Pharaoh, that they must go *three days' journey into the wilderness to do sacrifice*, and therefore it was requisite that they should bend their march that way, else they had justly been exclaimed against as notorious dissemblers. Before they entered the lists with their enemies, matters must be settled between them and their God, laws must be given, ordinances instituted, covenants sealed, the original contract ratified, and, for the doing of this, it was necessary that they should retire into the solitudes of a wilderness, the only closet for such a crowd; the high road would be no proper place for these transactions. It is said, (Deut. 32. 10.) *He led them about*, some hundreds of miles about, and yet, (Ps. 107. 7.) *He led them forth by the right way*; God's way is the right way, though it seems *about*. If we think he leads not his people the nearest way, yet we may be sure he leads them the best way, and so it will appear when we come to our journey's end. *Judge nothing before the time*.

2. There was one reason why God did not lead them the nearest way, which would have brought them after a few days march to the land of the Philistines; (for it was that part of Canaan that lay next to Egypt;) that reason was, Because they were not as yet fit for war, much less fit for war with the Philistines, v. 17. Their spirits were broken with slavery, it was not easy for them to turn their hands of a sudden from the trowel to the sword; the Philistines were formidable enemies, too fierce to be encountered by raw recruits; it was more suitable that they should begin with the Amalekites, and be prepared for the wars of Canaan, by experiencing the difficulties of the wilderness. Note, God proportions his people's trials to their strength, and will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, 1 Cor. 10. 13. That promise, if compared with the foregoing verses, will seem to refer to this event, as an instance of it. *God knows our frame,* and considers our weakness and faint-heartedness, and by lesser trials will prepare us for greater. God is said to bring Israel out of Egypt as the eagle brings up her young ones, (Deut. 32. 11.) teaching them by degrees to fly.

Orders being thus given which way they should go, we are told, (1.) That they went up themselves, not as a confused rout, but in good order, rank and file, they went up harnessed, v. 18. They went up by five in a rank, so some; in five squadrons, so others. They marched like an army with banners, which added much to their strength and honour. (2.) That they took the bones of Joseph along with them, (v. 19.) and probably, the bones of the rest of Jacob's sons, unless (as some think) they had been privately carried to Canaan, (Acts 7. 16.) severally as they died. Joseph had particularly appointed that his bones should be carried up, when God should visit them, (Gen. 50. 25, 26.) so that their carrying up of his bones, was not only a performance of the oath their fathers had sworn to Joseph, but an acknowledgment of the performance of God's promise to them by Joseph, that he would visit them, and bring them out of the land of Egypt; and an encouragement to their faith and hope, that he would fulfil the other part of the promise, which was, to bring them to Canaan, in expectation of which, they carried these bones with them while they wandered in the desert; they might think, "Joseph's bones must rest at last, and then we shall." Moses is said to take these bones with him; Moses was now a very great man; so had Joseph been in his day, yet he was now but a box full of dry bones; that was all that remained of him in this world, which might serve for a monitor to Moses, to remember his mortality. *I have said, Ye are gods;* it was said to Moses expressly, (ch. 7. 1.) but ye shall die like men.

II. Here is the guidance they were blessed with in the way; (v. 21, 22.) *The Lord went before them in a pillar.* In the two first stages, it was enough that God directed Moses whither to march, he knew the country and the road well enough; but now that they were come to the edge of the wilderness, (v. 20.) they would have occasion for a guide; and a good guide they had, one that was infinitely wise, kind, and faithful; *The Lord went before them, the Shechinah,* or appearance of the divine Majesty, which was typical of Christ, or a previous manifestation of the eternal Word, which, in the fullness of time, was to be made flesh, and dwell among us. Christ was with the church in the wilderness, 1 Cor. 10. 9. Now their king passed before them, even the Lord on the head of them, Mic. 2. 13. Note, Those whom God brings into a wilderness, he will not leave nor lose there, but will take care to lead them through it; we may well think it was a very great satisfaction to Moses and the pious

Israelites, to be sure that they were under divine guidance. They needed not to fear missing their way, who were thus led, or being lost, who were thus directed; they needed not to fear being benighted, who were thus illuminated, nor being robbed, who were thus protected. They who make the glory of God their end, and the word of God their rule, the Spirit of God the guide of their affections, and the providence of God the guide of their affairs, may be confident that the Lord goes before them, as truly as he went before Israel in the wilderness, though not so sensibly; we must live by faith.

1. They had sensible evidences of God's going before them. They all saw an appearance from heaven of a pillar, which, in the bright day, appeared cloudy, and, in the dark night, appeared fiery; we commonly see that that which is a flame in the night, is a smoke in the day, so was this. God gave them this ocular demonstration of his presence, in compassion to the infirmity of their faith, and in compliance with that infant state of the church, which needed to be thus lisped to in their own language; but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed God's gracious presence with them, according to his promise.

2. They had sensible effects of God's going before them in this pillar. For, (1.) It led them the way in that vast howling wilderness, in which there was no road, no track, no way-mark, of which they had no maps, through which they had no guides. When they marched, this pillar went before them, at the rate that they could follow, and appointed the place of their encampment, as Infinite Wisdom saw fit; which both eased them from care, and secured them from danger, both in moving and resting. (2.) It sheltered them by day from the heat, which, at some times of the year, was extreme. (3.) It gave them light by night when they had occasion for it, and, at all times, made their camp pleasant, and the wilderness they were in less frightful.

III. These were constant, standing miracles; (v. 22.) *He took not away the pillar of cloud;* no, not when they seemed to have less occasion for it, travelling through inhabited countries, no, not when they murmured and were provoking; it never left them, till it brought them to the borders of Canaan. It was a cloud which the wind could not scatter. This favour is acknowledged with thankfulness long after, Neh. 9. 19. Ps. 78. 14.

There was something spiritual in this pillar of cloud and fire. 1. The children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in this cloud, which, some think, distilled dew upon them, 1 Cor. 10. 2. By coming under this cloud, they signified their putting of themselves under the divine guidance and command by the ministry of Moses. Protection draws allegiance; this cloud was the badge of God's protection, and so became the bond of their allegiance. Thus they were initiated, and admitted under that government, now when they were entering upon the wilderness. 2. Some make this cloud a type of Christ. The cloud of his human nature was a veil to the light and fire of his divine nature; we find him, (Rev. 10. 1.) clothed with a cloud, and his feet as pillars of fire. Christ is our Way, the Light of our way, and the Guide of it. 3. It signifies the special conduct and protection which the church of Christ is under in this world. God himself is the Keeper of Israel, and he neither slumbers nor sleeps, Ps. 121. 4. Isa. 27. 3. There is a defence created, not only on Zion's assemblies, but on every dwelling-place in Zion. See Isa. 4. 5, 6. Nay, every Israelite indeed is hidden under the shadow of God's wings; (Ps. 17. 8.) angels, whose ministry was made use of in this cloud, are employed for their good, and pitch their tents about them. Hag-

py art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people?

CHAP. XIV.

The departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt (which was indeed the birth of the Jewish church) is made yet more memorable by further works of wonder, which were wrought immediately upon it. Witness the records of this chapter, the contents whereof, together with a key to it, we have, *Heb. 11. 29. They passed through the Red-sea, as by dry-land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned:* and this they did by faith, which intimates that there was something typical and spiritual in it. Here is, 1. The extreme distress and danger that Israel was in at the Red-sea. 1. Notice was given of it to Moses before, v. 1..4. 2. The cause of it was Pharaoh's violent pursuit of them, v. 5..9. 3. Israel was in a great consternation upon it, v. 10..12. 4. Moses endeavours to encourage them, v. 13, 14. II. The wonderful deliverance that God wrought for them out of this distress. 1. Moses is instructed concerning it, v. 15..18. 2. Lines that could not be forced are set between the camp of Israel and Pharaoh's camp, v. 19, 20. 3. By the divine power the Red-sea is divided, (v. 21.) and is made, (1.) A lane to the Israelites, who marched safely through it, v. 22, 29. But, (2.) To the Egyptians it was made, [2.] An ambush into which they were drawn, v. 23..25. And, [1.] A grave in which they were all buried, v. 26..28. III. The impressions this made upon the Israelites, v. 30, 31.

1. **AND** the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon; before it shall ye encamp by the sea. 3. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. 4. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so. 5. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? 6. And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: 7. And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. 8. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with a high hand. 9. But the Egyptians pursued after them, (all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen, and his army,) and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon

We have here,

I. Instructions given to Moses concerning Israel's motions and encampments, which were so very surprising, that if Moses had not had express orders about them before, they would scarcely have been persuaded to follow the pillar of cloud and fire. That therefore there might be no scruple or dissatisfaction about it, Moses is told before,

1. Whither they must go, v. 1, 2. They were got to the edge of the wilderness, (*ch. 13. 20.*) and a stage or two more would have brought them to Horeb, the place appointed for their serving God; but, instead of going forward, they are ordered to turn short off, on the right hand from Canaan, and to march toward the Red-sea. Where they were, at Etham, there was no sea in their way to obstruct their passage, but God himself orders them into straits, which might give them an assurance, that when his purposes were served, he would without fail bring them out of those straits. Note, God sometimes raises difficulties in the way of the salvation of his people, that he may have the glory of subduing them, and helping his people over them.

2. What God designed in these strange orders. Moses would have yielded an implicit obedience, though he had given him no reason; but shall he hide from Moses the thing that he does? No, Moses shall know, (1.) That Pharaoh has a design to ruin Israel, v. 3. (2.) That therefore God has a design to ruin Pharaoh, and he takes this way to effect it, v. 4. Pharaoh's sagacity would conclude that Israel was entangled in the wilderness, and so would become an easy prey to him; and that he might be the more apt to think so, God orders them into yet greater entanglements; also by turning them so much out of their road, he amazes him yet more, and gives him further occasion to suppose that they were in a state of embarrassment and danger. And thus (says God) *I will be honoured upon Pharaoh.* Note, [1.] All men being made for the honour of their Maker, those whom he is not honoured by, he will be honoured upon. [2.] What seems to tend to the church's ruin, is often over-ruled to the ruin of the church's enemies, whose pride and malice are fed by Providence, that they may be ripened for destruction.

II. Pharaoh's pursuit of Israel, in which, while he gratifies his own malice and revenge, he is furthering the accomplishment of God's counsels concerning him. It was told him that the people fled, v. 5. Such a fright was he in, when he gave them leave to go, that when the fright was a little over, he either forgot, or would not own, that they departed with his consent, and therefore was willing that it should be represented to him as a revolt from their allegiance. Thus what may easily be justified, is easily condemned, by putting false colours upon it. Now, hereupon,

1. He reflects upon it with regret, that he had connived at their departure. He and his servants, though it was with the greatest reason in the world that they had let Israel go, yet were now angry with themselves for it; *Why have we done thus?* (1.) It vexed them that Israel had their liberty, that they had lost the profit of their labours, and the pleasure of chastising them. It is meat and drink to proud persecutors, to trample upon the saints of the Most High, and say to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over;* and therefore it vexes them to have their hands tied. Note, The liberty of God's people is a heavy grievance to their enemies, *Esth. 5. 12, 13. Acts 5. 17, 33.* (2.) It aggravated the vexation, that they themselves had consented to it, thinking now, that they might have hindered it, and that they needed not to have yielded, though they had stood it out to the last extremity. Thus God makes men's envy and rage against his people, a torment to themselves, *Ps. 112. 10.* It was well-done to let Israel go, and what they would have reflected on with comfort, if they had done it from an honest principle; but, in doing it by constraint, they called themselves a thousand fools for doing it, and passionately wished it undone again. Note, It is very common, but very absurd and criminal, for people to repent of their good deeds;

their justice and charity, and even their repentance, are repented of. See an instance somewhat like this, Jer. 34. 10, 11.

2. He resolves, if possible, either to reduce them, or to be avenged on them; in order to that, he levies an army, musters all his force of chariots and horsemen, v. 17, 18. (for, it should seem, he took no foot with him, because the king's business required haste,) and thus he doubts not but he shall re-enslave them, v. 6, 7. It is easy to imagine what a rage Pharaoh was now in, roaring like a lion disappointed of his prey; how his proud heart aggravated the affront, swelled with indignation, scorned to be baffled, longed to be avenged: and now, all the plagues are as if they had never been, he has quite forgotten the sorrowful funerals of his first-born, he can think of nothing but making Israel feel his resentments; now he thinks he can be too hard for God himself; for, otherwise, could he have hoped to conquer a people so dear to him? God gave him up to these passions of his own heart, and so hardened it. It is said, (v. 8.) The children of Israel went out with a *high hand*, that is, with a great deal of courage and bravery, triumphing in the enlargement, and resolved to break through the difficulties that lay in their way. *But the Egyptians* (v. 9.) *pursued after them*. Note, Those that in good earnest set their faces heaven-ward, and will live godly in Christ Jesus, must expect to be set upon by Satan's temptations and terrors. He will not tamely part with any out of his service, nor go out without raging, Mark 9. 26.

10. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lift up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. 11. And they said unto Moses, Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? 12. *Is not* this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? for *it had been* better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. 13. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever: 14. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

We have here,

I. The fright that the children of Israel were in, when they perceived that Pharaoh pursued them, v. 10. They knew very well the strength and rage of the enemy, and their own weakness; numerous indeed they were, but all foot, unarmed, undisciplined, disquieted by long servitude, and (which was worst of all) now penned up by the situation of their camp, so that they could not make their escape. On one hand was Pi-hahiroth, a range of craggy rocks unpassable; on the other hand were Migdol and Baal-zephon, which, some think, were forts and garrisons upon the frontiers of Egypt; before them was the sea, behind them were the Egyptians, so that there was no way open for them but upward, and thence their deliverance came.

Note, We may be in the way of our duty, following God, and hastening toward heaven, and yet may be in great straits, *troubled on every side*, 2 Cor. 4. 8.

In this distress, no marvel that they were sore afraid, their father Jacob was so in a like case; (Gen. 32. 7.) when without are fightings, it cannot be otherwise, but that within are fears: what therefore was the fruit of this fear? According as that was, the fear was good or evil.

1. Some of them cried out unto the Lord; their fear set them a praying, and that was a good effect of it. God brings us into straits, that he may bring us to our knees.

2. Others of them cried out against Moses; their fear set them a murmuring, v. 11, 12. They give up themselves for lost, and as if God's arm were shortened all of a sudden, and he were not as able to work miracles to-day as he was yesterday, they despair of deliverance, and can count upon nothing but *dying in the wilderness*. How inexcusable was their distrust! Did they not see themselves under the guidance and protection of a pillar from heaven? And can almighty power fail them, or infinite goodness be false to them? Yet this was not the worst; they quarrel with Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, and, in quarrelling with him, fly in the face of God himself, and provoke him to wrath, whose favour was now the only succour they had to flee to. As the Egyptians were angry with themselves for the best deed they ever did, so the Israelites were angry with God for the greatest kindness that was ever done them; so gross are the absurdities of unbelief. They here express, (1.) A sordid contempt of liberty, preferring servitude before it, only because it was attended with some difficulties. A generous spirit would have said, "If the worst come to the worst," (as we say,) "it is better to die in the field of honour, than to live in the chains of slavery;" nay, under God's conduct, they could not miscarry, and therefore they might say, "Better live God's freemen in the open air of a wilderness, than the Egyptians' bondmen in the smoke of the brick-kilns." But because, for the present, they are a little embarrassed, they are angry that they were not left buried alive in their house of bondage. (2.) Base ingratitude to Moses, who had been the faithful instrument of their deliverance; they condemn him, as if he had dealt hardly and unkindly with them, whereas it was evident, beyond dispute, that whatever he did, and however it issued, it was by direction from their God, and with design for their good. What they had said in a former ferment, (when they hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit,) they repeat and justify in this; *We said in Egypt, Let us alone*; and it was ill-said, yet more excusable, because then they had not had so much experience as they had now of God's wonderful appearances in their favour. But they had as soon forgotten the miracles of mercy, as the Egyptians had forgotten the miracles of wrath; and they, as well as the Egyptians, hardened their hearts, at last, to their own ruin; as Egypt, after ten plagues, so Israel, after ten provocations, of which this was the first, (Numb. 14. 22.) was sentenced to die in the wilderness.

II. The seasonable encouragement that Moses gave them in this distress, v. 13, 14. He answered not these fools according to their folly. God bore with the provocation they gave to him, and did not (as he might justly have done) choose their delusions, and bring their fears upon them; and therefore Moses might well afford to pass by the affront they put upon him: instead of chiding them, he comforts them, and with an admirable presence and composure of mind, not disheartened either by the threatenings of Egypt, or the tremblings of Israel,

still their murmuring, with the assurance of a speedy and complete deliverance; *Fear ye not.* Note, It is our duty and interest, when we cannot get out of our troubles, yet to get above our fears, so that they may only serve to quicken our prayers and endeavours, but may not prevail to silence our faith and hope.

1. He assures them that God would deliver them; that he would undertake their deliverance; (*The Lord shall fight for you;*) and that he would effect it in the utter ruin of their pursuers. This, Moses was confident of himself, and would have them to be so, though as yet he knew not how or which way it would be brought to pass. God had assured him that Pharaoh and his host should be ruined, and he comforts them with the same comforts wherewith he had been comforted.

2. He directs them to leave it to God, in a silent expectation of the event; "*Stand still,* and think not to save yourselves either by fighting or flying; wait God's orders, and observe them; be not contriving what course to take, but follow your leader; wait God's appearances, and take notice of them, that you may see how foolish you are to distrust them. Compose yourselves, by an entire confidence in God, into a peaceful prospect of the great salvation God is now about to work for you. Hold your peace; you need not so much as give a shout against the enemy, as Josh. 6. 16. The work shall be done without any concurrence of yours."

Note, (1.) If God himself bring his people into straits, he will himself discover a way to bring them out again. (2.) In times of great difficulty, and great expectation, it is our wisdom to keep our spirits calm, quiet, and sedate; for then we are in the best frame both to do our own work, and to *consider the work of God.* *Your strength is to sit still,* (Isa. 30. 7.) *for the Egyptians shall help in vain,* and threaten to hurt in vain.

15. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me! speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: 16. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 17. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 18. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 19. And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed, and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: 20. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

We have here,

1. Direction given to Israel's leader.

1. What he must do himself; he must, for the present, leave off praying, and apply himself to his business; (v. 15.) *Wherefore criest thou unto me?*

Moses, though he was assured of a good issue to the present distress, yet did not neglect prayer. We read not of one word he said in prayer, but he lifted up to God his heart, the language of which God well understood, and took notice of. Moses' silent prayers of faith prevailed more with God, than Israel's loud outcries of fear, v. 10. Note, (1.) Praying, if of the right kind, is *crying to God*, which denotes it to be the language, both of a natural and of an importunate desire. (2.) There may be true crying to God by prayer, where the voice is not heard, as Hannah's, 1 Sam. 1. 13. But is God displeased with Moses for praying? No, he asks this question, *Wherefore criest thou unto me?* [1.] To satisfy his faith. "Wherefore, shouldst thou press thy petition any further, when it is already granted; enough is said, speak no more of this matter; *I have accepted thy prayer:*" so the Chaldee explains it. [2.] To quicken his diligence. Moses had something else to do beside praying, he was to command the hosts of Israel, and it was now requisite that he should be at his post. Every thing is beautiful in its season.

2. What he must order Israel to do; *Speak to them, that they go forward.* Some think that Moses had prayed, not so much for their deliverance, (he was assured of that,) as for the pardon of their murmurings; and that God's ordering them to go forward was an intimation of the pardon. There is no going forward with any comfort, but in the sense of our reconciliation to God. Moses had bidden them stand still, and expect orders from God; and now orders are given. They thought they must have been directed either to the right hand or to the left. "No," says God, "speak to them to go forward, directly to the sea-side;" as if there had lain a fleet of transport-ships ready for them to embark in. Note, When we are in the way of our duty, though we meet with difficulties, we must go forward, and not stand in mute astonishment; we must mind present work, and then leave the event to God; use means, and trust him with the issue.

3. What he might expect God to do. Let the children of Israel go as far as they can, upon dry ground, and then God will divide the sea, and open a passage for them through it, v. 16. 18. God designs, not only to deliver the Israelites, but to destroy the Egyptians; and the plan of his counsels is accordingly. (1.) He will show favour to Israel, the waters shall be divided for them to pass through, v. 16. The same power could have *congealed* the waters for them to pass over, but Infinite Wisdom chose rather to *divide* the waters for them to pass through; for that way of salvation is always pitched upon, which is most humbling. Thus it is said, with reference to this, (Isa. 63. 13, 14.) *He led them through the deep, as a beast goes down into the valley, and thus made himself a glorious name.* (2.) He will get him honour upon Pharaoh. If the due rent of honour be not paid to the great Lord, by and from whom we have and hold our beings and comforts, he will distraint for it, and recover it. God will be a loser by no man. In order to this, it is threatened, (v. 17.) *I, behold I, will harden Pharaoh's heart.* The manner of expression is observable; *I, behold I, will do it.* I, that may do it; so it is the language of his sovereignty; we may not contribute to the hardening of any man's heart, nor withhold any thing that we can do toward the softening of it; but God's grace is his own, *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth.* I, that can do it; so it is the language of his power; none but the Almighty can make the heart *soft*, (Job 23. 16.) nor can any other being make it *hard.* I, that will do it; for it is the language of his justice; it is a righteous thing with God, to put those under the impressions of his

wrath, who have long resisted the influences of his grace. It is spoken in a way of triumph over this obstinate and presumptuous rebel; "*I, even I, will take an effectual course to humble him; he shall break, that would not bend.*" It is an expression like that, (Isa. 1. 24.) *Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries.*

II. A guard set upon Israel's camp there where it now lay most exposed, which was *in the rear*, v. 19, 20. *The angel of God*, whose ministry was made use of in the pillar of cloud and fire, went from *before the camp of Israel*, where they did not now need a *guide*, (there was no danger of missing their way through the sea, nor needed they any other word of command than to go forward,) and it came behind them, where now they needed a *guard*, (the Egyptians being just ready to seize the hindmost of them,) and so was a wall or partition between them. There, it was of use to the Israelites, not only to protect them, but to light them, through the sea, and, at the same time, it confounded the Egyptians, so that they lost the sight of their prey just then when they were ready to lay hands on it. The word and providence of God have a black and dark side toward sin and sinners, but a bright and pleasant side toward those that are Israelites indeed. That which is a savour of life unto life to some, is a savour of death unto death to others. This was not the first time that He, who in the beginning *divided between light and darkness*, (Gen. 1. 4.) and still forms both, (Isa. 45. 7.) had, at the same time, allotted darkness to the Egyptians, and light to the Israelites; a specimen of the endless distinction which will be made between the inheritance of the saints in light, and that utter darkness which for ever will be the portion of hypocrites. God will separate between the precious and the vile.

21. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided. 22. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry *ground*: and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. 23. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, *even* all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24. And it came to pass, that in the morning-watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians. 25. And took off their chariot-wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. 26. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. 27. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the

sea. 28. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: there remained not so much as one of them. 29. But the children of Israel walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 30. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. 31. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and his servant Moses.

We have here the history of that work of wonder, which is so often mentioned both in the Old and New Testament, the dividing of the Red-sea before the children of Israel. It was the terror of the Canaanites, (Josh. 2. 9, 10.) the praise and triumph of the Israelites, Ps. 114. 3.—106. 9.—136. 13, 14. It was a type of baptism, 1 Cor. 10. 1, 2. Israel's passage through it was typical of the conversion of souls, (Isa. 11. 15.) and the Egyptians' perdition in it was typical of the final ruin of all impenitent sinners, Rev. 20. 14. Here is,

I. An instance of God's almighty power, in the kingdom of nature, in dividing the sea, and opening a passage through the waters. It was a bay, or gulf, or arm of the sea, two or three leagues over, which was divided, v. 21. The *instituted* sign made use of was, Moses's *stretching out his hand* over it, to signify that it was done in answer to his prayer, for the confirmation of his mission, and in favour to the people which he led. The *natural* sign was a *strong east-wind*, signifying that it was done by the power of God, whom the winds and the seas obey. If there be any passage in the book of Job, which has reference to the miracles wrought for Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, it is that, (Job 26. 12.) *He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through Rahab*, (so the word is,) that is, Egypt. Note, God can bring his people through the greatest difficulties, and force a way where he does not find it. The God of nature has not tied himself to its laws, but, when he pleases, dispenses with them, and then the fire does not burn, nor the water flow.

II. An instance of his wonderful favour to his Israel. They went through the sea to the opposite shore, (for I cannot suppose, with some, that they fetched a compass, and came out again on the same side,) v. 22. they *walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea*, v. 29. And the pillar of cloud, *that glory of the Lord*, being their *re-re-ward*, Isa. 58. 8. (that the Egyptians might not charge them in the flank,) the *waters were a wall to them*, (it is twice mentioned,) *on their right hand, and on their left*. Moses and Aaron, it is probable, ventured first into this untrodden path, and then all Israel after them; and this march through the paths of the great waters would make their march afterward, through the wilderness, less formidable. They who had followed God through the sea, needed not to fear following him whithersoever he led them. This march through the sea was in the night, and not a moon-shiny night, for it was seven days after the full moon, so that they had no light but what they had from the pillar of cloud and fire. This made it the more awful; but where God leads

us, he will light us; while we follow his conduct, we shall not want his comforts.

This was done, and recorded, in order to encourage God's people in all ages to trust in him in the greatest straits. What *cannot* he do, who did this? What *will not* he do for those that fear and love him, who did this for these murmuring unbelieving Israelites, who yet were *beloved for their fathers' sake*, and for the sake of a remnant among them? We find the saints, long afterward, making themselves sharers in the triumph of this march; (Ps. 66. 6.) *They went through the flood on foot, there did we rejoice in him*: and see how this work of wonder is improved, Ps. 77. 11, 16, 19.

III. An instance of his just and righteous wrath upon his and his people's enemies, the Egyptians. Observe here,

1. How they were infatuated; in the heat of their pursuit, they *went in after the Israelites into the midst of the sea*, v. 23. "Why," thought they, "may not we venture where Israel did?" Once or twice, the magicians of Egypt had done what Moses did, with their enchantments; Pharaoh remembered that, but forgot how they were non-plussed at last. They were more advantageously provided with chariots and horses, while the Israelites were on foot. Pharaoh had said, *I know not the Lord*; and by this it appeared he did not, else he would not have ventured thus. None so bold as those that are blind. Rage against Israel made them thus daring and inconsiderate: they had long hardened their own hearts; and now God hardened them to their ruin, and hid from their eyes the things that belonged to their peace and safety. *Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird*; (Prov. 1. 17.) yet so blind were the Egyptians, that they *hastened to the snare*, Prov. 7. 23. Note, The ruin of sinners is brought on by their own presumption, which hurries them headlong into the pit. They are self-destroyers.

2. How they were troubled and perplexed, v. 24, 25. For some hours, they marched through the divided waters as safely and triumphantly as Israel did, not doubting but that, in a little time, they should gain their point. But *in the morning-watch, the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians, and troubled them*. Something or other they saw or heard from the pillar of cloud and fire, which put them into great consternation, and gave them an apprehension of their ruin, before it was brought upon them. Now it appeared that *the triumphing of the wicked is short*, and that God has ways to frighten sinners into despair, before he plunges them into destruction. *He cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth*. (1.) They had hectorered and boasted, as if the day were their own; but now they were troubled and dismayed, struck with a panic fear. (2.) They had driven furiously; but now they drove heavily, and found themselves plunged and embarrassed at every step, the way grew deep, their hearts grew sad, their wheels dropped off, and the axle-trees failed. Thus can God check the violence of those that are in pursuit of his people. (3.) They had been flying upon the back of Israel, as the hawk upon the trembling dove; but now they cried, *Let us flee from the face of Israel*, which was become to them *like a torch of fire in a sheaf*, Zech. 12. 6. Israel is now, all of a sudden, become as much a terror to them, as they had been to Israel. They might have let Israel alone and would not, now they would flee from the face of Israel and cannot. Men will not be convinced, till it is too late, that those who meddle with God's people, meddle to their own hurt; when the Lord shall come with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment, the mighty men will in vain seek to shelter themselves under rocks and moun-

tains *from the face of Israel*, and Israel's King, Rev. 6. 15. Compare with this story, Job 27. 20, &c.

3. How they were all drowned; as soon as ever the children of Israel were got safe to the shore, Moses was ordered to *stretch out his hand over the sea*, and thereby give a signal to the waters to close again, as, before, upon the word of command, they had *opened to the right and the left*, v. 29. He did so, and immediately the waters returned to their place, and overwhelmed all the host of the Egyptians, v. 27, 28. Pharaoh and his servants, who had hardened one another in sin, now fell together, and not one escaped. An ancient tradition says, that Pharaoh's magicians, Jannes and Jambres, perished with the rest, as Balaam with the Midianites whom he had seduced, Numb. 31. 8. And now, (1.) God avenged upon the Egyptians the blood of the first-born whom they had drowned; and the principal is repaid with interest, it is recompensed double, full-grown Egyptians for new-born Israelites; thus the Lord is righteous, and precious is his people's blood in his sight, Ps. 72. 14. (2.) God reckoned with Pharaoh for all his proud and insolent conduct toward Moses his ambassador; mocking the messengers of the Lord, and playing the fool with them, bring ruin without remedy: now God *got him honour upon Pharaoh*, looking upon that proud man, and abasing him, Job 40. 12. Come and see the desolations he made, and write it, net in water, but with an iron pen in the rock for ever. Here lies that bloody tyrant who bid defiance to his Maker, to his demands, threatenings, and judgments; a rebel to God, and a slave to his own barbarous passions; perfectly lost to humanity, virtue, and all true honour; here he lies, buried in the deep, a perpetual monument of divine justice. Here he went down to the pit, though he was a terror of the mighty in the land of the living. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, Ezek. 31. 18.

IV. Here is the notice which the Israelites took of this wonderful work which God wrought for them, and the good impressions which it made upon them for the present.

1. They saw the Egyptians dead upon the sands, v. 30. Providence so ordered it, that the next tide threw up the dead bodies, (1.) For the greater disgrace of the Egyptians. Now the beasts and birds of prey were called to *eat the flesh of the captains and mighty men*, Rev. 19. 17, 18. The Egyptians were very nice and curious in embalming and preserving the bodies of their great men, but here the utmost contempt is poured upon all the grandees of Egypt; see how they lie, heaps upon heaps, as dung upon the face of the earth. (2.) For the greater triumph of the Israelites, and to affect them the more with their deliverance; for the eye affects the heart. See Isa. 66. 24, *They shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me*. Probably, they stripped the slain, and having borrowed jewels of their neighbours before, which (the Egyptians having by this hostile pursuit of them broken their faith with them) from henceforward they were not under any obligation to restore, they now got arms from them, which, some think, they were not before provided with. Thus when God broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, *he gave him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness*, Ps. 74. 14.

2. The sight of this great work greatly affected them, and now they *feared the Lord and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses*, v. 31. Now they were ashamed of their distrusts and murmurings, and, in the good mind they were in, they would never again despair of help from Heaven, no not in the greatest straits; they would never again quar-

rel with Moses, nor talk of returning to Egypt. They were now baptized unto Moses in the sea, 1 Cor. 10. 2. This great work which God wrought for them by the ministry of Moses, bound them effectually to follow his directions, under God. This confirmed their faith in the promises that were yet to be fulfilled; and, being brought thus triumphantly out of Egypt, they did not doubt that they should be in Canaan shortly, having such a God to trust to, and such a mediator between them and him. O that there had been such a heart in them as now there seemed to be! Sensible mercies, when they are fresh, make sensible impressions; but with many, these impressions soon wear off: while they see God's works, and feel the benefit of them, they fear him and trust in him; but they soon forget his works, and then they slight him. How well were it for us, if we were always in as good a frame as we are in sometimes!

CHAP. XV.

In this chapter, I. Israel looks back upon Egypt with a song of praise for their deliverance. Here is, 1. The song itself, v. 1.-19. 2. The solemn singing of it, v. 20, 21. II. Israel marches forward in the wilderness, (v. 22.) and there, 1. Their discontent at the waters of Marah, (v. 23, 24,) and the relief granted them, v. 25, 26. 2. Their satisfaction in the waters of Elim, v. 27.

1. **T**HEN sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. 2. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. 3. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. 4. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. 5. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. 6. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. 7. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. 8. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together: the floods stood upright as a heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. 9. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. 10. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. 11. Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? 12. Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. 13. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which

thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. 14. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. 15. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. 16. Fear and dread shall fall upon them: by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over which thou hast purchased. 17. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. 18. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. 19. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them: but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. 20. And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Having read how that complete victory of Israel over the Egyptians was obtained, here we are told how it was celebrated; they that were to hold their peace while the deliverance was in working, (ch. 14. 14.) must not hold their peace now that it was wrought: the less they had to do then, the more they had to do now; if God accomplishes deliverance by his own immediate power, it redounds so much the more to his glory. Moses, no doubt, by divine inspiration, indited this song, and delivered it to the children of Israel, to be sung before they stirred from the place where they saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore. Observe, 1. They expressed their joy in God, and thankfulness to him, by singing; it is almost natural to us thus to give vent to our joy, and the exultations of our spirit. By this instance it appears, that the singing of psalms, as an act of religious worship, was used in the church of Christ before the giving the ceremonial law, therefore was no part of it, nor abolished with it; singing is as much the language of holy joy, as praying is of holy desire. 2. Moses, who had gone before them through the sea, goes before them in the song, and composes it for them. Note, Those that are active in public services, should not be neuters in public praises. 3. When the mercy was fresh, and they were much affected with it, then they sang this song. Note, When we have received special mercy from God, we ought to be quick and speedy in our returns of praise to him, before time and the deceitfulness of our own hearts efface the good impressions that have been made. David sang his triumphant song in the day that the Lord delivered him, 2 Sam. 22. 1. *Bis dat, qui cito dat* --He gives twice, who gives quickly. 4. When they believed the Lord, (ch. 14. 31.) then they sang this song: it was a song of faith; this connexion is

observed, (Ps. 106. 12.) *Then believed they his words, they sang his praise*: if with the heart man believes, thus confession must be made.

Here is,

I. The song itself: and it is, 1. An ancient song, the most ancient that we know of. 2. A most admirable composition, the style lofty and magnificent, the images lively and proper, and the whole very moving. 3. It is a holy song, consecrated to the honour of God, and intended to exalt his name, and celebrate his praise, and his only, not in the least to magnify any man: holiness to the Lord is engraven on it, and to him they made melody in the singing of it. 4. It is a typical song. The triumphs of the gospel-church, in the downfall of its enemies, are expressed in the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb put together, which songs are said to be sung upon a sea of glass, as this was upon the Red-sea, Rev. 15. 2, 3.

Let us observe what Moses chiefly aims at in this song.

(1.) He gives glory to God, and triumphs in him; this is first in his intention; (v. 1.) *I will sing unto the Lord*. Note, All our joy must terminate in God, and all our praises be offered up to him, the Father of lights, and Father of mercies, *for he hath triumphed*. Note, All that love God, triumph in his triumphs; what is his honour, should be our joy. Israelites rejoice in God, v. 2. [1.] As their own God, and therefore their *strength, song, and salvation*: happy therefore the people whose God is the Lord, they need no more to make them happy; they have work to do, temptations to grapple with, and afflictions to bear, and are weak in themselves; but he strengthens them, his grace is their strength. They are often in sorrow, upon many accounts, but in him they have comfort; he is *their song*; sin, and death, and hell, threaten them, but he is, and will be, *their salvation*; see Isa. 12. 2. [2.] As their *fathers' God*. This they take notice of, because, being conscious to themselves of their own unworthiness and provocations, they had reason to think that what God had now done for them was for their *fathers' sake*, Deut. 4. 37. Note, The children of the covenant ought to improve their fathers' relation to God as their God, for comfort, for caution, and for quickening. [3.] As a God of infinite power; (v. 3.) *The Lord is a man of war*, that is, well able to deal with all those that strive with their Maker, and will certainly be too hard for them. [4.] As a God of matchless and incomparable perfection; (v. 11.) *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods?* This is pure praise, and a high expression of humble adoration. It is, *First*, a challenge to all other gods to compare with him: "Let them stand forth, and pretend their utmost; none of them dare make the comparison." Egypt was notorious for the multitude of its gods, but the *God of the Hebrews* was too hard for them, and baffled them all, Numb. 33. 4. Deut. 32. 23.. 39. The princes and potentates of the world are called *gods*, but they are feeble and mortal, none of them all comparable to Jehovah the almighty and eternal God. *Secondly*, It is a confession of his infinite perfection, as transcendent and unparalleled. Note, God is to be worshipped and adored as a Being of such infinite perfection, that there is none like him, nor any to be compared with him; as one that in all things has, and must have, the pre-eminence, Ps. 89. 6. More particularly, 1. *He is glorious in holiness*: his holiness is his glory. It is that attribute which angels adore, Isa. 6. 3. His holiness appeared in the destruction of Pharaoh, his hatred of sin, and his wrath against obstinate sinners. It appeared in the deliverance of Israel, his delight in the holy seed, and his faithfulness to his own promise. God is *rich in mercy*, that is his treasure,

glorious in holiness, that is his honour. Let us always give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. 2. *He is fearful in praises*; that which is the matter of our praise, though it is joyful to the servants of God, is dreadful and very terrible to his enemies, Ps. 66. 1.. 3. Or, it directs us in the manner of our praising God; we should praise him with a humble holy awe, and *serve the Lord with fear*; even our spiritual joy and triumph must be balanced with a religious fear. 3. He is *doing wonders*, wondrous to all, being above the power, and out of the common course, of nature; especially wondrous to us, in whose favour they are wrought, who are so unworthy, that we had little reason to expect them. They were wonders of power, and wonders of grace; in both God was to be humbly adored.

(2.) He describes the deliverance they were now triumphing in; because the song was intended, not only to express and excite their thankfulness for the present, but to preserve and perpetuate the remembrance of this work of wonder to after-ages. Two things were to be taken notice of:

[1.] The destruction of the enemy; the waters were divided, v. 8, *The floods stood upright as a heap*, Pharaoh and all his hosts were buried in the waters. *The horse and his rider could not escape*, (v. 1.) *the chariots, and the chosen captains*; (v. 4.) they themselves went into the sea, and there they were overwhelmed, v. 19. *The depths, the sea, covered them*, and the proud waters went over the proud sinners, they *sank like a stone, like lead*, (v. 5, 10.) under the weight of their own guilt and God's wrath. Their sin had made them hard like a stone, and now they justly sink like a stone. *Nay, the earth itself swallowed them*; (v. 12.) their dead bodies sank into the sands upon which they were thrown up, which sucked them in. Those whom the Creator fights against, the whole creation is at war with. All this was the Lord's doing, and his only. It was an act of his power; *Thy right hand, O Lord, not our's, has dashed in pieces the enemy*, v. 6. It was with the *blast of thy nostrils*, (v. 8.) and *thy wind*, (v. 10.) and the *stretching out of thy right hand*, v. 12. It was an instance of his transcendent power, (v. 7.) in the *greatness of thine excellency*; and it was the execution of his justice, *Thou sentest forth thy wrath*, v. 7. This destruction of the Egyptians was made the more remarkable by their pride and insolence, and their strange assurance of success; (v. 9.) *The enemy said, I will pursue*. Here is, *First*, *Great confidence*; when they pursue, they do not question but they shall overtake, and when they overtake, they do not question but they shall overcome, and obtain so decisive a victory as to *divide the spoil*. Note, It is common for men to be most elated with the hopes of success, when they are upon the brink of ruin, which makes their ruin so much the sorer. See Isa. 37. 24, 25. *Secondly*, *Great cruelty*; nothing but killing, and slaying, and destroying, and this will satisfy his lust; and a barbarous lust that is, which so much blood must be the satisfaction of. Note, It is a cruel hatred with which the church is hated; its enemies are bloody men. This is taken notice of here, to show, 1. That God resists the proud, and delights to humble those who lift up themselves; he that says, "I will, and I will, whether God will or no," shall be made to know, that wherein he deals proudly, God is above him. 2. That those who thirst for blood shall have enough of it. They who love to be destroying, shall be destroyed, for we know who has said, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay*.

[2.] The protection and guidance of Israel; (v. 13.) *Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people*; led them forth out of the bondage of Egypt, led them forth out of the perils of the Red-sea, v. 19

But the children of Israel went on dry land. Note, The destruction of the wicked serves for a foil to set off the salvation of Israel, and to make it the more illustrious, Isa. 45. 13. . 15.

(3.) He sets himself to improve this wonderful appearance of God for them. [1.] In order to quicken them to serve God; in consideration of this, (v. 2.) *I will prepare him a habitation.* God having preserved them, and prepared a covert for them under which they had been safe and easy, they resolve to spare no cost or pains for the erecting of a tabernacle to his honour, and there they will exalt him, and mention, to his praise, the honour he had got upon Pharaoh. God had now exalted them, making them great and high, and therefore they will exalt him, by speaking of his infinite height and grandeur. Note, Our constant endeavour should be, by praising his name and serving his interests, to exalt God: and it is an advancement to us to be so employed. [2.] In order to encourage them to trust in God: so confident is this psalmist of the happy issue of the salvation which was so gloriously begun, that he looks upon it as in effect finished already; (v. 13.) "*Thou hast guided to thy holy habitation.*" Thou hast thus put them into the way to it, and wilt in due time bring them to the end of that way," for God's work is perfect; or, "*Thou hast guided them to attend thy holy habitation in heaven with their praises.*" Note, Those whom God takes under his direction, he will guide to his holy habitation, in faith now, and in fruition shortly.

Two ways, this great deliverance was encouraging.

First, It was such an instance of God's power, as would terrify their enemies, and quite dishearten them, (v. 14. . 16.) The very tidings of the overthrow of the Egyptians would be more than half the overthrow of all their other enemies; it would sink their spirits, and that would go far toward the sinking of their powers and interests; the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and Canaanites, (with each of which nations Israel was to grapple,) would be alarmed by it, would be quite dispirited, and would conclude it was in vain to fight against Israel, when a God of such power fought for them. It had this effect; the Edomites were afraid of them, (Deut. 2. 4.) so were the Moabites, (Numb. 22. 3.) and the Canaanites, Josh. 2. 9, 10.—5. 1. Thus God sent his fear before them, (ch. 23. 27.) and cut off the spirit of princes.

Secondly, It was such a beginning of God's favour to them, as gave them an earnest of the perfection of his kindness. This was but in order to something further; (v. 17.) *Thou shalt bring them in.* If he thus bring them out of Egypt, notwithstanding their unworthiness, and the difficulties that lay in the way of their escape, doubtless, he will bring them into Canaan; for has he begun, (so begun,) and will he not make an end? Note, Our experiences of God's power and favour should be improved for the support of our expectations; "*Thou hast*—therefore not only thou *canst*, but we trust thou *wilt*," is good arguing. Observe, *Thou wilt plant them in the place which thou hast made for thee to dwell in.* Note, It is good dwelling where God dwells, in his church on earth, (Ps. 27. 4.) in his church in heaven, John 17. 24. When he says, "*This is my rest for ever,*" we should say, "*Let it be our's.*"

Lastly, The great ground of the encouragement which they draw from this work of wonder, is, v. 18, *The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.* They had now seen an end of Pharaoh's reign; but time itself shall not put a period to Jehovah's reign, which, like himself, is eternal, and not subject to change. Note, It is the unspeakable comfort of all

God's faithful subjects, not only that he does reign universally, and with an incontestable sovereignty, but that he will reign eternally, and there shall be no end of his dominion.

II. The solemn singing of this song, v. 20, 21. Miriam (or Mary, it is the same name) presided in an assembly of the women, who, (according to the softness of their sex, and the common usage of those times for expressing joy) with timbrels and dances sang this song. Moses led the psalm, and gave it out for the men, and then Miriam for the women: famous victories were wont to be applauded by the daughters of Israel; (1 Sam. 18. 6, 7.) so was this: when God brought Israel out of Egypt, it is said, (Mic. 6. 4.) *He sent before them Moses, Aaron, and Miriam*, though we read not of any thing remarkable that Miriam did but this.* But those are to be reckoned great blessings to a people, who assist them, and go before them, in praising God.

22. So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; and they went out into the wilderness of Shur: and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. 23. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. 24. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? 25. And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, 26. And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee. 27. And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

It should seem, it was with some difficulty that Moses prevailed with Israel to leave that triumphant shore on which they sang the foregoing song. They were so taken up either with the sight, or with the song, or with the spoiling of the dead bodies, that they cared not to go forward, but Moses with much ado brought them from the Red-sea into a wilderness: the pleasures of our way to Canaan must not retard our progress, but quicken it, though we have a wilderness before us. Now here we are told,

I. That in the wilderness of Shur they had no water, v. 22. This was a sore trial to the young travellers, and an alloy to their joy; thus God would train them up to difficulties; David, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, reaches forth toward God, Ps. 63. 1.

II. That at Marah they had water, but it was bitter, so that though they had been three days

* Our author had either, for the moment, overlooked the circumstances recorded in the 13th of Numbers; or, by the term *remarkable*, he must have meant what was worthy both to be noticed by the reader, and also to have been done by Miriam.—Ed

without water, they could not drink it, either because it was extremely unpleasant to the taste, or was likely to be prejudicial to their health, or was so brackish, that it rather increased their thirst than quenched it, v. 23. Note, God can imbitter that to us from which we promise ourselves most satisfaction, and often does so in the wilderness of this world, that our wants and disappointments in the creature may drive us to the Creator, in whose favour alone true comfort is to be had. Now in this distress,

1. The people fretted and quarrelled with Moses, as if he had done ill by them; *What shall we drink?* all their clamour, v. 24. Note, The greatest joys and hopes are soon turned into the greatest griefs and fears with them that live by sense only, and not by faith.

2. Moses prayed; (v. 25.) *He cried unto the Lord.* The complaints which they brought to him, he brought to God, on whom, notwithstanding his elevation, Moses owned a constant dependence. Note, It is the greatest relief of the cares of magistrates and ministers, when those under their charge make them uneasy, that they may have recourse to God by prayer: he is the Guide of the church's guides; and to him, as the Chief Shepherd, the under-shepherds must upon all occasions apply.

3. God provided graciously for them; he directed Moses to a tree which he cast into the waters; in consequence of which, all of a sudden, they were made sweet. Some think this wood had a peculiar virtue in it for this purpose, because it is said, *God showed him the tree.* God is to be acknowledged, not only in the creating of things useful for man, but in discovering their usefulness. Or perhaps this was only a sign, and not at all a means, of the cure, any more than the brazen serpent, or Elisha's casting one cruise full of salt into the waters of Jericho. Some make this tree typical of the cross of Christ, which sweetens the bitter waters of affliction to all the faithful, and enables them to rejoice in tribulation. The Jews' tradition is, that the wood of this tree was itself bitter, yet it sweetened the waters of Marah; the bitterness of Christ's sufferings and death alters the property of our's.

4. Upon this occasion, God came upon terms with them, and plainly told them, now that they were got clear of the Egyptians, and were entered into the wilderness, that they were upon their good behaviour, and that, according as they carried themselves, so it would be well or ill with them; *there he made a statute and an ordinance*, and settled matters with them; *there he proved them*, that is, there he put them upon the trial, admitted them as probationers for his favour. In short, he tells them, v. 26. (1.) What he expected from them, and that was, in one word, obedience. They must diligently *hearken to his voice*, and *give ear to his commandments*, that they might know their duty, and not transgress through ignorance; and they must take care in every thing to do that which was right in God's sight, and to *keep all his statutes*. They must not think, now that they were delivered from their bondage in Egypt, that they had no lord over them, but were their own masters; no, *therefore* they must look upon themselves as God's servants, because he had *loosed their bonds*, Ps. 116. 16. Luke, 1. 74, 75. (2.) What they might then expect from him; *I will put none of these diseases upon thee*, that is, "I will not bring upon thee any of the plagues of Egypt." This intimates, that, if they were rebellious and disobedient, the very plagues which they had seen inflicted upon their enemies should be brought upon them; so it is threatened, Deut. 28. 60. God's judgments upon Egypt, as they were *mercies* to Israel, opening the way to their deliverance, so they were *warnings* to

Israel, and designed to awe them into obedience. Let not the Israelites think, because God had thus highly honoured them in the great things he had done for them, and had proclaimed them to all the world his favourites, that therefore he would connive at their sins, and let them do as they would. No, God is no Respector of persons; a rebellious Israelite shall fare no better than a rebellious Egyptian; and so they found, to their cost, before they got to Canaan. "But if thou wilt be obedient, thou shalt be safe and happy;" the threatening is implied only, but the promise is expressed, "*I am the Lord that healeth thee*, and will take care of thy comfort wherever thou goest." Note, God is the great Physician. If we be kept well, it is he that keeps us; if we be made well, it is he that recovers us; he is our Life, and the Length of our days.

III. That at Elim they had good water and enough of it, v. 27. Though God may, for a time, order his people to encamp by the waters of Marah, yet that shall not always be their lot. See how changeable our condition is in this world, from better to worse, from worse to better; let us therefore learn both how to be abased and how to abound; to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, when we are full; and to weep as though we wept not, when we are emptied. Here were twelve wells for their *supply*, one for every tribe, that they might not strive for water, as their fathers had sometimes done; and, for their *pleasure*, there were seventy palm-trees, under the shadow of which their great men might repose themselves. Note, God can find places of refreshment for his people even in the wilderness of this world, wells in the valley of Baca, lest they should faint in their mind with perpetual fatigue; yet, whatever our delights may be in the land of our pilgrimage, we must remember that we do but encamp by them for a time, that here we have no continuing city.

CHAP. XVI.

This chapter gives us an account of the victualling of the camp of Israel. I. Their complaint for want of bread, v. 1. 3. II. The notice God gave them beforehand of the provision he intended to make for them, v. 4. 12. III. The sending of the manna, v. 13. 15. IV. The laws and orders concerning the manna. 1. That they should gather it daily for their daily bread, v. 16. 21. 2. That they should gather a double portion on the sixth day, v. 22. 26. 3. That they should expect none on the seventh day, v. 27. 31. 4. That they should preserve a pot of it for a memorial, v. 32.

1. **AND** they took their journey from Elim; and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. 2. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: 3. And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full! for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. 4. Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will

walk in my law or no. 5. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. 6. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; 7. And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what *are* we, that ye murmur against us? 8. And Moses said, *This shall be*, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not against us, but against the LORD. 9. And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD; for he hath heard your murmurings. 10. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. 11. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12. I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that *I am* the LORD your God.

The host of Israel, it seems, took along with them out of Egypt, when they came thence on the fifteenth day of the first month, a month's provisions, which, by the fifteenth day of the second month, was all spent; and here we have,

I. Their discontent and murmuring upon that occasion, v. 2, 3. The whole congregation, the greatest part of them, joined in this mutiny; it was not immediately against God that they murmured, but (which was equivalent) against Moses and Aaron, God's vicegerents among them. 1. They count upon being killed in the wilderness; nothing less, at the first appearance of disaster. If the Lord had been pleased to kill them, he could easily have done that in the Red sea; but then he preserved them, and now could as easily provide for them. It argues great distrust of God, and of his power and goodness, in every distress and appearance of danger to despair of life, and to talk of nothing but being speedily killed. 2. They invidiously charge Moses with a design to starve them when he brought them out of Egypt; whereas, what he had done, was both by order from God, and with a design to promote their welfare. Note, It is no new thing for the greatest kindnesses to be misinterpreted, and basely represented as the greatest injuries. The worst colours are sometimes put upon the best actions. Nay, 3. They so far undervalue their deliverance, that they wished they had died in Egypt, nay, and died by the hand of the Lord too, that is, by some of the plagues which cut off the Egyptians, as if it were not the hand of the Lord, but of Moses only, that brought them into this hungry wilderness. It is common for people to say of that pain, or sickness,

or sore, of which they see not the second causes, "It was what pleases God," as if that were not so likewise which comes by the hand of man, or some visible accident. Prodigious madness! They will rather die by the flesh-pots of Egypt, where they found themselves with provision, than live under the guidance of the heavenly pillar in a wilderness, and be provided for by the hand of God; they pronounce it better to have fallen in the destruction of God's enemies, than to bear the fatherly discipline of his children. We cannot suppose that they had any great plenty in Egypt, how largely soever they now talk of the flesh-pots, nor could they fear dying for want in the wilderness, while they had their flocks and herds with them; but discontent magnifies what is past, and vilifies what is present, without regard to truth or reason. None talk more absurdly than murmurers. Their impatience, ingratitude, and distrust of God, were so much the worse, inasmuch as they had lately received such miraculous favours, and convincing proofs, both that God could help them in the greatest exigencies, and that really he had mercy in store for them. See how *soon* they forgot his works, and provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea. Ps. 106. 7. 13. Note, Experiences of God's mercies greatly aggravate our distrusts and murmurings.

II. The care God graciously took for their supply; justly he might have said, "I will rain fire and brimstone upon these murmurers, and consume them;" but, quite contrary, he promises to rain bread upon them. Observe,

1. How God makes known to Moses his kind intentions, that he might not be uneasy at their murmurings, nor be tempted to wish he had let them alone in Egypt. (1.) He takes notice of the people's complaints; (v. 12.) *I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel*. As a God of pity, he took cognizance of their necessity, which was the occasion of their murmuring; as a just and holy God, he took cognizance of their base and unworthy reflections upon his servant Moses, and was much displeased with them. Note, When we begin to fret and be uneasy, we ought to consider that God hears all our murmurings, though silent, and only the murmurings of the heart. Princes, parents, masters, do not hear all the murmurs of their inferiors against them, and it is well they do not, for perhaps they could not bear it; but God hears, and yet bears. We must not think, because God does not immediately take *vengeance* on men for their sins, that therefore he does not take *notice* of them; no, he hears the murmurings of Israel, and is grieved with this generation, and yet continues his care of them, as the tender parent of the froward child. (2.) He promises them a speedy, sufficient, and constant, supply, v. 4. Man being made out of the earth, his Maker has wisely ordered him food out of the earth, Ps. 104. 14. But the people of Israel, typifying the church of the first-born that are written in heaven, and born from above, and being themselves immediately under the conduct and government of heaven, receiving their charters, laws, and commissions, from heaven, from heaven also received their food: their law being given by the disposition of angels, they did also eat angels' food. See what God designed in making this provision for them, *That I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or no*. [1.] Thus he tried whether they would trust him, and walk in the law of faith or no; whether they could live from hand to mouth, and (though now uneasy because their provisions were spent) could rest satisfied with the bread of the day in its hand, and depend upon God for fresh supplies to-morrow. [2.] Thus he tried whether they would serve him, and be always faithful to so good a Master, that provided so well for his servants; and hereby he made it appear

to all the world, in the issue, what an ungrateful people they were, whom nothing could affect with a sense of obligation. Let *favours be showed* to them, yet *will they not learn righteousness*, Isa. 26. 10.

2. How Moses knew these intentions to Israel, as God ordered him; here Aaron was his prophet, as he had been to Pharaoh; Moses directed Aaron what to *speak to the congregation of Israel*; (v. 9.) and some think, that, while Aaron was giving a public summons to the congregation to *come near before the Lord*, Moses retired to pray, and that the appearance of the glory of the Lord, (v. 10.) was in answer to his prayer. They are called to come near, as Isa. 1. 18, *Come, and let us reason together*. Note, God condescends to give even murmurers a fair hearing; and shall we then despise the cause of our inferiors, when they contend with us? Job, 31. 13.

(1.) He convinces them of the evil of their murmurings; they thought they reflected only upon Moses and Aaron, but here they are told that God was struck at through their sides. This is much insisted on; (v. 7, 8.) "*Your murmurings are not against us*, then we would have been silent, but *against the Lord*; it was he that led you into these straits, and not we." Note, When we are tempted to murmur against those who are instruments of any uneasiness to us, whether justly or unjustly, we do well to consider how much we reflect upon God by it; men are but God's hand. They that quarrel with the reproofs and convictions of the word, and are angry with their ministers; when they are touched in a tender part, know not what they do, for therein they strive with their Maker. Let this for ever stop the mouth of murmuring, that it is daring impiety to murmur at God, because he is God; and gross absurdity to murmur at men, because they are but men.

(2.) He assures them of the supply of their wants; that, since they had harped upon the flesh-pots so much, they should for once have flesh in abundance that evening, and bread the next morning, and so on every day thenceforward, v. 8, 12. Many there are, of whom we say, that they are better fed than taught; but the Israelites were thus fed, that they might be taught; *he led him about, he instructed him*; (Deut. 32. 10.) and as to this instance, see Deut. 8. 3, *He fed thee with manna, that thou mightest know that man doth not live by bread only*. And, beside that, here are two things mentioned, which he intended to teach them by sending them manna; [1.] *By this ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt*, v. 6. That they were brought out of Egypt, was plain enough; but so strangely selfish and short-sighted were they, that they said it was Moses that brought them out, v. 3. Now God sent them manna, to prove that it was no less than infinite power and goodness that brought them out, and that could perfect what was begun. If Moses only had brought them out of Egypt, he could not thus have fed them; they must therefore own that that was the Lord's doing, because this was so, and both were marvellous in their eyes; yet, long afterward, they needed to be told that *Moses gave them not this bread from heaven*, John, 6. 32. [2.] *By this ye shall know that I am the Lord your God*, v. 12. This gave proof of his power as the Lord, and his particular favour to them as their God; when God plagued the Egyptians, it was to make them know that he was the Lord; when he provided for the Israelites, it was to make them know that he was their God.

3. How God himself manifested his glory, to still the murmurings of the people, and to put a reputation upon Moses and Aaron, v. 10. While Aaron was speaking, *the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud*. The cloud itself, one would think, was

enough both to strike an awe upon them, and to give encouragement to them; yet, in a few days, it was grown so familiar to them, that it made no impression upon them, unless it shone with an unusual brightness. Note, What God's ministers say to us, is then likely to do us good, when the glory of God shines in with it upon our souls.

13. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. 14. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness *there lay* a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost, on the ground.

15. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, *It is manna*: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, *This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat*: 16. *This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded*: Gather of it every man according to his eating; an omer for every man: *according to the number of your persons, take ye every man for them which are in his tents*. 17. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less. 18. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating. 19. And Moses said, *Let no man leave of it till the morning*. 20. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank; and Moses was wrath with them. 21. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

Now they begin to be provided for by the immediate hand of God.

I. He makes them a feast, at night, of delicate fowl, *feathered fowl*, (Ps. 78. 27.) therefore not *locusts*, as some think; quails, or pheasants, or some wild fowl, came up, and covered the camp, so t. me, that they might take up as many of them as they pleased. Note, God gives us of the good things of this life, not only for necessity, but for delight, that we may not only serve him, but serve him cheerfully.

II. Next morning, he rained manna upon them, which was to be continued to them for their daily bread.

1. That which was provided for them was manna, which descended from the clouds, so that, in some sense, they might be said to live upon the air. It came down in dew that melted, and yet was itself of such a consistency as to serve for nourishing strengthening food, without any thing else. They called it *Manna*, *Manhu*,—"What is this?" Either, "What a poor thing this is!" despising it; or, "What a strange thing this is!" admiring it; or, "It is a portion, no matter what it is; it is that which our God has allotted us, and we will take it, and be thankful," v. 14, 15. It was pleasant food: the Jews say, it was palatable to all, however varied their tastes.* It was wholesome food, light of di-

* Our Author alludes, we presume, to the following passage in the Apocryphal Book of Wisdom, ch. 16. 20, 21.—*Thou hast... sent them bread... which had abundance of all pleasures in it, and*

gestion, and very necessary (Dr. Grew says) to cleanse them from disorders, with which he thinks it probable that they were, in the time of their bondage, more or less infected, which disorders a luxurious diet would have made contagious. By this spare and plain diet we are all taught a lesson of temperance, and forbidden to desire dainties and varieties.

2. They were to gather it every morning, (v. 16.) *the portion of a day in his day, v. 4.* Thus they must lie upon daily providence, as the fowls of the air, of whom it is said, *That thou givest them, they gather;* (Ps. 104. 28.) not to-day for to-morrow, *let the morrow take thought for the things of itself.* To this daily raining and gathering of manna our Saviour seems to allude, when he teaches us to pray, *Give us this day our daily bread.* We are hereby taught, (1.) Prudence and diligence in providing food convenient for ourselves and our households; what God graciously gives, we must industriously gather, with quietness working, and eating our own bread, not the bread either of idleness or deceit. God's bounty leaves room for man's duty; it did so even when manna was rained, they must not eat till they have gathered. (2.) Contentment and satisfaction with a sufficiency; they must gather, *every man according to his eating;* enough is as good as a feast, and more than enough is as bad as a surfeit. They that have most, have, for themselves, but food, and raiment, and mirth; and they that have least, generally have these: so that *he who gathers much has nothing over, and he who gathers little has no lack.* There is not so great a disproportion between one and another, in the comforts and enjoyments of the things of this life, as there is in the property and possession of the things themselves. (3.) Dependence upon Providence; "*Let no man leave till morning,* (v. 19.) but let them learn to go to bed and sleep quietly, though they have not a bit of bread in their tent, nor in all their camp, trusting that God, with the following day, will bring them their daily bread." It was surer and safer in God's store-house than in their own, and would thence come to them sweeter and fresher. Read with this, Matt. 6. 25, *Take no thought for your life, &c.* See here the folly of hoarding. The manna that was laid up by some, (who thought themselves wiser and better managers than their neighbours, and who would provide, in case it should fail next day,) putrefied and bred worms, and became good for nothing. Note, That proves to be most wasted, which is covetously and distrustfully spared. Those riches are corrupted, Jam. 5. 2, 3.

Let us set ourselves to think, [1.] Of that great power of God which fed Israel in the wilderness, and made miracles their daily bread. What cannot this God do, who prepared a table in the wilderness, and furnished it richly even for those who questioned whether he could or no? Ps. 78. 19, 20. Never was there such a market of provisions as this, where so many hundred thousand men were daily furnished, without money, and without price. Never was there such an open house kept as God kept in the wilderness for forty years together, nor such free and plentiful entertainment given. The feast which Ahasuerus made, to show the *riches of his kingdom, and the honour of his majesty,* was nothing to this, Esth. 1. 4. It is said, (v. 21.) *When the sun waxed hot, it melted;* as if what was left, were drawn up by the heat of the sun into the air to be the seed of the next day's harvest, and so from day to day. [2.] Of that constant providence of God, which *gives food to all flesh,* for his mercy *endures for ever,* Ps. 136. 25. He is a great House-

keeper that provides for all the creatures. The same wisdom, power, and goodness, that now brought food daily out of the clouds, does, in the constant course of nature, bring food yearly out of the earth, and gives us all things richly to enjoy.

22. And it came to pass, *that on the sixth day* they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23. And he said unto them, *This is that* which the LORD hath said, *To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD:* bake *that* which you will bake *to-day,* and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning. 24. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. 25. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. 26. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, *which is the sabbath,* in it there shall be none. 27. And it came to pass, *that there went out some of the people on* the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. 28. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? 29. See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. 30. So the people rested on the seventh day. 31. And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it *was* like coriander-seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers made with honey.

We have here,

1. A plain intimation of the observing of a *seventh-day sabbath*, not only before the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, but before the bringing of Israel out of Egypt, and therefore *from the beginning,* Gen. 2. 3. If the sabbath had now been first instituted, how could Moses have understood what God said to him, (v. 5.) concerning a double portion to be gathered on the sixth day, without making any express mention of the sabbath? And how could the people so readily take the hint, (v. 22.) even to the surprise of the rulers, before Moses had declared that it was done with a regard to the sabbath, if they had not had some knowledge of the sabbath before? The setting apart of one day in the seven for holy work, and, in order to that for holy rest, was a divine appointment ever since God created man upon the earth, and the most ancient of positive laws. The way of sabbath-sanctification is the good old way.

2. The double provision which God made for the Israelites, and which they were to make for themselves, on the sixth day; God gave them on the sixth day the bread of two days, v. 29. Appointing them to rest on the seventh day, he took care that they should be no losers by it: and none ever will be losers by serving God. On that day, they were to fetch in enough for two days, and to pre-

was meet for all tastes. For thy sustenance declared the sweetness unto thy children, which served to the appetite of him that took it, and was meet to that which every man would.—Ed.

pare it, v. 23. The law was very strict, that they must bake and seethe, the day before, and not on the sabbath-day. This does not now make it unlawful for us to dress meat on the Lord's day, but directs us to contrive our family-affairs so that they may hinder us as little as possible in the work of the sabbath. Works of necessity, no doubt, are to be done on that day; but it is desirable to have as little as may be to do of things necessary to the life that now is, that we may apply ourselves the more closely to the one thing needful. That which they kept for their food on sabbath-day did not putrefy, v. 24. When they kept it in opposition to a command, (v. 20.) it stank; when they kept it in obedience to a command, it was sweet and good; for every thing is sanctified by the *word of God and prayer*.

3. The intermission of the manna on the seventh day; God did not send it then, and therefore they must not expect it, nor go out to gather, v. 25, 26. This showed that it was not produced by natural causes, and that it was designed for a confirmation of the divine authority of the law which was to be given by Moses. Thus God took an effectual course to make them *remember the sabbath-day*; they could not forget it, nor the day of preparation for it. Some, it seems, went out on the seventh day, expecting to find manna, (v. 27.) but they found none; for those that will find must seek in the appointed time; Seek the Lord *while he may be found*. God, upon this occasion, said to Moses, *How long refuse ye to keep my commandment?* v. 28. Why did he say this to Moses? He was not disobedient: No, but he was the ruler of a disobedient people, and God charges it upon him, that he might the more warmly charge it upon them, and might take care that their disobedience should not be through any neglect or default of his. It was for going out to seek for manna on the seventh day that they were thus reprov'd. Note, (1.) Disobedience, even in a small matter, is very provoking. (2.) God is jealous for the honour of his sabbaths. If walking out on the sabbath to seek for food was thus reprov'd, walking out on that day purely to find our own pleasure cannot be justified.

32. And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it, to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. 33. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. 34. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony, to be kept. 35. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited: they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. 36. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

God having provided manna to be his people's food in the wilderness, and to be to them a continual feast, we are here told,

1. How the memory of it was preserved; an omer of this manna was laid up in a *golden pot*, as we are told, (Heb. 9. 4.) and kept *before the testimony*, or the ark, when it was afterward made, v. 32.. 34. The preservation of this manna from waste and corruption was a standing miracle, and therefore the more proper memorial of this miraculous food.

"Posterity shall see the bread," says God, "*where whith I have fed you in the wilderness*;" see what sort of food it was, and how much each man's daily portion of it was, that it may appear they were neither kept to hard fare, nor to short allowance, and then judge between God and Israel, whether they had any cause given them to murmur, and find fault with their provisions, and whether they, and their seed after them, had not a great deal of reason gratefully to own God's goodness to them. Note, Eaten bread must not be forgotten; God's miracles and mercies are to be had in everlasting remembrance, for our encouragement to trust in him at all times.

2. How the mercy of it was continued as long as they had occasion for it. The manna never ceased till they came to the borders of Canaan, where there was bread enough and to spare, v. 35. See how constant the care of Providence is; seed time and harvest fail not, while the earth remains. Israel was very provoking in the wilderness, yet the manna never failed them: thus still God causes his rain to fall on the just and unjust.

The manna is called *spiritual meat*, (1 Cor. 10. 3.) because it was typical of spiritual blessings in heavenly things; Christ himself is the true Manna, the Bread of life, of which this was a figure, John, 6. 49.. 51. The word of God is the manna by which our souls are nourished, Matth. 4. 4. The comforts of the Spirit are hidden manna, Rev. 2. 17. These come from heaven, as the manna did, and are the support and comfort of the divine life in the soul, while we are in the wilderness of this world. It is food for *Israelites*, for those only that follow the pillar of cloud and fire; it is to be *gathered*, Christ in the word is to be applied to the soul, and the means of grace are to be used; we must every one of us gather for ourselves, and gather, in the morning of our days, the morning of our opportunities, which if we let slip, it may be too late to gather. The manna they gathered must not be hoarded up, but eaten; they that have received Christ, must by faith live upon him, and not receive his grace in vain: there was manna enough for all, enough for each, and none had too much; so in Christ there is a complete sufficiency, and no superfluity. But they that did eat manna hungered again, died at last, and with many of them God was not well-pleased; whereas they that feed on Christ by faith shall never hunger, and shall die no more, and with them God will be for ever well-pleased; the Lord evermore give us this bread!

CHAP. XVII.

Two passages of story are recorded in this chapter, I. The watering of the host of Israel. 1. In the wilderness they wanted water, v. 1. 2. In their want, they chide with Moses, v. 2, 3. 3. Moses cried to God, v. 4. 4. God ordered him to smite the rock, and fetch water out of that; Moses did so, v. 5, 6. 5. The place named from it, v. 7. II. The defeating of the host of Amalek. 1. The victory obtained by the prayer of Moses, v. 8.. 12. 2. By the sword of Joshua, v. 13. 3. A record kept of it, v. 14.. 16. And these things which happened to them are written for our instruction, in our spiritual journey and warfare.

I. **AND** all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. 2. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide you with me? wherefore do ye tempt the

LORD? 3. And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this *that* thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? 4. And Moses cried unto the **LORD**, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. 5. And the **LORD** said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the **LORD**, saying, Is the **LORD** among us, or not?

Here is,

I. The strait that the children of Israel were in, for want of water; once before, they were in the like distress, and now, a second time, *v. 1.* They journeyed according to the commandment of the **LORD**, led by the pillar of cloud and fire, and yet they came to a place where there was *no water for them to drink.* Note, We may be in the way of our duty, and yet may meet with troubles, which Providence brings us into, for the trial of our faith, and that God may be glorified in our relief.

II. Their discontent and distrust in this strait: it is said, (*v. 3.*) They *thirsted there for water.* If they had no water to drink, they must needs thirst; but this intimates not only that they wanted water, and felt the inconvenience of that want, but that their passions sharpened their appetites, and they were violent and impatient in their desire; their thirst made them outrageous; natural desires, and those that are most craving, have need to be kept under the check and guidance of religion and reason.

See what was the language of this inordinate desire.

1. They challenged Moses to supply them; (*v. 2.*) *Give us water, that we may drink,* demanding it as a debt, and strongly suspecting that he was not able to discharge it. Because they were supplied with bread, they insist upon it, that they must be supplied with water too; and indeed to those that by faith and prayer live a life of dependence upon God, one favour is an earnest of another, and may be humbly pleaded: but the unthankful and unbelieving have reason to think that the abuse of former favours is the forfeiture of further favours; *Let not them think that they shall receive any thing,* (*Jam. 1. 7.*) yet they are ready to demand every thing.

2. They quarrelled with him for bringing them out of Egypt, as if, instead of delivering them, he designed to murder them, than which nothing could be more base and invidious, *v. 3.* Many that have not only designed well, but done well, for their generation, have had their best services thus misconstrued, and their patience thereby tried, by unthinking unthankful people. To such a degree their malice against Moses rose, that they were *almost ready to stone him, v. 4.* Many good works

he had showed them; and for which of these would they stone him? John, 10. 32. Ungoverned passions, provoked by the crossing of unbridled appetites, sometimes make men guilty of the greatest absurdities, and act like madmen, that cast firebrands, arrows, and death, among their best friends.

3. They began to question whether God were with them or not; (*v. 7.*) They *tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?"* Is Jehovah among us by that name by which he made himself known to us in Egypt?" They question his essential presence, whether there was a God or not; his common providence, whether that God governed the world; and his special promise, whether he would be so good as his word to them. This is called *tempting God*, which signifies, not only a distrust of God in general, but a distrust of him after they had received such proofs of his power and goodness, for the confirmation of his promise: they do, in effect, suppose that Moses was an impostor—Aaron a deceiver—the pillar of cloud and fire a mere sham and illusion, which imposed upon their senses—that long series of miracles which had rescued them, served them, and fed them, a chain of cheats—and the promise of Canaan, a banter upon them; it was all so, if *the Lord was not among them.* Note, It is a great provocation to God, for us to question his presence, providence, or promise, especially for his Israel to do it, who are so peculiarly bound to trust him.

III. The course that Moses took, when he was thus set upon and insulted. 1. He reproved the murmurers; (*v. 2.*) *Why chide ye with me?* Observe how mildly he answered them; it was well that he was a man of extraordinary meekness, else their tumultuous conduct would have made him lose the possession of himself: it is folly to answer passion with passion, for that makes bad worse; but *soft answers turn away wrath:* he showed them whom their murmurings reflected upon, and that the reproaches they cast on him fell on God himself; *Ye tempt the Lord,* that is, "By distrusting his power, ye try his patience, and so provoke his wrath." 2. He made his complaint to God; (*v. 4.*) *Moses cried unto the Lord:* this servant came, and showed his Lord all these things, Luke, 14. 21. When men unjustly censure us and quarrel with us, it will be a great ease to us, to go to God, and by prayer lay the case before him, and leave it with him: if men will not hear us, God will; if their bad conduct towards us ruffle our spirits, God's consolations will compose them. Moses begs of God to direct him what he should do, for he was utterly at a loss; he could not of himself either supply their want, or pacify their tumult; God only could do it. He pleads his own peril, "*They be almost ready to stone me;* Lord, if thou hast any regard to the life of thy poor servant, interpose now."

IV. God's gracious appearance for their relief, *v. 5, 6.* He orders Moses to go on before the people, and venture himself in his post, though they spake of stoning him. He must take his rod with him, not (as God might justly have ordered) to summon some plague or other to chastise them for their distrust and murmuring, but to fetch water for their supply. Oh the wonderful patience and forbearance of God toward provoking sinners! He *loads those with benefits, that make him to serve with their sins,* maintains those that are at war with him, and reaches out the hand of his bounty to those that lift up the heel against him. Thus he teaches us, if our enemy hunger, to feed him, and if he thirst, as Israel did now, *to give him drink,* Rom. 12. 20. Matth. 5. 44, 45. Will he fail those that trust him, when he was so liberal even to those that tempted him? If God had only showed Moses a fountain of

water in the wilderness, as he did Hagar not far from hence, (Gen. 21. 19.) that had been a great favour; but, that he might show his power as well as his pity, and make it a miracle if mercy, he gave them water out of a rock. He directed Moses whither to go, and appointed him to take of the elders of Israel with him, to be witnesses of what was done, that they might themselves be satisfied, and might satisfy others, of the cert-inty of God's presence with them; he promised to meet him there in the cloud of glory, (to encourage him,) and ordered him to smite the rock: Moses obeyed, and immediately water came out of the rock in great abundance, which ran throughout the camp in streams and rivers, (Ps. 78. 15, 16.) and followed them wherever they went in that wilderness: it is called a *fountain of waters*, Ps. 114. 8. God showed the care he took of his people, in giving them water when they wanted it; he showed his power, in fetching the water out of a rock; and he put an honour upon Moses, in appointing the water to flow out, upon his smiting of the rock. This fair water, that came out of the rock, is called *honey and oil*, (Deut. 32. 13.) because the people's thirst made it doubly pleasant; coming when they were in extreme want, it was like honey and oil to them. It is probable the people digged canals for the conveyance of it, and pools for the reception of it, in like manner as, long afterward, passing through the valley of Baca, they made it a well, Ps. 84. 6. Numb. 21. 18. Let this direct us to live in a dependence, 1. Upon God's providence, even in the greatest straits and difficulties. God can open fountains for our supply, where we least expect them, *waters in the wilderness*, (Isa. 43. 20.) because he makes a *way in the wilderness*, v. 19. Those who, in this wilderness, keep to God's way, may trust him to provide for them. While we follow the pillar of cloud and fire, surely goodness and mercy shall follow us, like the water out of the rock. 2. Upon Christ's grace; *that Rock was Christ*, 1 Cor. 10. 4. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to *rivers of living water*, John. 7. 38, 39.—4. 14. These flow from Christ, who is the Rock smitten by the law of Moses, for he was made under the law. Nothing will supply the needs, and satisfy the desires, of a soul, but water out of the rock, this fountain opened. The pleasures of sense are puddle-water; spiritual delights are rock-water, so pure, so clear, so refreshing; rivers of pleasure.

V. A new name was, upon this occasion, given to the place, preserving the remembrance, not of the mercy of their supply, (the water that followed them was sufficient to do that,) but of the sin of their murmuring, *Massah, Temptation*, because they tempted God, *Meribah, Strife*, because they chid with Moses, v. 7. There was thus a remembrance kept of sin, both for the disgrace of the sinners themselves, (sin leaves a blot upon the name,) and for warning to their seed to take heed of sinning after the similitude of their transgression.

3. Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand. 10. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. 11. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his

hand, Amalek prevailed. 12. But Moses' hands *were* heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon: and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. 14. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this *for* a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 15. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-nissi. 16. For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn, *that* the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation.

We have here the story of the war with Amalek, which, we may suppose, was the first that was recorded in the *book of the wars of the Lord*, Numb. 21. 14. Amalek was the first of the nations that Israel fought with, Numb. 24. 20. Observe,

I. Amalek's attempt; they *came out, and fought with Israel*, v. 8. The Amalekites were the posterity of Esau, who hated Jacob because of the birthright and blessing; and this was an effort of the hereditary enmity; a malice that ran in the blood, and perhaps was now exasperated, by the working of the promise towards an accomplishment. Consider this, 1. As Israel's affliction; they had been quarrelling with Moses, (v. 2.) and now God sends Amalekites to quarrel with them: wars abroad are the just punishment of strifes and discontents at home. 2. As Amalek's sin; so it is reckoned, Deut. 25. 17, 18. They did not boldly front them, as a generous enemy, but, without any provocation given by Israel, or challenge given to them, basely fell upon their rear, and smote those that were faint and feeble, and could neither make resistance, nor escape; herein they bade defiance to that Power which had so lately ruined the Egyptians; but in vain did they attack a camp guarded and victualled by miracles; verily they knew not what they did.

II. Israel's engagement with Amalek, in their own necessary defence against the aggressors; and there,

1. The post assigned to Joshua, of whom this is the first mention: he is nominated commander in chief in this expedition, that he might be trained up to the services he was designed for, after the death of Moses, and be a *man of war from his youth*. He is ordered to draw out a detachment of choice men from the thousands of Israel, and to drive back the Amalekites, v. 9. When the Egyptians pursued them, Israel must stand still, and see what God would do; but now it was required that they should bestir themselves. Note, God is to be trusted in the use of means.

2. The post assumed by Moses, (v. 9.) *I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in my hand*. See how God qualifies his people for, and calls them to, various services for the good of his church; Joshua fights, Moses prays, and both minister to Israel. Moses went up to the top of the hill, and placed himself, probably, so as to be seen by Israel; there he held up *the rod of God in his hand*; that wonder-working rod which had summoned the plagues of Egypt, and under which Israel passed

out of the house of bondage. This rod Moses held up, (1.) To *Israel*, to animate them; the rod was held up as the banner to encourage the soldiers, who might look up, and say, "Yonder is the rod, and yonder the hand that used it, when such glorious things were wrought for us." Note, It tends much to the encouragement of faith to reflect upon the great things God has done for us, and review the monuments of his favours. (2.) To *God*, by way of appeal to him: "Is not the battle the Lord's? Is not he able to help, and engaged to help? Witness this rod, the voice of which, thus held up, is that, (Isa. 51. 9, 10.) *Put on strength, O arm of the Lord; art not thou it that hath cut Rahab?*" Moses was not only a standard-bearer, but an intercessor, pleading with God for success and victory. Note, When the host goes forth against the enemy, earnest prayers should be made to the God of hosts, for his presence with them. It is here the praying legion that proves the thundering legion. There, in Salem, in Zion where prayers were made, there, the victory was won, *there brake he the arrows of the bow*, Ps. 76, 2, 3.

Observe,

[1.] How Moses was tired, (v. 12.) *his hands were heavy*: the strongest arm will fail with being long extended; it is God only whose hand is *stretched out still*. We do not find that Joshua's hands were heavy in fighting, but Moses's hands were heavy in praying; the more spiritual any service is, the more apt we are to fail and flag in it; praying work, if done with due intenseness of mind and vigour of affection, will be found hard work, and though *the spirit be willing, the flesh will be weak*: our great Intercessor in heaven faints not, nor is he weary, though he attends continually to this very thing.

[2.] What influence the rod of Moses had upon the battle; (v. 11.) *When Moses held up his hand in prayer, (so the Chaldee explains it,) Israel prevailed, but when he laid down his hand from prayer, Amalek prevailed*. To convince Israel that the hand of Moses (with whom they had just now been chiding) contributed more to their safety than their own hands, his rod than their sword, the successes and falls, as Moses lifts up or lets down his hands. It seems, the scale wavered for some time, before it turned on Israel's side; even the best cause must expect disappointments as an ally to its success; though the battle be the Lord's, Amalek may prevail for a time; the reason was, Moses let down his hands. Note, The church's cause is, commonly, more or less successful, according as the church's friends are more or less strong in faith, and fervent in prayer.

[3.] The care that was taken for the support of Moses. When he could not stand any longer, he sat down, not in a chair of state, but upon a stone; (v. 12.) when he could not hold up his hands, he would have them held up; Moses, the man of God, is glad of the assistance of Aaron his brother, and Hur, who, some think, was his brother-in-law, the husband of Miriam. We should not be shy, either of asking help from others, or giving help to others, for we are members one of another. Moses's hands, thus stayed, were *steady till the going down of the sun*; and though it was with much ado that he held out, yet his willing mind was accepted. No doubt, it was a great encouragement to the people to see Joshua before them in the field of battle, and Moses above them upon the top of the hill; Christ is both to us; our Joshua, the Captain of our salvation, who fights our battles, and our Moses, who, in the upper world, ever lives, making intercession that our faith fail not.

III. The defeat of Amalek. Victory had hovered awhile between the camp; sometimes Israel pre-

vailed, and sometimes Amalek, but Israel carried the day, v. 13. Though Joshua fought with great disadvantages—his soldiers undisciplined, ill armed, long inured to servitude, and apt to murmur; yet by them God wrought a great salvation, and made Amalek pay dear for his insolence. Note, Weapons, formed against God's Israel, cannot prosper long, and shall be broken at last. The cause of God and his Israel will be victorious. Though God gave the victory, yet it is said, *Joshua discomfited Amalek*, because Joshua was a type of Christ, and of the same name, and in him it is that we are more than conquerors. It was his arm alone that spoiled principalities and powers, and routed all their force.

IV. The trophies of this victory set up.

1. Moses took care that God should have the glory of it; (v. 15.) instead of setting up a triumphal arch, to the honour of Joshua, (though it had been a laudable policy to put marks of honour upon him,) he builds an altar to the honour of God; and we may suppose it was not an altar without sacrifice; but that which is most carefully recorded, is, the inscription upon the altar, *Jehovah-nissi—The Lord is my banner*; which, probably, refers to the lifting up of the rod of God as a banner in this action. The presence and power of Jehovah were the banner under which they enlisted, by which they were animated and kept together, and therefore which they erected in the day of their triumph. In the name of our God we must always lift up our banners, Ps. 10. 5. It is fit that he who does all the work should have all the praise.

2. God took care that posterity should have the comfort and benefit of it; "Write this for a memorial, not in loose papers, but in a book, write it, and then rehearse it in the ears of Judah, let him be intrusted with this memorial, to transmit it to the generations to come." Moses must now begin to keep a diary or journal of occurrences; it is the first mention of writing that we find in scripture; and perhaps the command was not given till after the writing of the law upon the tables of stone; "Write it, in *perpetuam rei memoriam*—that the event may be had in perpetual remembrance;" that which is written remains. (1.) Write what had been done, what Amalek had done against Israel; write in gall their bitter hatred, write in blood their cruel attempts, let them never be forgotten, nor yet what God had done for Israel in saving them from Amalek. Let ages to come know that God fights for his people, and *he that teaches them, touches the apple of his eye*. (2.) Write what should be done.

[1.] That in process of time Amalek should be totally ruined and rooted out, (v. 14.) that he should be remembered only in history. Amalek would have cut off the name of Israel, that it might be no more in remembrance, (Ps. 83. 4, 7.) and therefore God not only disappoints him in that, but cuts off his name. Write it for the encouragement of Israel, whenever the Amalekites are an annoyance to them, that Israel will at last undoubtedly triumph in the fall of Amalek. This sentence was executed in part by Saul, (1 Sam. 15.) and completely by David; (ch. 30. 2 Sam. 1. 1.—8. 12.) after this time, we never read so much as of the name of Amalek. [2.] That in the mean time God would have a continual controversy with him; (v. 16.) *Because his hand is upon the throne of the Lord*, that is, against the camp of Israel, in which the Lord ruled, which was the *place of his sanctuary*, and is therefore called a *glorious high throne from the beginning*, (Jer. 17. 12.) therefore the Lord will have *war with Amalek from generation to generation*. This was written for direction to Israel, never to make any league with the Amalekites, but to look upon them as irreconcilable enemies, doomed to ruin. Amalek's destruction was typical of the de-

struction of all the enemies of Christ and his kingdom. *Whoever make war with the Lamb, the Lamb will overcome them.*

CHAP. XVIII.

This chapter is concerning Moses himself, and the affairs of his own family. 1. Jethro his father-in-law brings to him his wife and children, v. 1. 6. 11. Moses entertains his father-in-law with great respect, (v. 7.) with good discourse, (v. 8. 11.) with a sacrifice and a feast, v. 12. III. Jethro advises him about the management of his business, as a judge in Israel, to take inferior judges in to his assistance; (v. 13. 23.) Moses, after some time, takes his counsel, (v. 24. 26.) and so they part, v. 27.

1. **W**HEN Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, *and* that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt, 2. Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, 3. And her two sons, of which the name of the one *was* Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land: 4. And the name of the other *was* Eliezer; For the God of my father, *said he, was* mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. 5. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God: 6. And he said unto Moses, I thy father-in-law Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

This incident may very well be allowed to have happened, as it is placed here, before the giving of the law, and not, as some place it, in connexion with what is recorded, Numb. 10. 11, 29, &c. Sacrifices were offered before; in these mentioned here, (v. 12.) it is observable that *Jethro* is said to take them, not *Aaron*. And as to Jethro's advising Moses to constitute judges under him, though it is intimated, (v. 13.) that the occasion of his giving that advice *was on the morrow*, yet it does not follow but that Moses's settling of that affair might be some time after, when the law was given, as it is placed, Deut. 1. 9. It is plain that Jethro himself would not have him make this alteration in the government, till he had received instructions from God about it, (v. 23.) which he did not, till some time after. Jethro comes,

I. To congratulate the happiness of Israel, and particularly the honour of Moses his son-in-law; and now Jethro thinks himself well paid for all the kindness he had showed to Moses in his distress, and his daughter better-matched than he could have expected. Jethro could not but hear what all the country rang of, the glorious appearances of God for his people Israel; (v. 1.) and he comes to inquire, and inform himself more fully thereof, (see Ps. 111. 2.) and to rejoice with them, as one that had a true respect both for them and for their God. Though he, as a Midianite, was not to share with them in the promised land, yet he shared with them in the joy of their deliverance. We may thus make the comforts of others our own, by taking pleasure, as God does, in the *prosperity of the righteous*.

II. To bring Moses's wife and children to him. It seems, he had sent them back, probably from the inn where his wife's aversion to the circumcision of her son had like to have cost him his life; (*ch. 4. 25.*) he sent them home to his father-in-law, fear-

ing lest they should prove a further hinderance; he foresaw what discouragements he was likely to meet with in the court of Pharaoh, and therefore would not take any with him in his own family. He was of that tribe that said to his father, *I have not known him*, when service was to be done for God, Deut. 33. 9. Thus Christ's disciples, when they were to go upon an expedition, not much unlike that of Moses, were to forsake *wife and children*, Matth. 19. 29. But though there might be a reason for the separation that was between Moses and his wife for a time, yet they must come together again, as soon as ever they could with any convenience. It is the law of the relation, *Ye husbands, dwell with your wives*, 1 Pet. 3. 7. Jethro, we may suppose, was glad of his daughter's company, and fond of her children, yet he would not keep her from her husband, nor them from their father, v. 5, 6. Moses must have his family with him, that, while he ruled the church of God, he might set a good example of prudence in family government, 1 Tim. 3. 5. Moses had now a great deal both of honour and care put upon him, and it was fit that his wife should be with him, to share with him in both.

Notice is taken of the significant names of his two sons. 1. The eldest was called *Gershom*, (v. 3.) *a stranger*; Moses designing thereby, not only a memorial of his own condition, but a memorandum to his son of his condition also; for we are all strangers upon earth, as all our fathers were. Moses had a great uncle almost of the same name, *Gershon, a stranger*; for though he was born in Canaan, (Gen. 46. 11.) yet even *there* the patriarchs confessed themselves *strangers*. 2. The other he called *Eliezer*, (v. 4.) *My God a help*, as we translate it; it looks back to his deliverance from Pharaoh, when he made his escape, after the slaying of the Egyptian; but, if this was (as some think) the son that was circumcised in the inn as he was going, I would rather translate it, so as to look forward, which the original will bear, *The Lord is mine help, and will deliver me* from the sword of Pharaoh, which he had reason to expect would be drawn against him, when he was going to fetch Israel out of bondage. Note, When we are undertaking any difficult service for God in our generation, it is good for us to encourage ourselves in God as our Help: he that has delivered, does, and will.

7. And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of *their* welfare; and they came into the tent. 3. And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, *and* all the travail that had come upon them by the way, *and how* the LORD delivered them. 9. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. 10. And Jethro said, Blessed *be* the LORD who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly *he was* above them. 12. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron

came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

Observe here,

I. The kind greeting that was between Moses and his father-in-law, v. 7. Though Moses was a prophet of the Lord, a great prophet, and king in Jeshurun, yet he showed a very humble respect to his father-in-law. However God in his providence is pleased to advance us, we must make conscience of giving honour to whom honour is due, and never look with disdain upon our poor relations. Those that stand high in the favour of God, are not thereby discharged from the duty they owe to men, nor will that justify them in a stately haughty carriage. Moses went out to meet Jethro, did *obeisance to him, and kissed him*. Religion does not destroy good manners. *They asked each other of their welfare*. Even the kind How-do-you's that pass between them are taken notice of, as the expressions and improvements of mutual love and friendship.

II. The narrative that Moses gave his father-in-law of the great things God had done for Israel, v. 8. This was one thing Jethro came for, to know more fully and particularly what he had heard the general report of. Note, Conversation concerning God's *wondrous works* is profitable conversation; it is *good, and to the use of edifying*, Ps. 105. 2. Compare Ps. 145. 11, 12. Asking and telling news, and discoursing of it, are not only an allowable entertainment of conversation, but are capable of being turned to a very good account, by taking notice of God's providence, and its operations and tendencies in all occurrences.

III. The impressions this narrative made upon Jethro. 1. He congratulated God's Israel; (v. 9.) *Jethro rejoiced*. He not only rejoiced in the honour done to his son-in-law, but in *all the goodness done to Israel*, v. 9. Note, Public blessings are the joy of public spirits. While the Israelites were themselves murmuring, notwithstanding all God's goodness to them, here was a Midianite rejoicing. This was not the only time that the faith of the Gentiles shamed the unbelief of the Jews; see Math. 8. 10. Standers-by were more affected with the favours God had showed to Israel, than they were that received them. 2. He gave the glory to Israel's God; (v. 10.) "*Blessed be Jehovah*," (for by that name he is now known,) "*who hath delivered you, Moses and Aaron, out of the hand of Pharaoh*, so that though he designed your death, he could not effect it, and by your ministry has delivered the people." Note, Whatever we have the joy of, God must have the praise of. 3. His faith was hereby confirmed, and he took this occasion to make a solemn profession of it; (v. 11.) *Now know I that Jehovah is greater than all gods*. Observe, (1.) The matter of his faith: That the God of Israel is greater than all pretenders, all false and counterfeit deities, that usurp divine honours; he silences them, subdues them, and is too hard for them all, and therefore is himself the only *living and true God*. He is also higher than all princes and potentates, (who also are called gods,) and has both an incontestable authority over them, and an irresistible power to control and over-rule them; he manages them all as he pleases, and gets honour upon them, how great soever they are. (2.) The confirmation and improvement of his faith; *Now know I*; he knew it before, but now he knew it better; his faith grew up to a full assurance, upon this fresh evidence. Those obstinately shut their eyes against the clearest light, who do not know that *the Lord is greater than all gods*. (3.) The ground and reason upon which he built it; *for wherein they dealt proudly*, the magicians, and the idols which the Egyptians worshipped, or Pharaoh and his grandees, (they both

opposed God, and set up in competition with him,) *he was above them*. The magicians were baffled, the idols shaken, Pharaoh humbled, his powers broken, and, in spite of all their confederacies, God's Israel was rescued out of their hands. Note, Sooner or later, God will show himself above those that by their proud dealings contest with him. He that *exalts himself against God shall be abased*.

IV. The expressions of their joy and thankfulness; they had communion with each other, both in a feast and in a sacrifice; v. 12. Jethro, being hearty in Israel's interests, was cheerfully admitted, though a Midianite, into fellowship with Moses and the elders of Israel, *forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham*, though of a younger house.

1. They joined in a sacrifice of thanksgiving; *Jethro took burnt-offerings for God*, and, probably, offered them himself, for he was a priest in Midian, and a worshipper of the true God, and the priesthood was not yet settled in Israel. Note, Mutual friendship is sanctified by joint-worship. It is a very good thing for relations and friends, when they come together, to join in the spiritual sacrifice of prayer and praise, as those that meet in Christ, the Centre of unity.

2. They joined in a feast of rejoicing, a feast upon the sacrifice. Moses, upon this occasion, invited his relations and friends to an entertainment in his own tent, a laudable usage among friends, and which Christ himself not only warranted, but recommended, by his acceptance of such invitations. This was a temperate feast, *They did eat bread*; this bread, we may suppose, was manna. Jethro must see and taste that bread from heaven, and, though a Gentile, is as welcome to it as any Israelite; the Gentiles still are so to Christ, the Bread of life. It was a feast kept after a godly sort; they did eat bread *before God*, soberly, thankfully, in the fear of God; and their table-talk was such as became saints. Thus we must eat and drink, to the glory of God, behaving ourselves at our tables as these who believe that God's eye is upon us.

13. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. 14. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? 15. And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: 16. When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another; and I do make *them* know the statutes of God, and his laws. 17. And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. 18. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. 19. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: 20. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must

walk, and the work that they must do. 21. Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them, *to be* rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: 22. And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, *that* every great matter they shall bring unto thee; but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear *the burden* with thee. 23. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee *so*, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. 24. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. 25. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 26. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. 27. And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

Here is,

I. The great zeal and industry of Moses as a magistrate. Having been employed to redeem Israel out of the house of bondage, herein he is a further type of Christ, that he is employed as a lawgiver and a judge among them.

1. He was to answer inquiries, and acquaint them with the will of God in doubtful cases, and to explain the laws of God that were already given them, concerning the sabbath, the manna, &c. beside the laws of nature, relating both to piety and equity, *v. 15, They came to inquire of God*; and happy it was for them that they had such an oracle to consult: we are ready to wish, many a time, that we had some such certain way of knowing God's mind, when we are at a loss what to do. Moses was faithful both to him that appointed him, and to them that consulted him, and made them *know the statutes of God, and his laws, v. 16*. His business was, not to make laws, but to make known God's laws; his place was but that of a servant.

2. He was to decide controversies, and determine matters in variance, judging between a man and his fellow, *v. 16*. And if the people were as quarrelsome one with another, as they were with God, no doubt he had a great many causes brought before him; and the more, because their trials put them to no expense, nor was the law costly to them. When a quarrel happened in Egypt, and Moses would have reconciled the contenders, they asked, *Who made thee a prince and a judge?* But now it was past dispute that God had made him one; and they humbly attend him whom they had then proudly rejected.

This was the business Moses was called to, and it appears that he did it, (1.) With great consideration, which, some think, is intimated in his posture; he *sat* to judge, (*v. 13*.) composed and sedate. (2.) With great condescension to the people, who stood *by him, v. 14*. He was very easy of access, the meanest Israelite was welcome himself to bring his cause before him. (3.) With great constancy and

closeness of application. [1.] Though Jethro, his father-in-law, was with him, which might give him a good pretence for a vacation, (he might have adjourned the court for that day, or, at least, have shortened it,) yet he sits, even the next day after his coming, *from the morning unto the evening*. Note, Necessary business must always take place of ceremonious attentions. It is too great a compliment to our friends, to prefer the enjoyment of their company before our duty to God, which ought to be done, while yet the other is not left undone. [2.] Though Moses was advanced to great honour, yet he did not therefore take his ease, and throw upon others the burthen of care and business; no, he thought his preferment, instead of discharging him from service, made it more obligatory upon him. Those think of themselves above what is meet, who think it below them to do good. It is the honour even of angels themselves to be serviceable. [3.] Though the people had been provoking to him, and were ready to stone him, (*ch. 17. 4*.) yet still he made himself the servant of all. Note, Though others fail in their duty to us, yet we must not therefore neglect our's to them. [4.] Though he was an old man, yet he kept to his business from morning to night, and made it his meat and drink to do it. God had given him great strength both of body and mind, which enabled him to go through a great deal of work with ease and pleasure; and, for the encouragement of others to spend and be spent in the service of God, it proved, that, after all his labours, his natural force was not abated. They that wait on the Lord and his service shall renew their strength.

II. The great prudence and consideration of Jethro, as a friend. 1. He disliked the method that Moses took, and was so free with him as to tell him so, *v. 14, 17, 18*. He thought it was too much business for Moses to undertake alone, that it would be a prejudice to his health, and too great a fatigue to him; and also that it would make the administration of justice tiresome to the people. And therefore he tells him plainly, *It is not good*. Note, There may be over-doing even in well-doing, and therefore our zeal must always be governed by discretion, that our good may not be evil spoken of. Wisdom is profitable to direct, that we may neither content ourselves with less than our duty, nor overtask ourselves with that which is beyond our strength. 2. He advised him to such a model of government as would better answer the intention, which was, (1.) That he should reserve to himself all applications to God; (*v. 19*.) *Be thou for them to God-ward*; that was an honour which it was not fit any other should share with him in, *Numb. 12. 6, 8*. Also, whatever concerned the whole congregation in general must pass through his hand, *v. 20*. But, (2.) That he should appoint judges in the several tribes and families, who should try causes between man and man, and determine them, which would be done with less noise, and more despatch, than in the general assembly where'n Moses himself presided. Thus they must be governed as a nation by a king as supreme, and inferior magistrates sent and commissioned by him, *1 Pet. 11. 13, 14*. Thus many hands would make light work, causes would be sooner heard, and the people eased by having justice thus brought to their tent-doors. Yet, (3.) An appeal might be, if there were just cause for it, from these inferior courts to Moses himself; at least, if the judges were themselves at a loss; (*v. 22*.) *Every great matter they shall bring unto thee*. Thus, that great man would be the more serviceable by being employed only in great matters. Note, Those whose gifts and stations are most eminent, may yet be greatly furthered in their work, by the assistance of those that are every way their infe-

riors, which therefore they should not despise. The head has need of the hands and feet, 1 Cor. 12. 21. Great men should not only study to be useful themselves, but contrive how to make others useful, according as their capacity is.

This is Jethro's advice, by which it appears, that, though Moses excelled him in prophecy, he excelled Moses in politics. Yet he adds two qualifications to his counsel.

[1.] That great care should be taken in the choice of the persons who should be admitted into this trust; (v. 21.) they must be *able men*, &c. It was requisite that they should be men of the best character, *First*, For judgment and resolution; *able men*, men of good sense, that understood business, and bold men, that would not be daunted by frowns or clamours. Clear heads and stout hearts make good judges. *Secondly*, For piety and religion; *such as fear God*, as believe there is a God above them, whose eye is upon them, to whom they are accountable, and whose judgment they stand in awe of; conscientious men, that dare not do a base thing, though they could do it ever so secretly and securely. The fear of God is that principle which will best fortify a man against all temptations to injustice, Neh. 5. 15. Gen. 42. 18. *Thirdly*, For integrity and honesty; *men of truth*, whose word one may take, and whose fidelity one may rely upon; who would not for a world tell a lie, betray a trust, or act an insidious part. *Fourthly*, For a noble and generous contempt of worldly wealth; *hating covetousness*, not only not seeking bribes, or aiming to enrich themselves, but abhorring the thought of it; he is fit to be a magistrate, and he alone, who *despise the gain of oppression*, and *shake the hands from the holding of bribes*, Isa. 33. 15.

[2.] That he should attend God's direction in the case; (v. 23.) *If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so*. Jethro knew that Moses had a better counsellor than he was, and to his counsel he refers him. Note, Advice must be given with a humble submission to the word and providence of God, which must always over-rule.

Now Moses did not despise this advice, because it came from one not acquainted, as he was, with the words of God, and the visions of the Almighty; but he *hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law*, v. 24. When he came to consider the thing, he saw the reasonableness of what his father-in-law offered, and resolved to put it in practice, which he did soon afterward, when he had received directions from God in that matter. Note, Those are not so wise as they would be thought to be, who think themselves too wise to be counselled; for a wise man (one who is truly so) *will hear, and will increase learning*, and not slight good counsel, though given by an inferior. Moses did not leave the election of the magistrates to the people, who had already done enough to prove themselves unfit for such a trust; but he chose them, and appointed them, some for greater, others for lesser divisions, the lesser, probably, subordinate to the greater. We have reason to value government as a very great mercy, and to thank God for laws and magistrates, so that we are not like *the fishes of the sea*, where the greater devour the lesser.

III. Jethro's return to his own land, v. 27. No doubt he took home with him the improvements he had made in the knowledge of God, and communicated them to his neighbours for their instruction. It is supposed that the Kenites (mentioned, 1 Sam. 15. 6.) were the posterity of Jethro, (compare Judg. 1. 16.) and they are there taken under special protection, for the kindness their ancestor here showed Israel. The good-will showed to God's people, even in the smallest instances, shall in no wise lose

its reward, but shall be recompensed, at furthest, in the resurrection.

CHAP. XIX.

This chapter introduces the solemnity of the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, which was one of the most striking appearances of the Divine Glory that ever was in this lower world. We have here, I. The circumstances of time and place, v. 1, 2. II. The covenant between God and Israel settled in general. The gracious proposal God made to them; (v. 3. 6.) and their consent to the proposal, v. 7, 8. III. Notice given, three days before, of God's design to give the law out of a thick cloud, v. 9. Orders given to prepare the people to receive the law; (v. 10. 13.) and care taken to execute those orders, v. 14, 15. IV. A terrible appearance of God's glory upon mount Sinai, v. 16. 20. V. Silence proclaimed, and strict charges given to the people to observe decorum, while God spake to them, v. 21. 25.

1. **I**N the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. 3. And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5. Now therefore, If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7. And Moses came, and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Here is,

I. The date of the great charter by which Israel was incorporated. 1. The time when it bears date; (v. 1.) *in the third month* after they came out of Egypt. It is computed that the law was given just fifty days after their coming out of Egypt, in remembrance of which, the feast of Pentecost was observed the fiftieth day after the passover; and, in compliance with which, the Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, at the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the death of Christ. In Egypt, they had spoken of a three days' journey into the wilderness to the place of the sacrifice, (ch. 5. 3.) but it proved to be almost a two months' journey; so often are we out in calculation of times; and things prove longer in the doing than we expected. 2. The place whence it bears date; from *mount Sinai*, a place which nature, not art, had made eminent and conspicuous, for it was the highest of all that range of mountains. Thus God put contempt upon cities, and palaces, and magnificent structures, setting up his pavilion on the top of a high mountain, in a

waste and barren desert, there to carry on this treaty. It is called *Sinai*, from the multitude of thorny bushes that overspread it.

II. The charter itself; Moses was called up to the mountain, (on the top of which God had pitched his tent, and at the foot of which Israel had pitched their's,) and was employed as the mediator, or rather no more than the messenger, of the covenant; (v. 3.) *Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel.* Here the learned Bishop Patrick observes, that the people are called by the names *both of Jacob and Israel*, to remind them, that they who had lately been as low as Jacob, when he went to Padan-aram, were now grown as great as God made him, when he came from thence, (justly enriched with the spoils of him that had oppressed him,) and was called *Israel*.

Now observe, 1. That the Maker, and the first Mover, of the covenant, is God himself. Nothing was said or done by this stupid and unthinking people themselves toward this settlement; no motion made, no petition put up for God's favour, but this blessed charter was granted *ex mero motu*—*purely out of God's own good-will*. Note, In all our dealings with God, free grace prevents us with the blessings of goodness, and all our comfort is owing, not to our knowing God, but rather to our being *known of him*, Gal. 4. 9. *We love him, visit him, and covenant with him, because he first loved us*, visited us, and covenanted with us. God is the Alpha, and therefore must be the Omega. 2. That the matter of the covenant is not only just and unexceptionable, and such as puts no hardship upon them, but kind and gracious, and such as gives them the greatest privileges and advantages imaginable.

(1.) He reminds them of what he had done for them, v. 4. He had righted them, and avenged them upon their persecutors and oppressors; "*Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians*, how many lives were sacrificed to Israel's honour and interests;" he had given them unparalleled instances of his favour to them, and his care of them; *I bare you on eagles' wings*, a high expression of the wonderful tenderness God had showed for them; it is explained, Deut. 32. 11, 12. It denotes great speed; God not only came upon the wing for their deliverance, (when the set time was come, he rode on a cherub, and did fly,) but he hastened them out, as it were, upon the wing; he did it also with great ease, with the strength, as well as with the swiftness, of an eagle. They that faint not, nor are weary, are said to *mount up with wings as eagles*, Isa. 40. 31. Especially, it denotes God's particular care of them, and affection to them. Even Egypt, that iron furnace, was the nest in which these young ones were hatched, where they were first formed as the embryo of a nation; when, by the increase of their numbers, they grew to some maturity, they were carried out of that nest. Other birds carry their young in their talons, but the eagle (they say) upon her wings, so that even those archers who shoot flying cannot hurt the young ones, unless they first shoot through the old one. Thus, in the Red-sea, the pillar of cloud and fire, the token of God's presence, interposed itself between the Israelites and their pursuers; (lines of defence which could not be forced, a wall which could not be penetrated;) yet this was not all; their way, so paved, so guarded, was glorious, but their end much more so; *I brought you unto myself*. They were brought not only into a state of liberty and honour, but into covenant and communion with God. This, this was the glory of their deliverance, as it is of our's by Christ, that he died, *the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*. This God aims at in all the gracious methods of his providence and grace, to bring us back to himself, from whom we have revolted, and to

bring us home to himself, in whom alone we can be happy. He appeals to themselves, and their own observation and experience, for the truth of what is here insisted on; *Ye have seen what I did*; so that they could not disbelieve God, unless they would first disbelieve their own eyes. They saw how all that was done was purely the Lord's doing. It was not they that reached toward God, but it was he that brought them to himself. Some have well observed, that the *Old-Testament church* is said to be borne upon eagles' wings, denoting the power of that dispensation which was carried on with *a high hand and an outstretched arm*; but the *New-Testament church* is said to be gathered by the Lord Jesus, *as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings*, (Matth. 23. 37.) denoting the grace and compassion of that dispensation, and the admirable condescension and humiliation of the Redeemer.

(2.) He tells them plainly what he expected and required from them; in one word, *obedience*, (v. 5.) that they should *obey his voice indeed, and keep his covenant*. Being thus saved by him, that which he insisted upon, was, that they should be ruled by him. The reasonableness of this demand is, long after, pleaded with them, that *in the day he brought them out of the land of Egypt*, this was the condition of the covenant, *Obey my voice*; (Jer. 7. 23.) and this he is said to protest earnestly to them, Jer. 11. 4, 7. Only *obey indeed*, not in profession and promise only, not in pretence, but in sincerity. God had showed them real favours, and therefore required real obedience.

(3.) He assures them of the honour he would put upon them, and the kindness he would show them, in case they did thus keep his covenant; (v. 5, 6.) *Then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me*. He does not specify any one particular favour, as giving them the land of Canaan, or the like, but expresses it in that which was inclusive of all happiness, that he would be to them a God in covenant, that they should be to him a people. [1.] God here asserts his sovereignty over, and propriety in, the whole visible creation; *All the earth is mine*. Therefore he needed them not; He, that had so vast a dominion, was great enough, and happy enough, without concerning himself for so small a demesne as Israel was. All nations on the earth being his, he might choose which he pleased for his peculiar, and act in a way of sovereignty. [2.] He appropriates Israel to himself. *First*, As a people dear unto him, *You shall be a peculiar treasure*; not that God was enriched by them, as a man is by his treasure, but he was pleased to value and esteem them as a man does his treasure, they were *precious in his sight and honourable*; (Isa. 43. 4.) *he set his love upon them*; (Deut. 7. 7.) took them under his special care and protection, as a treasure that is kept under lock and key. He looked upon the rest of the world but as trash and lumber in comparison with them. By giving them divine revelation, instituted ordinances, and promises inclusive of eternal life, by sending his prophets among them, and pouring out his Spirit upon them, he distinguished them from, and dignified them above, all people. And this honour he gave all the saints, they are unto God a *peculiar people*, (Tit. 2. 14.) his when he *makes up his jewels*. *Secondly*, As a people devoted to him, and to his honour and service, (v. 6.) *a kingdom of priests, a holy nation*. All the Israelites, if compared with other people, were priests unto God, so near were they to him, (Ps. 148. 14.) so much employed in his immediate service, and such intimate communion they had with him. When they were first made free people, it was that they might sacrifice to the Lord their God as priests; they were under God's immediate government, and the tendency of the laws given them was to distinguish them from others, and engage

them for God as a holy nation. Thus all believers are, through Christ, made to our God kings and priests, (Rev. 1. 6.) *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood*, 1 Pet. 2. 9.

III. Israel's acceptance of this charter, and consent to the conditions of it. 1. Moses faithfully delivered God's message to them; (v. 7.) he *laid before their faces all those words*; he not only explained to them what God had given him in charge, but he put it to their choice, whether they would accept these promises upon these terms, or no. His laying it to their faces, bespeaks his laying it to their consciences. 2. They readily agreed to the covenant proposed. They would oblige themselves to obey the voice of God, and take it as a great favour to be made a kingdom of priests to him. They answered together as one man, *namine contradicente—without a dissentient voice*, (v. 8.) *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do*. Thus they strike the bargain, accepting the Lord to be to them a God, and giving up themselves to be to him a people. Oh that there had been such a heart in them! 3. Moses, as a mediator, returned the words of the people to God, v. 8. Thus Christ, the mediator between us and God, as a Prophet, reveals God's will to us, his precepts and promises, and then, as a Priest, offers up to God our spiritual sacrifices, not only of prayer and praise, but of devout affections, and pious resolutions, the work of his own Spirit in us. Thus he is that blessed *Days-Man who lays his hand upon us both*.

9. And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. 10. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes. 11. And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. 12. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves *that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it*: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13. There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. 14. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. 15. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your wives*.

Here,

I. God signifies to Moses his purpose of coming down upon mount Sinai, in some visible appearance of his glory in a thick cloud; (v. 9.) for he said that he would dwell in the thick darkness, (2 Chron. 6. 1.) and he made it his pavilion, (Ps. 18. 11.) *holding back the face of his throne*, then when he set it upon mount Sinai, and spreading a cloud upon it, Job 26. 9. This thick cloud was to prohibit curious inquiries into things secret, and to command an awful adoration of that which was revealed. God would come down in the sight of all the people; (v. 11.) though they should see no manner of simili-

tude, yet they should see so much as would convince them that God was among them of a truth. And so high was the top of mount Sinai, that it is supposed that not only the camp of Israel, but even the countries about, might discern some extraordinary appearance of glory upon it, which would strike terror upon them. It seems also to have been particularly intended to put an honour upon Moses, (v. 9.) *that they may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever*. Thus the correspondence was to be first settled by a sensible appearance of the divine glory, which was afterward to be carried on more silently by the ministry of Moses. In like manner, the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon Christ at his baptism, and all that were present heard God speak to him, (Matt. 3. 17.) that afterward, without the repetition of such visible tokens, they might believe him. So likewise the Spirit descended in token and signs upon the apostles, (Acts, 2. 3.) that they might be believed. Observe, When the people had declared themselves willing to obey the voice of God, then God promised they should hear his voice; for if any man be resolved to *do his will, he shall know it*, John 7. 17.

II. He ordered Moses to make preparation for this great solemnity, giving him two days' time for it.

1. He must *sanctify the people*, (v. 10.) as Job, before this, sent and *sanctified his sons*, Job. 1. 5. He must raise their expectation by giving them notice what God would do, and assist their preparation by directing them what they must do. "*Sanctify them*," that is, "Call them off from their worldly business, and call them to religious exercises, meditation, and prayer, that they may receive the law from God's mouth with reverence and devotion. *Let them be ready*," v. 11. Note, When we are to attend upon God in solemn ordinances, it concerns us to sanctify ourselves, and to get ready beforehand. Wandering thoughts must be gathered in, impure affections abandoned, disquieting passions suppressed, nay, and all cares about secular business for the present dismissed, and I bid by, that our hearts may be engaged to approach unto God. Two things particularly were prescribed as signs and instances of their preparation. (1.) In token of their cleansing of themselves from all sinful pollutions, that they might be holy to God, they must *wash their clothes*, (v. 10.) and they did so; (v. 14.) not that God regards our clothes; but, while they were washing their clothes, he would have them think of washing their souls by repentance from the sins they had contracted in Egypt, and since their deliverance. It becomes us to appear in clean clothes when we wait upon great men; so clean hearts are required in our attendance on the great God, who sees them as plainly as men see our clothes. This is absolutely necessary to our acceptable worshipping of God. See Ps. 26. 6. Isa. 1. 16. 18. Heb. 10. 22. (2.) In token of their devoting themselves entirely to religious exercises, upon this occasion, they must abstain even from lawful enjoyments during these three days, and not *come at their wives*, v. 15. See 1 Cor. 7. 5.

2. He must *set bounds about the mountain*, v. 12, 13. Probably, he drew a line, or ditch, round at the foot of the hill, which none were to pass, upon pain of death. This was to intimate, (1.) That humble awful reverence which ought to possess the minds of all those that worship God. We are mean creatures before a great Creator, vile sinners before a holy righteous judge; and therefore a godly fear and shame well become us, Heb. 12. 28. Ps. 2. 11. (2.) The distance which worshippers were kept at, under that dispensation, which we ought to take notice of, that we may the more value our privilege under the gospel, having *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. 10. 19.

3. He must order the people to attend upon the summons that should be given; (v. 13.) "*When the trumpet soundeth long*, then let them take their places at the foot of the mount, and so sit down at God's feet," as it is explained, Deut. 33. 3. Never was so great a congregation called together, and preached to, at once, as this was here. No one man's voice could have reached so many, but the voice of God did.

16. And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled. 17. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20. And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22. And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. 23. And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargest us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24. And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down; and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. 25. So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Now, at length, is come that memorable day, that terrible day of the Lord, that day of judgment, in which *Israel heard the voice of the Lord God speaking to them out of the midst of the fire, and lived*, Deut. 4. 33. Never was there such a sermon preached, before or since, as this which was here preached to the church in the wilderness. For,

I. The Preacher was God himself; (v. 18.) *The Lord descended in fire*, and, (v. 20.) *The Lord came down upon mount Sinai*. The *Shechinah*, or Glory of the Lord, appeared in the sight of all the people; he *shined forth from mount Paran*, with *ten thousands of his saints*, (Deut. 33. 2.) that is, attended, as the Divine Majesty always is, with a multitude of the holy angels, who were both to grace the solemnity, and to assist it. Hence the law is said to be given *by the disposition of angels*, Acts, 7. 53.

II. The pulpit (or throne rather) was mount Sinai, hung with a *thick cloud*, (v. 16.) covered with *smoke*, (v. 18.) and made to *quake greatly*. Now

it was that the earth *trembled at the presence of the Lord*, and the *mountains skipped like rams*; (Ps. 114. 4, 7.) that Sinai itself, the rough and rocky, *melted from before the Lord God of Israel*, Judg. 5. 5. Now it was that the *mountains saw him, and trembled*, (Hab. 3. 10.) and were witnesses against a hard-hearted unmoved people, whom nothing would influence.

III. The congregation was called together by the *sound of a trumpet, exceeding loud*, (v. 16.) and *waxed louder and louder*, v. 19. This was done by the ministry of the angels, and we read of trumpets sounded by angels, Rev. 8. 6. It was the *sound of the trumpet that made all the people tremble*, as those who knew their own guilt, and that they had reason to expect that the sound of this trumpet should have been to them the *alarm of war*.

IV. Moses brought the hearers to the place of meeting, v. 17. He that had led them out of the bondage of Egypt, now led them to receive the law from God's mouth. Public persons are then public blessings, when they lay out themselves in their places to promote the public worship of God. Moses, at the head of an assembly worshipping God, was as truly great, as Moses at the head of an army in the field.

V. The introductions to the service were *thunders and lightnings*, v. 16. These were designed to strike an awe upon the people, and to raise and engage their attention. Were they asleep? The thunders would waken them. Were they looking another way? The lightnings would engage them to turn their faces toward him that spake to them. Thunder and lightning have natural causes, but the scripture directs us in a particular manner to take notice of the power of God, and his terror, in them. Thunder is the voice of God, and lightning the fire of God, proper to engage the senses of sight and hearing, those senses by which we receive so much of our information.

VI. Moses is God's minister, who is spoken to, to command silence, and keep the congregation in order; (v. 19.) *Moses spake*. Some think that it was now that he said, *I exceedingly fear and quake*; (Heb. 12. 21.) but God stilled his fear by his distinguishing favour to him, in calling him up to the top of the mount, (v. 20.) by which also he tried his faith and courage. No sooner was Moses got up a little way toward the top of the mount, than he was sent down again to keep the people from *breaking through to gaze*, v. 21. Even the priests or princes, the heads of the houses of their fathers, who officiated for their respective families, and therefore are said to *come near to the Lord* at other times, must now keep their distance, and conduct themselves with a great deal of caution. Moses pleads that they needed not to have any further orders given them, effectual care was taken already to prevent any intrusions, v. 23. But God, who knew their wilfulness and presumption, and what was now in the hearts of some of them, hastens him down with this in charge, that neither the priests nor the people should offer to force the lines which were set, to *come up unto the Lord*, but Moses and Aaron only, the men whom God delighted to honour. Observe, 1. What it was that God forbade them—*breaking through to gaze*; enough was provided to awaken their consciences, but they were not allowed to gratify their vain curiosity. They might see, but not gaze. Some of them, probably, were desirous to see some similitude, that they might know how to make an image of God, which he took care to prevent, for they *saw no manner of similitude*, Deut. 4. 15. Note, In divine things, we must not covet to know more than God would have us know; and he has allowed us as much as is good

for us. A desire of forbidden knowledge was the ruin of our first parents. Those that would be wise above what is written, and intrude into those things which they have not seen, need this admonition, that they *break not through to gaze*. 2. Under what penalty it was forbidden, *Lest the Lord break forth upon them*, (v. 22-24.) and *many of them perish*. Note, (1.) The restraints and warnings of the divine law are all intended for our good, and to keep us out of that danger which otherwise we should, by our own folly, run ourselves into. (2.) It is at our peril, if we break the bounds that God has set us, and intrude upon that which he has not allowed us; the Bethshemites and Uzzah paid dear for their presumption. And even when we are called to approach God, we must remember that he is in heaven, and we upon earth, and therefore it behoves us to exercise reverence and godly fear.

CHAP. XX.

All things being prepared for the solemn promulgation of the divine law, we have, in this chapter, I. The ten commandments, as God himself spake them upon mount Sinai; (v. 1-17.) as remarkable a portion of scripture as any in the Old Testament. II. The impressions made upon the people thereby, v. 18-21. III. Some particular instructions, which God gave privately to Moses, to be by him communicated to the people, relating to his worship, v. 22-26.

1. **AND** God spake all these words, saying, 2. *I am the LORD thy God*, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6. And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. 7. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 8. Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy. 9. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11. For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

Here is,

I. The preface of the law-writer, Moses; (v. 1.) *God spake all these words*. The law of the ten commandments is, 1. A law of God's making. They are enjoined by the infinite eternal Majesty of heaven and earth. And *where the word of the*

King of kings is, surely there is power. 2. It is a law of his own speaking. God has many ways of speaking to the children of men; (Job 33. 14.) *once, yea twice*, by his Spirit, by conscience, by providences, by his voice; all which we ought careful y to attend to; but he never spake, at any time, upon any occasion, so as he spake the ten commandments, which therefore we ought to hear with the *more earnest heed*. It was not only spoken audibly, (so he owned the Redeemer by a voice from heaven, Matth. 3. 17.) but with a great deal of dreadful pomp. This law God had given to man before; (it was written in his heart by nature;) but sin had so defaced that writing, that it was necessary, in this manner, to revive the knowledge of it.

II. The preface of the Law-Maker; (v. 2.) *I am the LORD thy God*. Herein, 1. God asserts his own authority to enact this law in general; "I am the LORD, who command thee all that follows." 2. He proposes himself as the sole Object of that religious worship which is enjoined in the four first of the commandments. They are here bound to obedience by a threefold cord, which, one would think, could not easily be broken. (1.) Because *God is the Lord*—Jehovah, self-existent, independent, eternal, and the Fountain of all being and power; therefore he has an incontestable right to command us. He that gives being, may give law; and therefore he is able to bear us out in our obedience, to reward it, and to punish our disobedience. (2.) He was *their* God, a God in covenant with them, their God by their own consent; and if they would not keep his commandments, who would? He had laid himself under obligations to them by promise, and therefore might justly lay his obligations on them by precept. Though that covenant of peculiarity is now no more, yet there is another, by virtue of which all that are baptized are taken into relation to him as their God, and are therefore unjust, unfaithful, and very unkind, if they obey him not. (3.) He *had brought them out of the land of Egypt*; therefore they were bound in gratitude to obey him, because he had done them so great a kindness, had brought them out of a grievous slavery into a glorious liberty; they themselves had been eye-witnesses of the great things God had done, in order to their deliverance, and could not but have observed that every circumstance of it heightened their obligation; they were now enjoying the blessed fruits of their deliverance, and in expectation of a speedy settlement in Canaan; and could they think any thing too much to do for Him that had done so much for them? Nay, by redeeming them, he acquired a further right to rule them; they owed their service to him to whom they owed their freedom, and whose they were by purchase. And thus, Christ, having rescued us out of the bondage of sin, is entitled to the best service we can do him, Luke 1. 74. Having loosed our bonds, he has bound us to obey him, Ps. 116. 16.

III. The law itself. The four first of the ten commandments, which concern our duty to God, (commonly called the *first table*) we have in these verses. It was fit that those should be put first, because man had a Maker to love, before he had a neighbour to love; and justice and charity are then only acceptable acts of obedience to God, when they flow from the principles of piety. It cannot be expected that he should be true to his brother, who is false to his God.

Now our duty to God is, in one word, to worship him, that is, to give to him the glory due to his name, the inward worship of our affections, the outward worship of solemn address and attendance. This is spoken of as the sum and substance of the everlasting gospel, (Rev. 14. 7.) *Worship God*.

1. The first commandment concerns the *Object*

of our worship, *Jehovah*, and him only; (v. 3.) *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* The Egyptians, and other neighbouring nations, had many gods, the creatures of their own fancy, strange gods, *new gods*; this law was prefixed, because of that transgression, and *Jehovah* being the God of Israel, they must entirely cleave to him, and not be for any other, either of their own invention, or borrowed from their neighbours. This was the sin they were most in danger of, now that the world was so overspread with Polytheism, which yet could not be rooted out effectually, but by the gospel of Christ. The sin against this commandment, which we are most in danger of, is, giving the glory and honour to any creature, which are due to God only. Pride makes a god of self, covetousness makes a god of money, sensuality makes a god of the belly; whatever is esteemed and loved, feared or served, delighted in, or depended on, more than God, that (whatever it is) we do in effect make a god of. This prohibition includes a precept which is the foundation of the whole law, that we take the Lord for our God, acknowledge that he is God, accept him for our's, adore him with admiration and humble reverence, and set our affections entirely upon him. There is a reason intimated in the last words, *before me*; it intimates, (1.) That we cannot have any other god, but he will certainly know it. There is none *beside him*, but what is *before him*. Idolaters covet secrecy; but *shall not God search this out?* (2.) That it is very provoking to him; it is a sin that dares him to his face, which he cannot, which he will not, overlook, or connive at. See Ps. 44. 20. 21.

2. The second commandment concerns the ordinances of worship, or the way in which God will be worshipped, which it is fit that he himself should have the appointing of. Here is,

(1.) The prohibition; we are here forbidden to worship even the true God by images, v. 4, 5. [1.] The Jews (at least after the captivity) thought themselves forbidden by this commandment to make any image or picture whatsoever. Hence the very images which the Roman armies had in their ensigns are called *an abomination* to them, (Matth. 24. 15.) especially when they were set up *in the holy place*. It is certain that it forbids making any image of God, (for to whom can we liken him? Isa. 40. 18, 25.) or the image of any creature, for a religious use; it is called *the changing of the truth of God into a lie*, (Rom. 1. 25.) for an image is a *teacher of lies*; it insinuates to us that God has a body, whereas he is an infinite Spirit, Hab. 2. 18. It also forbids us to make images of God in our fancies, as if he were a *man as we are*. Our religious worship must be governed by the power of faith, not by the power of imagination. They must not make such images or pictures as the heathen worshipped, lest they also should be tempted to worship them. Those who would be kept from sin, must keep themselves from the occasions of it. [2.] They must not *bow down to them* occasionally, that is, show any sign of respect or honour to them, much less serve them constantly, by sacrifice or incense, or any other act of religious worship. When they paid their devotion to the true God, they must not have any image before them, for the directing, exciting, or assisting, of their devotion. Though the worship was designed to terminate in God, it would not please him if it came to him through an image. The best and most ancient lawgivers among the heathen forbade the setting up of images in their temples: it was forbidden in Rome by Numa, a pagan prince: yet commanded in Rome by the Pope, a Christian bishop, but, in this, antichristian. The use of images in the church of Rome, at this day, is so plainly contrary to the letter of this command,

and so impossible to be reconciled to, that, in all their catechisms and books of devotion which they put into the hands of the people, they leave out this commandment, joining the reason of it to the first; and so the third commandment they called the second, the fourth the third, &c.; only, to make up the number ten, they divide the tenth into two. Thus have they committed two great evils, in which they persist, and from which they hate to be reformed: they take away from God's word, and add to his worship.

(2.) The reasons to enforce this prohibition, (v. 5, 6.) which are, [1.] God's jealousy in the matters of his worship, "*The Lord Jehovah, and thy God, am a jealous God*, especially in things of this nature." It intimates the care he has of his own institutions, his hatred of idolatry and all false worship, his displeasure against idolaters, and that he resents every thing in his worship that looks like, or leads to, idolatry. Jealousy is quick-sighted. Idolatry being spiritual adultery, as it is very often represented in scripture, the displeasure of God against it is fitly called *jealousy*. If God is jealous herein, we should be so, afraid of offering any worship to God otherwise than as he has appointed in his word. [2.] The punishment of idolaters. God looks upon them as haters of him, though they perhaps pretend love to him; he will *visit their iniquity*, that is, he will very severely punish it, not only as a breach of his law, but as an affront to his majesty, a violation of the covenant, and a blow at the root of all religion. He will *visit it upon the children*, that is, this being a sin for which churches shall be unchurched, and a bill of divorce given them, together with the parents, the children also shall be cast out of covenant and communion, as with the parents the children were at first taken in. Or, he will bring such judgments upon a people as shall be the total ruin of families. If idolaters live to be old, so as to see their children of the third or fourth generation, it shall be the vexation of their eyes, and the breaking of their hearts, to see them fall by the sword, carried captives, and enslaved. Nor is it an unrighteous thing with God, (if the parents died in their iniquity, and the children tread in their steps, and keep up false worships, because they received them by tradition from their fathers,) when the measure is full, and God comes by his judgments to reckon with them, to bring into the account the idolatries their fathers were guilty of. Though he bear long with an idolatrous people, he will not bear always, but by the fourth generation, at furthest, he will begin to visit. Children are dear to their parents; therefore, to deter men from idolatry, and to show how much God is displeased with it, not only a brand of infamy is by it entailed upon families, but the judgments of God may for it be executed upon the poor children, when the parents are dead and gone. [3.] The favour God would show to his faithful worshippers, *Keeping mercy for thousands* of persons, thousands of generations of them *that love me, and keep my commandments*. This intimates that the second commandment, though, in the letter of it, it is only a prohibition of false worships, yet includes a precept of worshipping God in all those ordinances which he has instituted. As the first commandment requires the inward worship of love, desire, joy, hope, and admiration, so the second requires the outward worship of prayer and praise, and solemn attendance on God's word. Note, *First*, Those that truly love God will make it their constant care and endeavour to keep his commandments, particularly those that relate to his worship. Those that love God, and keep those commandments, shall receive grace to keep his other commandments. Gospel-worship will have a good influence upon all manner of gospel-obedience. *See*

condly, God has mercy in store for such; even *they* need mercy, and can't plead merit; and mercy they shall find with God; merciful protection in their obedience, and a merciful recompense of it. *Thirdly*, This mercy shall extend to *thousands*, much further than the wrath threatened to those that hate him, for *that* reaches but to the third or fourth generation. The streams of mercy run now as full, as free, and as fresh, as ever.

3. The third commandment concerns the *manner* of our worship, that it be done with all possible reverence and seriousness, *v. 7.*

We have here, (1.) A strict prohibition; *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* It is supposed, that, having taken Jehovah for their God, they would make mention of his name; (for thus all people will walk every one in the name of his God;) this command gives a needful caution not to mention it in vain, and it is still as needful as ever. We take God's name in vain, [1.] By hypocrisy, making a profession of God's name, and a value for it, but not living up to that profession. They that name the name of Christ, but do not depart from iniquity, as that name binds them to do, name it in *vain*, their worship is *vain*, (Matth. 15. 7. 9.) their oblations *vain*, (Isa. 1. 11, 13.) their religion *vain*, Jam. 1. 26. [2.] By covenant-breaking; if we make promises to God, binding our souls with those bands to that which is good, and yet perform not to the Lord our vows, we take his name in vain, (Matth. 5. 33.) it is folly, and God has no pleasure in fools, (Eccl. 5. 4.) nor will he be mocked, Gal. 6. 7. [3.] By rash swearing, mentioning the name of God, or any of his attributes, in the form of an oath, without any just occasion for it, or due application of mind to it, but as a by-word, to no purpose at all, or to no good purpose. [4.] By false swearing, which, some think, is chiefly intended in the letter of the commandment; so it was expounded by them of old time, *Thou shalt not forswear thyself*, Matth. 5. 33. One part of the religion regard the Jews were taught to pay to their God, was, to *swear by his name*, Deut. 10. 20. But they affronted him, instead of doing him honour, if they called him to be Witness to a lie. [5.] By using the name of God lightly and carelessly, and without any regard to its awful significance. The profanation of the forms of devotion is forbidden, as well as the profanation of the forms of swearing; as also the profanation of any of those things whereby God makes himself known, his word, or any of his institutions; when they are either turned into charms and spells, or into jest and sport, the name of God is taken in vain.

(2.) A severe penalty; *The Lord will not hold him guiltless*; magistrates, who punish other offences, may not think themselves concerned to take notice of this, because it does not immediately offer injury either to private property or the public peace; but God, who is jealous of his honour, will not thus connive at it. The sinner may perhaps hold himself guiltless, and think there is no harm in it, and that God will never call him to an account for it; to obviate which suggestion, the threatening is thus expressed, God will *not hold him guiltless*, as he hopes he will; but more is implied, namely, that God will himself be the Avenger of those that take his name in vain, and they will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

4. The fourth commandment concerns the *time* of worship; God is to be served and honoured daily, but *one day in seven* is to be particularly dedicated to his honour, and spent in his service.

Here is,

(1.) The command itself; (*v. 8.*) *Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy*; and *v. 10.* *In it thou shalt do no manner of work.* It is taken for granted

that the sabbath was instituted before; we read of God's blessing and sanctifying a seventh day from the beginning, (Gen. 2. 3.) so that this was not the enacting of a new law, but the reviving of an old law. [1.] They are told what is the day they must religiously observe, *a seventh, after six days' labour*; whether this was the seventh by computation from the first seventh, or from the day of their coming out of Egypt, or both, is not certain: now the precise day was not tied to them, (*ch. 16. 23.*) and from this they were to observe the seventh. [2.] How it must be observed. *First*, As a day of rest; they were to do no manner of work on this day, in their callings or worldly business. *Secondly*, As a holy day, set apart to the honour of the holy God, and to be spent in holy exercises. God, by blessing it, had made it holy; they, by solemnly blessing him, must keep it holy, and not alienate it to any other purpose than that for which the difference between it and other days was instituted. [3.] Who must observe it; *Thou, and thy son, and thy daughter*; the wife is not mentioned, because she is supposed to be one with the husband, and present with him; and if he sanctify the sabbath, it is taken for granted that she will join with him; but the rest of the family are specified; children and servants must keep the sabbath, according to their age and capacity: in this, as in other instances of religion, it is expected that masters of families should take care, not only to serve the Lord themselves, but that their houses also should serve him, at least, that it may not be through their neglect if they do not, Josh. 24. 15. Even the proselyted strangers must observe a difference between this day and other days, which, if it laid some restraint upon them then, yet proved a happy indication of God's gracious purpose, in process of time, to bring the Gentiles in to the church, that they might share in the benefit of sabbaths. Compare Isa. 56. 6, 7. God takes notice of what we do on sabbath-days, though we should be where we are strangers. [4.] A particular memorandum put upon this duty, *Remember it.* It is intimated that the sabbath was instituted and observed before; but in their bondage in Egypt they had either lost their computation, or were restrained by their task-masters, or, through a great degeneracy and indifference in religion, they had let fall the observance of it, and therefore it was requisite they should be reminded of it. Note, Neglected duties remain duties still, notwithstanding our neglect. It also intimates that we are both apt to forget it, and concerned to remember it. Some think it denotes the preparation we are to make for the sabbath; we must think of it before it comes, that, when it does come, we may keep it holy, and do the duty of it.

(2.) The reasons of this command; [1.] We have time enough for ourselves on the other six days; *Six days must thou labour*; time enough we have to serve ourselves in those six days, on the seventh day let us serve God; and time enough to tire ourselves, on the seventh it will be a kindness to us to be obliged to rest. [2.] This is God's day, it is the *sabbath of the Lord thy God*, not only instituted by him, but consecrated to him; it is sacrilege to alienate it, the sanctification of it is a debt. [3.] It is designed for a memorial of the creation of the world, and therefore to be observed to the glory of the Creator, as an engagement upon ourselves to serve him, and an encouragement to us to trust in him, who made heaven and earth. By the sanctification of the sabbath, the Jews declared that they worshipped the God that made the world, and so distinguished themselves from all other nations, who worshipped gods which they themselves made. [4.] God has given us an example of rest, after six days' work; he rested the seventh day, took a com-

placency in himself, and *rejoiced in the work of his hand*, to teach us on that day to take a complacency in him, and to give him the glory of his works, Ps. 92. 4. The sabbath began in the finishing of the work of creation, so will the everlasting sabbath in the finishing of the work of providence and redemption; and we observe the weekly sabbath in expectation of that, as well as in remembrance of the former; in both conforming ourselves to him we worship. [5.] He has himself *blessed the sabbath-day, and sanctified it*; he has put an honour upon it, by setting it apart for himself; it is the holy of the Lord and honourable, and he has put blessings into it, which he has encouraged us to expect from him in the religious observation of that day; it is *the day which the Lord hath made*, let not us do what we can to unmake it; he has blessed, honoured, and sanctified it, let not us profane it, dishonour it, and level that with common time, which God's blessing has thus dignified and distinguished.

12. Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. 13. Thou shalt not kill. 14. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15. Thou shalt not steal. 16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 17. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

We have here the laws of the second table, as they are commonly called, the six last of the ten commandments, comprehending our duty to ourselves and to one another, and constituting a comment upon the second great commandment, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. As religion toward God is an essential branch of universal righteousness, so righteousness toward men is an essential branch of true religion. Godliness and honesty must go together.

I. The fifth commandment concerns the duties we owe to our relations; that of children to their parents is the only duty specified; *Honour thy father and thy mother*, which includes, 1. A decent respect to their persons, an inward esteem of them, outwardly expressed upon all occasions in our conduct toward them; *Fear them*; (Lev. 19. 3.) *Give them reverence*, Heb. 12. 9. The contrary to this is, mocking at them and despising them, Prov. 30. 17. 2. Obedience to their lawful commands; so it is expounded; (Eph. 6. 1. . 3.) *Children, obey your parents*, come when they call you, go where they send you, do what they bid you, refrain from what they forbid you; and this, as children, cheerfully, and from a principle of love. Though you have said, "We will not," yet afterward repent and obey, Matth. 21. 29. 3. Submission to their rebukes, instructions, and corrections; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, out of conscience toward God. 4. Disposing of themselves with the advice, direction, and consent, of parents, nor alienating their property, but with their approbation. 5. Endeavouring in every thing to be the comfort of their parents, and to make their old age easy to them; maintaining them if they stand in need of support, which our Saviour makes to be particularly intended in this commandment, Matth. 15. 4. . 6.

The reason annexed to this commandment is a promise; *That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*: having men-

tioned, in the preface to the commandments, his bringing them out of Egypt as a reason for their obedience, he here, in the beginning of the second table, mentions his bringing them into Canaan, as another reason; that good land they must have upon their thoughts, and in their eye, now that they were in the wilderness. They must also remember, when they were come to that land, that they were upon their good behaviour, and that, if they did not conduct themselves well, their days should be shortened in that land; both the days of particular persons who should be cut off from it, and the days of their nation, which should be removed out of it. But here a long life in that good land is promised particularly to obedient children. They that do their duty to their parents are most likely to have the comfort of that which their parents gather for them, and leave to them: they that support their parents shall find that God, the common Father, will support them. This promise is expounded, (Eph. 6. 3.) *That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth*. These who, in conscience towards God, keep this and the rest of God's commandments, may be sure that it shall be well with them, and that they shall live as long on earth as Infinite Wisdom sees good for them, and that what they may seem to be cut short of on earth shall be abundantly made up in eternal life, the heavenly Canaan which God will give them.

II. The sixth commandment concerns our own and our neighbour's life; (v. 13.) "*Thou shalt not kill*"; thou shalt not do any thing hurtful or injurious to the health, ease, and life, of thy own body, or any other person's, unjustly." This is one of the laws of nature, and was strongly enforced by the precepts given to Noah and his sons, Gen. 9. 5, 6. It does not forbid killing in lawful war, or in our own necessary defence, or the magistrates' putting offenders to death, for those things tend to the preserving of life; but it forbids all malice and hatred to the persons of any, (for *he that hateth his brother is a murderer*;) and all personal revenge arising therefrom; also all rash anger upon sudden provocations, and hurt said or done, or aimed to be done, in passion; of this our Saviour expounds this commandment, Matth. 5. 22. And, as that which is worst of all, it forbids persecution, laying wait for the blood of the innocent, and excellent ones of the earth.

III. The seventh commandment concerns our own and our neighbour's chastity; (v. 14.) *Thou shalt not commit adultery*: this is put before the sixth by our Saviour, (Mark 10. 19.) *Do not commit adultery, do not kill*; for our chastity should be as dear to us as our lives, and we should be as much afraid of that which *defiles* the body as of that which *destroys* it. This commandment forbids all acts of uncleanness, with all those fleshly lusts which produce these acts, and war against the soul, and all those practices which cherish and excite those fleshly lusts, as *looking*, in order to lust, which Christ tells us, is forbidden in this commandment, Matth. 5. 28.

IV. The eighth commandment concerns our own and our neighbour's wealth, estate, and goods; (v. 15.) *Thou shalt not steal*: though God had lately allowed and appointed them to spoil the Egyptians, in a way of just reprisal, yet he did not intend that it should be drawn into a precedent, and that they should be allowed thus to spoil one another. This command forbids us to rob ourselves of what we have, by sinful spending, or of the use and comfort of it, by sinful sparing; and to rob others, by removing the ancient land-marks, invading our neighbour's rights, taking his goods from his person, or house, or field, forcibly or clandestinely, over-reaching in bargains, not restoring what is borrowed or

found, withholding just debts, rents, or wages; and it forbids us, what is worst of all, to rob the public in the coin or revenue, or that which is dedicated to the service of religion.

V. The ninth commandment concerns our own and our neighbour's good name; (v. 16.) *Thou shalt not bear false witness*: this forbids, 1. Speaking falsely on any matter, lying, equivocating, and any way devising and designing to deceive our neighbour. 2. Speaking unjustly against our neighbour, to the prejudice of his reputation; and, 3. (which involves the guilt of *both* these offences,) Bearing false witness against him, laying to his charge things that he knows not, either judicially, upon oath, by which the third commandment, and the sixth or eighth, as well as this, are broken; or extrajudicially, in common converse, slandering, backbiting, tale-bearing, aggravating what is done amiss, and making it worse than it is, and any way endeavouring to raise our own reputation upon the ruin of our neighbours.

VI. The tenth commandment strikes at the root; (v. 17.) *Thou shalt not covet*. The foregoing commands implicitly forbid all desire of doing that which will be an injury to our neighbour; this forbids all inordinate desire of having that which will be a gratification to ourselves. "Oh that such a man's house were mine! Such a man's wife mine! Such a man's estate mine!" This is certainly the language of discontent at our own lot, and envy at our neighbour's; and these are the sins principally forbidden here. St. Paul, when the grace of God caused the scales to fall from his eyes, perceived that this law, *Thou shalt not covet*, forbids all those irregular appetites and desires which are the first-born of the corrupt nature, the first risings of the sin that dwelleth in us, and the first beginnings of all the sins that is committed by us: this is that lust which, he says, he had not known the evil of, if this commandment, when it came to his conscience in the power of it, had not showed it him, Rom. 7. 7. God give us all to see our face in the glass of this law, and to lay our hearts under the government of it!

18. And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. 21. And the people stood afar off: and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

Observe,

I. The extraordinary terror with which the law was given; never was any thing delivered with such awful pomp; every word was accented, and every sentence paused, with thunder and lightning, much louder and brighter, no doubt, than ordinary. And why was the law given in this dreadful manner, and with all this tremendous ceremony? 1. It was designed (once for all) to give a sensible discovery of the glorious majesty of God, for the assistance of our faith concerning it, that, *knowing the terror of the Lord*, we may be persuaded to live in his fear. 2. It was a specimen of the terrors of the general judgment, in which sinners will be called to an account for the breach of this law: the archangel's

trumpet will then sound an alarm, to give notice of the Judge's coming, and a *fire shall devour before him*. 3. It was an indication of the terror of those convictions which the law brings into conscience, to prepare the soul for the comforts of the gospel. Thus was the law given by Moses in such a way as might startle, affright, and humble, men, that the *grace and truth which come by Jesus Christ* might be the more welcome. The apostle largely describes this instance of the terror of that dispensation, as a foil to set off our privileges, as Christians, in the light, liberty, and joy, of the New-Testament dispensation, Heb. 12. 18, &c.

II. The impression which this made, for the present, upon the people; they must have had stupid hearts indeed if this had not affected them. 1. *They removed, and stood afar off*, v. 18. Before God began to speak, they were thrusting forward to gaze; (ch. 19. 21.) but now they were effectually cured of their presumption, and taught to keep their distance. 2. *They entreated that the word should not be so spoken to them any more*, (Heb. 12. 19.) but begged that God would speak to them by Moses, v. 19. Hereby they obliged themselves to acquiesce in the mediation of Moses, they themselves nominating him as a fit person to deal between them and God, and promising to hearken to him as to God's messenger; hereby also they teach us to acquiesce in that method which Infinite Wisdom takes of speaking to us by men like ourselves, whose *terror shall not make us afraid, nor their hand be heavy upon us*. Once, God tried the expedient of speaking to the children of men immediately, but it was found that they could not bear it, it rather drove men from God than brought them to him, and, as it proved in the issue, though it terrified them, it did not deter them from idolatry, for, soon after this, they worshipped the golden calf; let us therefore rest satisfied with the instructions given us by the scriptures and the ministry; for, if we believe not them, neither should we be persuaded though God should speak to us in thunder and lightning, as he did from mount Sinai; here that matter was determined.

III. The encouragement Moses gave them, explaining the design of God in his terror; (v. 20.) *Fear not*, that is, "Think not that the thunder and fire are designed to consume you," which was the thing they feared, (v. 19.) *lest we die*; thunder and lightning constituted one of the plagues of Egypt; but Moses would not have them think it was sent to them on the same errand on which it was sent to the Egyptians: no, it was intended, 1. To prove them, to try how they would like dealing with God immediately, without a mediator, and so to convince them how admirably well God had chosen for them, in putting Moses into that office. Ever since Adam fled, upon hearing God's voice in the garden, sinful man could not bear either to speak to God, or hear from him immediately. 2. To keep them to their duty, and prevent their sinning against God. He encourages them, saying, *Fear not*, and yet tells them that God thus spoke to them, *that his fear might be before their face*. We must not fear with amazement—with that fear which has torment, which only works upon the fancy for the present, which sets us a trembling, which genders to bondage, which betrays us to Satan, and alienates us from God; but we must always have in our minds a reverence of God's majesty, a dread of his displeasure, and an obedient regard to his sovereign authority over us; this fear will quicken us to our duty, and make us circumspect in our walking; thus *stand in awe, and sin not*, Ps. 4. 4.

IV. The progress of their communion with God by the mediation of Moses, v. 21. While the people continued to stand afar off, conscious of guilt,

and afraid of God's wrath, *Moses drew near unto the thick darkness*; he *was made to draw near*, so the word is: Moses of himself durst not have ventured into the thick darkness, if God had not called him, and encouraged him, and, as some of the rabbins suppose, sent an angel to take him by the hand, and lead him up. Thus it is said of the great Mediator, *I will cause him to draw near*; (Jer. 30. 21.) and by him it is that we also are introduced, Eph. 3. 12.

22. And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. 23. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. 24. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. 25. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. 26. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

Moses being gone into the *thick darkness where God was*, God there spoke in his hearing only privately and without terror, all that follows from hence to the end of ch. 23, which is mostly an exposition of the ten commandments; and he was to transmit it by word of mouth first, and afterward in writing, to the people. The laws in these verses related to God's worship.

I. They are here forbidden to make images for worship; (v. 22, 23.) *Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven*; (such was his wonderful condescension, much more than for some mighty prince to talk familiarly with a company of poor beggars;) now *ye shall not make gods of silver*. This repetition of the second commandment comes in here, either, 1. As pointing to that which God had chiefly in view in giving them this law in this manner, that is, their peculiar addictedness to idolatry, and the peculiar sinfulness of that crime. Ten commandments God had given them, but Moses is ordered to inculcate upon them especially the two first. They must not forget any of them, but they must be sure to remember those. Or, 2. As pointing to that which might properly be inferred from God's speaking to them as he had done. He had given them sufficient demonstration of his presence among them; they needed not to make images of him, as if he were absent. Besides, they had only seen that he *talked* with them, they had seen no manner of similitude, so that they could not make any image of God; and his manifesting himself to them only by a voice, plainly showed them that they must not make any such image, but keep up their communion with God by his word, and not otherwise.

Two arguments are here hinted against image-worship. (1.) That thereby they would affront God, intimated in that, *Ye shall not make with me gods*: though they pretended to worship them but as representations of God, yet really they made them rivals with God, which he would not endure. (2.) That thereby they would abuse themselves, intimated in that, *Ye shall not make unto you gods*; while ye think by them to assist your devotion, ye

will really corrupt it, and put a cheat upon yourselves." At first, it should seem, they made their images for worship of gold and silver, pretending, by the richness of those metals, to honour God, and, by the brightness of them, to affect themselves with his glory; but even in these they *changed the truth of God into a lie*, and so by degrees were justly given up to such strong delusions as to worship images of wood or stone.

II. They are here directed in making altars for worship: it is meant of occasional altars, such as they reared now in the wilderness, before the tabernacle was erected, and afterward, upon special emergencies, for present use, such as Gideon built, (Judg. 6. 24.) Manoah, (Judg. 13. 19.) Samuel, (1 Sam. 7. 17.) and many others. We may suppose, now that the people of Israel were so much affected, as it appears they were, with this glorious discovery which God had made of himself to them, that many of them would incline, in this pang of devotion, to offer sacrifice to God; and, it being necessary to sacrifice that there be an altar, they are here appointed,

1. To make their altars very plain, either of *earth* or of *unhewn stone*, v. 24, 25. That they might not be tempted to think of a graven image, they must not so much as hew into shape the stones that they made their altars of, but pile them up as they were, in the rough. This rule being prescribed before the establishment of the ceremonial law, which appointed altars much more costly, intimates, that, after the period of that law, plainness should be accepted as the best ornament of the external services of religion, and that gospel-worship should not be performed with external pomp and gaiety. The beauty of holiness needs no paint, nor do those do any service to the spouse of Christ that dress her in the attire of a harlot, as the church of Rome does: an *altar of earth* does best.

2. To make their altars very low, (v. 26.) so that they might not go up by steps to them. That the higher the altar was, and the nearer heaven, the more acceptable the sacrifice was, was a foolish fancy of the heathen, who therefore chose high places; in opposition to which, and to show that it is the elevation of the heart, not of the sacrifice, that God looks at, they were here ordered to make their altars low: we may suppose that the altars they reared in the wilderness, and other occasional altars, were designed only for the sacrifice of one beast at a time: but the altar in Solomon's temple, which was to be made much longer and broader, that it might contain many sacrifices at once, was made ten cubits high, that the height might bear a decent proportion to the length and breadth; and to that it was requisite they should go up by steps, which yet, no doubt, were so contrived as to prevent the inconvenience here spoken of, the *discovery of their nakedness* thereon.

III. They are here assured of God's gracious acceptance of their devotions, wherever they were paid according to his will; (v. 24.) *In all places where I record my name*, or where my name is recorded, that is, where I am worshipped in sincerity, *I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee*. Afterward, God chose one particular place wherein to record his name; but that being taken away now under the gospel, when men are encouraged to pray every where, this promise revives in its full extent, that, wherever God's people meet in his name to worship him, he will be *in the midst of them*: he will honour them with his presence, and reward them with the gifts of his grace; there he will come unto them, and will bless them, and more than this we need not desire for the beautifying of our solemn assemblies.

CHAP. XXI.

The laws recorded in this chapter relate to the fifth and sixth commandments; and though they are not accommodated to our constitution, especially in point of servitude, nor are the penalties annexed binding on us, yet they are of great use for the explanation of the moral law, and the rules of natural justice. Here are several enlargements, I. Upon the fifth commandment, which concerns particular relations. 1. The duty of masters toward their servants; their men-servants, (v. 2..6.) and maid-servants, v. 7..11. 2. The punishment of disobedient children that strike their parents, (v. 15.) or curse them, v. 17. II. Upon the sixth commandment, which forbids all violence offered to the person of a man. Here is, 1. Concerning murder, v. 12..14. 2. Man-stealing, v. 16. 3. Assault and battery, v. 18, 19. 4. Correcting a servant, v. 20, 21. 5. Hurting a woman with child, v. 22, 23. 6. The law of retaliation, v. 24, 25. 7. Maiming a servant, v. 26, 27. 8. An ox goring, v. 28..32. 9. Damage by opening a pit, v. 33, 34. 10. Cattle fighting, v. 35, 36.

NOW these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. 2. If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. 3. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: 6. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever. 7. And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do. 8. If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. 9. And if he hath betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. 10. If he take him another wife, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. 11. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.

The first verse is the general title of the laws contained in this and the two following chapters; some of them relating to the religious worship of God, but most of them relating to matters between man and man. Their government being purely a Theocracy, that which in other states is to be settled by human prudence was directed among them by a divine appointment, so that the constitution of their government was peculiarly adapted to make them happy. These laws are called *judgments*, because they are framed in infinite wisdom and equity, and because their magistrates were to give judgment according to them. God delivered them privately to Moses, and he was to communi-

cate them to the people. In the doubtful cases that had hitherto occurred, Moses had particularly inquired of God for them, as appeared, *ch.* 18. 15, but now God gave him statutes in general by which to determine particular cases, which likewise he must apply to other like cases that might happen, which, falling under the same reason, fell under the same rule.

He begins with the laws concerning servants, commanding mercy and moderation toward them. The Israelites had lately been servants themselves; and now that they were become, not only their own masters, but masters of servants too, lest they should abuse their servants, as they themselves had been abused and ruled with rigour by the Egyptian task-masters, provision was made by these laws for the mild and gentle usage of servants. Note, If those who have had power over us, have been injurious to us, that will not in the least excuse us if we be in like manner injurious to those who are under our power, but will rather aggravate our crime, because, in that case, we may the more easily put our souls into their souls' stead.

Here is,

1. A law concerning *men-servants*, sold, either by themselves, or their parents, through poverty, or by the judges, for their crimes; even those of the latter sort (if Hebrews) were to continue in slavery but seven years at the most, in which time it was taken for granted that they would sufficiently smart for their folly or offence. At seven years' end, the servant should either go out free, (v. 2, 3.) or his servitude should from thenceforward be his choice, v. 5, 6. If he had a wife given him by his master, and children, he might either leave them and go out free himself, or, if he had such a kindness for them, that he would rather tarry with them in bondage than go out at liberty with ut them, he was to have his ear bored through to the door-post, and serve till the death of his master, or the year of jubilee. By this law, God taught, (1.) The Hebrew servants' generosity, and a noble love of liberty, for they were the Lord's freemen; a mark of disgrace must be put upon him who refused liberty when he might have it, though he refused it upon considerations otherwise laudable enough. Thus Christians, being *bought with a price, and called unto liberty*, must not be the servants of men, nor of the lusts of men, 1 Cor. 7. 23. There is a free and princely spirit that much helps to uphold a Christian, Ps. 51. 12. He likewise taught, (2.) The Hebrew masters not to trample upon their poor servants, knowing, not only that they had been by birth upon a level with them, but that, in a few years, they would be so again. Thus Christian masters must look with respect on believing servants, Philem. 16. This law will be further useful to us, [1.] To illustrate the right God has to the children of believing parents, as such, and the place they have in his church. They are by baptism enrolled among his servants, because they are *born in his house*, for they are therefore *born unto him*, Ezek. 16. 20. David owns himself God's servant, as he was *the son of his hand-maid*, (Ps. 116. 16.) and therefore entitled to protection, Ps. 86. 16. [2.] To explain the obligation which the great Redeemer laid upon himself to prosecute the work of our salvation, for he says, (Ps. 40. 6.) *Mine ears hast thou opened*, which seems to allude to this law. He *loved his Father*, and his *captive-spouse*, and the *children that were given him*, and *would not go out free* from his undertaking, but engaged to *serve in it for ever*, Isa. 42. 1, 4. Much more reason have we thus to engage ourselves to serve God *for ever*; we have all the reason in the world to *love our Master* and his work, and to have our ears bored to his door-posts, as those who desire not to go out free from

his service, but to be found more and more free to it, and in it, Ps. 84. 10.

2. Concerning *maid-servants*, whom their parents, through extreme poverty, had sold when they were very young, to such as they hoped would marry them when they grew up; if they did not, yet they must not sell them to strangers, but rather study how to make them amends for their disappointment; if they did, they must maintain them handsomely, *v. 7. 11.* Thus did God provide for the comfort and reputation of the daughters of Israel, and has taught husbands to *give honour to their wives*, (be their extraction ever so mean,) as to the *weaker vessels*, 1 Pet. 3. 7.

12. He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. 13. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver *him* into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. 14. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die. 15. And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. 16. And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. 17. And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. 18. And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with *his* fist, and he die not, but keepeth *his* bed; 19. If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote *him* be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause *him* to be thoroughly healed. 20. And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. 21. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he *is* his money.

Here is,

1. A law concerning murder; he had lately said, *Thou shalt not kill*; here he provides, (1.) For the punishing of wilful murder; (*v. 12.*) *He that smiteth a man*, whether upon a sudden passion, or in malice premeditated, *so that he die*, the government must take care that the murderer be *put to death*, according to that ancient law, (Gen. 9. 6.) *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.* God, who, by his providence, gives and maintains life, thus, by his law, protects it: so that mercy showed to a wilful murderer is real cruelty to all mankind besides: such a one, God here says, shall be taken even *from his altar*, (*v. 14.*) to which he might flee for protection; and if God will not shelter him, let him *flee to the pit, and let no man stay him.* (2.) For the relief of such as were killed by accident, *per infortunium*—*by misfortune*, as our law expresses it, or *chance-medley*, when a man, in doing a lawful act, without intent of hurt to any, happens to kill another, or, as it is here described, *God delivers him into his hand*; for nothing comes to pass by chance: what seems to us purely casual, is ordered by the Divine Providence, for wise and holy ends, secret to us. In this case, God provided cities of refuge for the protection of those whose infelicity it was, but not their fault, to

occasion the death of another, *v. 13.* With us, who know no avengers of blood but the magistrates, the law itself is a sufficient sanctuary for those whose minds are innocent, though their hands are guilty, and there needs no other.

2. Concerning rebellious children; it is here made a capital crime, to be punished with death, for children, either, (1.) To strike their parents, (*v. 15.*) so as either to draw blood, or to make the place struck, black and blue. Or, (2.) To curse their parents, (*v. 17.*) if they profaned any name of God in doing it, as the rabbins say. Note, The undutiful behaviour of children toward their parents is a very great provocation to God our common Father; and if men do not punish it, he will. Those are perfectly lost to all virtue, and abandoned to all wickedness, that have broken through the bonds of filial reverence and duty to such a degree as in word or action to abuse their own parents. What yoke will they bear, that have shaken off this? Let children take heed of entertaining in their minds any such thought or passions toward their parents as savour of undutifulness and contempt; for the righteous God searches the heart.

3. Here is a law against man-stealing; (*v. 16.*) *He that steals a man*, woman, or child, with a design to sell them to the Gentiles, (for no Israelites would buy them,) was adjudged to death by this statute; which is ratified by the apostle, (1 Tim. 1. 10.) where *men-stealers* are reckoned among those wicked ones against whom laws must be made by Christian princes.

4. Care is here taken, that satisfaction be made for hurt done to a person, though death do not ensue, *v. 18, 19.* He that did the hurt must be accountable for damages, and pay, not only for the cure, but for the loss of time: to which the Jews add, that he must likewise give some recompense, both for the pain and for the blemish, if there were any.

5. Direction is given what should be done, if a servant died by his master's correction. This servant must not be an Israelite, but a Gentile slave, as the negroes to our planters; and it is supposed that he smite him with a rod, and not with any thing that was likely to give a mortal wound; yet, if he died under his hand, he should be punished for his cruelty, at the discretion of the judges, upon consideration of circumstances, *v. 20.* But if he continued a day or two after the correction given, the master was supposed to suffer enough by losing his servant, *v. 21.* Our law makes the death of a servant, by his master's reasonable beating of him, but *chance-medley*. Yet let all masters take heed of tyrannizing over their servants; the gospel teaches them even to *forbear*, and moderate *threatenings*, (Eph. 6. 9.) considering, with holy Job, *What shall I do, when God riseth up?* Job 31. 13. . 15.

22. If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart *from her*; and yet no mischief follow; he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges *determine*. 23. And if *any* mischief follow, then thou shalt give *life* for life, 24. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25. Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. 26. And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go.

free for his eye's sake. 27. And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake. 28. If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox *shall be quit*: 29. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. 30. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give, for the ransom of his life, whatsoever is laid upon him. 31. Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. 32. If the ox shall push a man-servant, or maid-servant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. 33. And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; 34. The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead *beast* shall be his. 35. And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die, then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead *ox* also they shall divide. 36. Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own.

Observe here,

I. The particular care which the law took of women with child, that no hurt should be done them, which might occasion their miscarrying. The law of nature obliges us to be very tender in that case, lest the tree and fruit be destroyed together, *v. 22, 23*. Women with child, who were thus taken under the special protection of the law of God, if they live in his fear, may still believe themselves under the special protection of the providence of God, and hope that they shall be saved in child-bearing. On this occasion comes in that general law of retaliation, which our Saviour refers to, *Matth. 5. 38, An eye for an eye*. Now, 1. The execution of this law is not hereby put into the hands of private persons, as if every man might avenge himself; which would introduce universal confusion, and make men like the fishes of the sea. The tradition of the elders seems to have put this corrupt gloss upon it; in opposition to which, our Saviour commands us to forgive injuries, and not to meditate revenge, *Matth. 5. 39*. 2. God often executes it in the course of his providence, making the punishment, in many cases, to answer to the sin, as *Judg. 1. 7. Isa. 33. 1. Hab. 2. 13. Matth. 26. 52. 3*. Magistrates ought to have an eye to this rule, in punishing offenders, and doing right to those that are injured. Consideration must be had of the nature, quality, and degree, of the wrong done, that reparation may be made to the party injured, and others deferred from doing the like; either *an eye*

shall go for an eye, or the forfeited eye shall be redeemed by a sum of money. Note, He that does wrong must expect, one way or other, to receive according to the wrong he has done, *Col. 3. 25*. God sometimes brings men's violent dealings upon their own heads; (*Psa. 7. 16.*) and magistrates are in this the ministers of his justice, that they are avengers, (*Rom. 13. 4.*) and they shall not bear the sword in vain.

II. The care God took of servants; if their masters maimed them, though it was only striking out a tooth, that should be their discharge, *v. 26, 27*. This was intended, 1. To prevent their being abused; masters would be careful not to offer them any violence, lest they should lose their service. 2. To comfort them, if they were abused; the loss of a limb should be the gaining of their liberty, which would do something toward balancing both the pain and disgrace they underwent. Nay,

III. Does God take care for oxen? Yes, it appears, by the following laws in this chapter, that he does, for our sakes, *1 Cor. 9. 9, 10*. The Israelites are here directed what to do,

1. In case of hurt done by oxen, or any other brute-creature; for the law, doubtless, was designed to extend to all parallel cases. (1.) As an instance of God's care of the life of man, (though forfeited a thousand times into the hands of divine justice,) and in token of his detestation of the sin of murder; if an ox killed any man, woman, or child, the ox was to be stoned, *v. 28*. And because the greatest honour of the inferior creatures, is, to be serviceable to man, the criminal is denied that honour, his flesh shall not be eaten. Thus God would keep up in the minds of his people, a rooted abhorrence of the sin of murder, and every thing that was barbarous. (2.) To make men careful that none of their cattle might do hurt, but that, by all means possible, mischief might be prevented; if the owner of the beast knew that he was mischievous he must answer for the hurt done, and, according as the circumstances of the case proved him to be more or less accessory, he must either be put to death, or ransom his life with a sum of money, *v. 29-32*. Some of our ancient books make this felony, by the common-law of England, and give this reason, "The owner, by suffering his beast to go at liberty, when he knew it to be mischievous, shows that he was very willing that hurt should be done." Note, It is not enough for us not to do mischief ourselves, but we must take care that no mischief be done by those whom it is in our power to restrain, whether man or beast.

2. In case of hurt done to oxen, or other cattle. If they fall into a pit, and perish there, he that opened the pit must make good the loss, *v. 33, 34*. Note, we must take heed, not only of doing that which will be hurtful, but of doing that which may be so. It is not enough not to design and devise mischief, but we must contrive to prevent mischief; else we become accessory to our neighbours' damage: mischief done in malice is the great transgression; but mischief done through negligence, and for want of due care and consideration, is not without fault, but ought to be reflected upon with regret, according as the degree of the mischief is: especially, we must be careful that we do nothing to make ourselves accessory to the sins of others, by laying an occasion of offence in our brother's way, *Rom. 14. 13*.

If cattle fight, and one kill another, the owners shall equally share in the loss, *v. 35*. Only, if the beast that had done the harm was known to the owner to have been mischievous, he shall answer for the damage, because he ought either to have killed him, or kept him up, *v. 36*. The determinations of these cases carry with them the evidence

of their own equity, and give such rules of justice as were then, and are still, in use, for the deciding of similar controversies that arise between man and man. But I conjecture that these cases might be specified, rather than others, (though some of them seem minute,) because they were *then* cases in fact actually depending before Moses; for, in the wilderness, where they lay closely encamped, and had their flocks and herds among them, such mischiefs as these last mentioned were likely enough to occur. That which we are taught by these laws, is, that we be very careful to do no wrong, either directly or indirectly; but that, if we have done wrong, we must be very willing to make satisfaction, and desirous that nobody may lose by us.

CHAP. XXII.

The laws of this chapter relate, I. To the eighth commandment, concerning theft; (v. 1..4.) Trespass by cattle; (v. 5.) Damage by fire; (v. 6.) Trusts (v. 7..13.) Borrowing cattle, (v. 14, 15.) or money, v. 25..27. II. To the seventh commandment. Against fornication; (v. 16, 17.) Bestiality, v. 19. III. To the first table, forbidding witchcraft, (v. 18.) Idolatry, v. 20. Commanding to offer the first fruits, v. 29, 30. IV. To the poor, v. 21..24. V. To the civil government, v. 28. VI. To the peculiarity of the Jewish nation, v. 31.

1. **I**F a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. 2. If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, *there shall no blood be shed for him*. 3. If the sun be risen upon him, *there shall be blood shed for him*; for he should make full restitution: if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall restore double. 5. If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. 6. If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed *therewith*; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

Here are the laws,

1. Concerning theft, which are these; (1.) If a man steal any cattle, (in which the wealth of those times chiefly consisted,) and they be found in his custody, he must restore double, v. 4. Thus he must both satisfy for the wrong, and suffer for the crime. But it was afterward provided, that, if the thief were touched in conscience, and voluntarily confessed it, before it was discovered or inquired into by any other, then he should only make restitution of what he had stolen, and add to it a fifth part, Lev. 6. 4, 5. (2.) If he had killed or sold the sheep or ox he had stolen, and thereby persisted in his crime, he must restore *five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep*; (v. 1.) more for an ox than for a sheep, because the owner, beside all the other profit, lost the daily labour of his ox. This law teaches us, that fraud and injustice, so far from enriching men, will impoverish them: if we unjustly get and keep that which is another's, it will not only waste itself, but it will consume that which is our own. (3.) If he was not able to make restitu-

tion, he must be sold for a slave, v. 3. The court of judgment was to do it, and it is probable that the person robbed had the money. Thus with us, in some cases, felons are transported into plantations where alone Englishmen know what slavery is. (4.) If a thief broke a house in the night, and was killed in the doing of it, his blood was upon his own head, and should not be required at the hand of him that shed it, v. 2. As he that does an unlawful act bears the blame of the mischief that follows to others, so likewise of that which follows to himself. A man's house is his castle, and God's law, as well as man's, sets a guard upon it; he that assaults it does it at his peril. Yet if it were in the day-time that the thief was killed, he that killed him must be accountable for it, (v. 3.) unless it were in the necessary defence of his own life. Note, We ought to be tender of the lives even of bad men; the magistrate must right us, and we must not avenge ourselves.

2. Concerning trespass, v. 5. He that wilfully put his cattle into his neighbour's field, must make restitution of the best of his own. Our law makes a much greater difference between this and other thefts, than the law of Moses did. The Jews hence observed it as a general rule, that restitution must always be made of the best, and that no man should keep any cattle that were likely to trespass upon his neighbours, or do them any damage. We should be more careful not to do wrong, than not to suffer wrong, because to *suffer* wrong is only an affliction, but to *do* wrong is a sin, and sin is always worse than affliction.

3. Concerning damage done by fire, v. 6. He that designed only the burning of *thorns*, might become accessory to the burning of *corn*, and should not be held guiltless. Men of hot and eager spirits should take heed, lest, while they pretend only to pluck up the tares, they root out the wheat also. If the fire did mischief, he that kindled it must answer for it, though it could not be proved that he designed the mischief. Men must suffer for their carelessness, as well as for their malice. We must take heed of beginning strife; for though it seem but little, we know not how great a matter it may kindle, which we must bear the blame of, if, with the madman, we cast fire-brands, arrows, and death, and pretend we mean no harm. It will make us very careful of ourselves, if we consider that we are accountable, not only for the hurt we do, but for the hurt we occasion, through inadvertency.

7. If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. 8. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, *to see* whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. 9. For all manner of trespass, *whether it be* for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which *another* challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour. 10. If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: 11. *Then* shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neigh-

pour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. 12. And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. 13. If it be torn in pieces, *then* let him bring it *for* witness, *and* he shall not make good that which was torn. 14. And if a man borrow *ought* of his neighbour, and it be hurt or die, the owner thereof *being* not with it; he shall surely make it good. 15. *But* if the owner thereof *be* with it, he shall not make it good: if it *be* a hired thing, it came for his hire.

These laws are,

1. Concerning *trusts*, v. 7.-13. If a man deliver goods, suppose to a carrier, to be conveyed, or to a warehouse-keeper, to be preserved, or cattle to a farmer, to be fed, upon a valuable consideration; and if a special confidence be reposed in the person they are lodged with; in case these goods be stolen or lost, perish or be damaged, if it appear that it was not by any fault of the trustee, the owner must stand to the loss; otherwise, he that has been false to his trust must be compelled to make satisfaction. The trustee must aver his innocence upon oath before the judges, if the case was such as afforded no other proof, and they were to determine the matter according as it appeared. This teaches us, (1.) That we ought to be very careful of every thing we are intrusted with; as careful of it, though it be another's, as if it were our own. It is unjust and base, and that which all the world cries shame on, to betray a trust. (2.) That there is such a general failing of truth and justice upon earth, as gives too much occasion to suspect men's honesty, whenever it is their interest to be dishonest. (3.) That an *oath for confirmation is an end of strife*, Heb. 6. 16. It is called an *oath for the Lord*, (v. 11.) because to Him the appeal is made, not only as to a Witness of truth, but as to an Avenger of wrong and falsehood. Those that had offered injury to their neighbour by doing any unjust thing, yet, it might be hoped, had not so far debauched their consciences as to profane an oath of the Lord, and call the God of truth to be Witness to a lie: perjury is a sin which natural conscience startles at as much as any other. The religion of an oath is very ancient, and a plain indication of the universal belief of a God, and a providence, and a judgment to come. (4.) That magistracy is an ordinance of God, designed, among other intentions, to assist men both in *discovering* rights disputed, and *recovering* rights denied; and great respect ought to be paid to the determination of the judges. (5.) That there is no reason why a man should suffer for that which he could not help: masters should consider this in dealing with their servants, and not rebuke that as a fault which was a mischance, and which they themselves, had they been in their servants' places, could not have prevented.

2. Concerning *loans*, v. 14, 15. If a man (suppose) lent his team to his neighbour, if the owner was with it, or was to receive profit for the loan of it, whatever harm befell the cattle, the owner must stand to the loss of: but if the owner were so kind to the borrower, as to lend it him gratis, and put such a confidence in him, as to trust it from under his own eye, then, if any harm happened, the borrower must make it good. Let us learn hence to be very careful not to abuse any thing that is lent us; it is not only unjust, but base and disingenuous, inasmuch as it is rendering evil for good; we should much rather choose to lose ourselves, than that any

should sustain loss by their kindness to us; *Alas! master, for it was borrowed*, 2 Kings 6. 5.

16. And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. 17. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins. 18. Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. 19. Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death. 20. He that sacrificeth unto *any* god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed. 21. Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. 23. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; 24. And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

Here is,

1. A law, that he who debauched a young woman should be obliged to marry her, v. 16, 17. If she was betrothed to another, it was *death* to debauch her, (Deut. 22. 23, 24.) but the law here mentioned respects her as *single*. But if the father refused her to him, he was to give satisfaction in money for the injury and disgrace he had done her. This law puts an honour upon marriage, and shows likewise how improper a thing it is, that children should marry without their parents' consent: even here, where the divine law appointed the marriage, both as a punishment to him that had done wrong, and a recompense to her that had suffered wrong, yet there was an express reservation for the father's power; if he denied his consent, it must be no marriage.

2. A law which makes witchcraft a capital crime, v. 18. Witchcraft not only gives that honour to the Devil which is due to God alone, but bids defiance to the Divine Providence, wages war with God's government, and puts his work into the Devil's hand, expecting him to do good and evil, and so making him, indeed, *the God of this world*; justly, therefore, was it punished with death, especially among a people that were blessed with a divine revelation, and cared for by Divine Providence above any people under the sun. By our law, consulting, covenanting with, invoking, or employing, any evil spirit, to any intent whatsoever, and exercising any enchantment, charm, or sorcery, whereby hurt shall be done to any person whatsoever, is made felony, without benefit of clergy; also pretending to tell where goods lost or stolen may be found, or the like, is an iniquity punishable by the judge, and the second offence with death. The justice of our law herein, is supported by the law of God here.

3. Unnatural abominations are here made capital; such beasts in the shape of men as are guilty of them are unfit to live; v. 18, *Whosoever lies with a beast shall die*.

4. Idolatry is also made capital, v. 20. God having declared himself jealous in this matter, the civil powers must be jealous in it too, and utterly destroy those persons, families, and places of Israel, that worshipped any god, save the Lord: this law might have prevented the woe! apostasies of the Jewish nation, in aftertimes, if these that should have executed it had not been ringleaders in the breach of it.

5. A caution against oppression; because those who were empowered to punish other crimes were themselves most in danger of this, God takes the punishing of it into his own hands.

(1.) Strangers must not be abused, (v. 21.) not wronged in judgment by the magistrates, not imposed upon in contracts, nor must any advantage be taken of their ignorance or necessity; no, nor must they be taunted, trampled upon, treated with contempt, or upbraided with being strangers; for all these were vexatious, and would discourage strangers from coming to live among them, or would strengthen their prejudices against their religion, to which, by all kind and gentle methods, they should endeavour to proselyte them. The reason given why they should be kind to strangers, is, "*Ye were strangers in Egypt*," and knew what it was to be vexed and oppressed there." Note, [1.] Humanity is one of the laws of religion, and obliges us particularly to be tender of those that lie most under disadvantages and discouragements, and to extend our compassionate concern to strangers, and those to whom we are not under the obligations of alliance or acquaintance. Those that are strangers to us are known to God, and he preserves them, Ps. 146. 9. [2.] Those that profess religion should study to oblige strangers, that they may thereby recommend religion to their good opinion, and take heed of doing any thing that may tempt them to think ill of it, or its professors, 1 Pet. 2. 12. [3.] Those that have themselves been in poverty and distress, if Providence enrich and enlarge them, ought to show a particular tenderness toward those that are now in such circumstances as they were in formerly, doing now by them as they then wished to be done by.

(2.) Widows and fatherless must not be abused; (v. 22.) *Ye shall not afflict them*, that is, "Ye shall comfort and assist them, and be ready upon all occasions to show them kindness." In making just demands from them, *their condition must be considered*, who have lost those that should deal for them, and protect them; they are supposed to be unversed in business, destitute of advice, timorous, and of a tender spirit, and therefore must be treated with kindness and compassion; no advantage must be taken against them, nor any hardship put upon them, which a husband or a father would have sheltered them from. For, [1.] God takes particular cognizance of their case, v. 23. Having no one else to complain and appeal to, they will *cry unto God*, and he will be sure to *hear them*; for his law and his providence are guardians to the widows and fatherless, and if men do not pity them, and will not hear them, he will. Note, It is a great comfort for those who are injured and oppressed by men, that they have a God to go to, who will do more than *give them the hearing*; and it ought to be a terror to those who are oppressive, that they have the cry of the poor against them, which God will hear. Nay, [2.] He will severely reckon with those that do oppress them; though they escape punishment from men, God's righteous judgments will pursue and overtake them, v. 24. Men that have a sense of justice and honour will espouse the injured cause of the weak and helpless; and shall not the righteous God do it? Observe the equity of the sentence here passed upon those that oppress the widows and fatherless; their wives shall become widows, and their children fatherless; and the Lord is known by these judgments, which he sometimes executes still.

25. If thou lend money to *any of my people that is poor* by thee, thou shalt not be to him as a usurer. neither shalt thou lay upon

him usury. 26. If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: 27. For that is his covering only; it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear: for I am gracious. 28. Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people. 29. Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. 30. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep, seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me. 31. And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat *any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field*; ye shall cast it to the dogs.

Here is,

1. A law against extortion, in lending. (1.) They must not receive usury for money from any that borrowed for necessity, (v. 25.) as in that case, Neh. 5. 5, 7. And such provision the law made for the preserving of estates to their families by the year of jubilee, that a people who had little concern in trade could not be supposed to borrow money, but for necessity, and therefore it is generally forbidden among themselves: but to a stranger they were allowed to lend upon usury, whom yet they might not oppress: this law, therefore, in the strictness of it, seems to have been peculiar to the Jewish state; but, in the equity of it, it obliges us to show mercy to those of whom we might take, and to be content to share with those we lend to, in less, as well as profit, if Providence cross them; and, upon this condition, it seems as lawful to receive interest for my money, which another takes pains with, improves, and run the hazard of, in husbandry. (2.) They must not take a poor man's bed-clothes in pawn; but, if they did, must restore them by bed-time, v. 26, 27. Those who lie soft and warm themselves, should consider the hard and cold lodging of many poor people, and not do any thing to make bad worse, or to add affliction to the afflicted.

2. A law against the contempt of authority; (v. 28.) *Thou shalt not revile the gods*, that is, the judges and magistrates, for their executing of these laws; they must do their duty, whoever suffer by it; magistrates ought not to fear the reproach of men, or their revilings, but to despise them so long as they keep a good conscience; but they that do revile them for their being a terror to evil works and workers, reflect upon God himself, and will have a great deal to answer for, another day. We find those under a black character, and a heavy doom, that *despise dominion and speak evil of dignities*, Jude 8. Princes and magistrates are our fathers, whom the fifth commandment obliges us to honour, and forbids us to revile. St. Paul applies this law to himself, and owns that he ought not to *speak evil of the ruler of his people*; no, not though the ruler was then his most unrighteous persecutor, Acts 23. 5. See Eccl. 10. 20.

3. A law concerning the offering of the first-fruits to God, v. 29, 30. It was appointed before, (ch. 13.) and it is here repeated; *The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me*; and much more reason have we to give ourselves, and all we have, to God, who *shared not his own Son, but delivered*

him up for us all. The first ripe of their corn they must not delay to offer; there is danger, if we delay our duty, lest we wholly omit it; and, by slipping the first opportunity, in expectation of another, we suffer Satan to cheat us of all our time. Let not young people delay to offer to God the first fruits of their time and strength, lest their delays come, at last, to be denials, through the deceitfulness of sin, and the more convenient season they promise themselves, never arrive. Yet it is provided, that the firstlings of their cattle should not be dedicated to God till they were past seven days old, for then they began to be good for something. Note, God is the first and best, and therefore must have the first and best.

4. A distinction put between the Jews and all other people; *Ye shall be holy men unto me*; and one mark of that honorable distinction is appointed in their diet, which was, that they should not *eat any flesh that was torn of beasts*, (v. 31.) not only because it was unwholesome, but because it was paltry, and base, and covetous, and a thing below those who were holy men unto God, to eat the leavings of the beasts of prey. We that are sanctified to God, must not be curious in our diet; but we must be conscientious, not feeding ourselves without fear, but eating and drinking by rule, the rule of sobriety, to the glory of God.

CHAP. XXIII.

This chapter continues and concludes the acts that passed in the first session (if I may so call it) upon mount Sinai. Here are, I. Some laws of universal obligation, relating especially to the ninth commandment, against bearing false witness, (v. 1.) and giving false judgment, v. 2, 3, 6, 8. Also a law of doing good to our enemies, (v. 4, 5.) and not oppressing strangers, v. 9. II. Some laws peculiar to the Jews. The sabbatical year, (v. 10, 11.) the three annual feasts, (v. 14, 17.) with some laws pertaining thereto. III. Gracious promises of the completing of the mercy God had begun for them, upon condition of their obedience. That God would conduct them through the wilderness, (v. 20, 24.) That he would prosper all they had, (v. 25, 26.) That he would put them in possession of Canaan, v. 27, 31. But they must not mingle themselves with the nations, v. 32, 33.

1. **THOU** shalt not raise a false report: but not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. 2. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do evil*: neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment: 3. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause. 4. If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. 5. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him; thou shalt surely help with him. 6. Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. 7. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked. 8. And thou shalt take no gift; for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous. 9. Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Here are,

I. Cautions concerning judicial proceedings; it was not enough that they had good laws, better than ever

any nation had, but care must be taken for the due administration of justice according to those laws.

1. The witnesses are here cautioned, that they neither occasion an innocent man to be indicted, by raising a false report of him, and setting common fame against him, nor assist in the prosecution of an innocent man, or one whom they do not know to be guilty, by *putting their hand* in swearing, as witnesses against him, v. 1. Bearing false witness against a man, in a matter that touches his life, has in it all the guilt of lying, perjury, malice, theft, murder, with the additional stains of colouring all with a pretence of justice, and involving many others in the same guilt. There is scarcely any one act of wickedness that a man can possibly be guilty of, which has in it a greater complication of villainies than this has. Yet the former part of this caution is to be extended to common conversation, and not only to judicial proceedings; so that slandering and backbiting are a species of false-witness bearing; a man's reputation lies as much at the mercy of every company, as his estate or life does at the mercy of a judge or jury; so that he who raises, or knowingly spreads, a false report against his neighbour, especially if the report be made to wise and good men, whose esteem one would desire to enjoy, sins as much against the laws of truth, justice, and charity, as a false witness does—with this further mischief, that he leaves it not in the power of the person injured to right himself. That which we translate, *Thou shalt not raise*, the margin reads, *Thou shalt not receive*, a false report; for sometimes the receiver, in this case, is as bad as the thief; and a backbiting tongue would not do so much mischief as it does, if it were not countenanced. Sometimes we cannot avoid *hearing* a false report, but we must not *receive* it, that is, we must not hear it with pleasure and delight, as those that rejoice in iniquity; nor give credit to it, as long as there remains any cause to question the truth of it. This is charity to our neighbour's good name, and doing as we would be done by.

2. The judges are here cautioned not to pervert judgment.

(1.) They must not be over-ruled, either by might or multitude, to go against their consciences in giving judgment, v. 2. With the Jews, causes were tried by a bench of Justices, and judgment given according to the majority of votes; in which case, every particular justice must go according to truth, as it appeared to him upon the strictest and most impartial inquiry, though the *multitude* of the people, and their outcries, or the sentence of the *Rabbin*, (we translate it *many*;) the more ancient and honourable of the justices, went the other way. Therefore (as with us) among the Jews, the junior upon the bench voted first, that he might not be swayed or over-ruled by the authority of the senior. Judges must not respect the persons either of the parties, or of their fellow-judges. The former part of this verse also gives a general rule for all, as well as judges, *not to follow a multitude to do evil*. General usage will never excuse us in a bad practice; nor is the broad way ever the better or safer, for its being tracked and crowded. We must inquire what we ought to do, not what the majority do; because we must be judged by our Master, not by our fellow-servants; and it is too great a compliment, to be willing to go to hell for company.

(2.) They must not pervert judgment, no, not in favour of a poor man, v. 3. Right must in all cases take place, and wrong must be punished, and justice never biassed, nor injury connived at, under pretence of charity and compassion. If a poor man be a bad man, and do a bad thing, it is foolish pity to let him fare the better for his poverty, Deut. 1, 16, 17.

(3.) Neither must they pervert judgment, in prejudice to a poor man, nor suffer him to be wronged, because he had not wherewithal to right himself; in such cases, the judges themselves must become advocates for the poor, as far as their cause was good and honest; *v. 6*, "*Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of the poor*; remember they are thy poor, bone of thy bone, thy poor neighbours, thy poor brethren, let them not, therefore, fare the worse for being poor."

(4.) They must dread the thoughts of assisting or abetting a bad cause; *v. 7*, "*Keep thee far from a false matter*; do not only keep thee free from it, nor think it enough to say, thou art unconcerned in it, but keep thee *far* from it, dread it as a dangerous snare. The innocent and righteous thou wouldst not, for all the world, slay with thine own hands; keep thee therefore from a false matter, for thou knowest not but it may end in that; and the righteous God will not leave such wickedness to go unpunished. *I will not justify the wicked*," that is, "I will condemn him that unjustly condemns others." Judges themselves are accountable to the Great Judge.

(5.) They must not take bribes, *v. 8*. They must not only not be swayed by a gift to give an unjust judgment, either to condemn the innocent, or acquit the guilty, or adjudge a man's right from him; but they must not so much as *take* a gift, lest it should have a bad influence upon them, and overrule them, contrary to their intentions, for it has a strange tendency to blind those that otherwise would do well.

(6.) They must not oppress a stranger, *v. 9*. Though aliens might not inherit lands among them, yet they must have justice done them, must peaceably enjoy their own, and be righted if they were wronged, though they were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. It is an instance of the equity and goodness of our law, that, if an alien be tried for any crime except treason, the one half of his jury, if he desire it, shall be foreigners; they call it a trial *per medietatem lingue*, a kind provision that strangers may not be oppressed. The reason here given is the same with that, (*ch. 22. 21.*) *Ye were strangers*; which is here elegantly enforced, *Ye know the heart of a stranger*; ye know something of the griefs and fears of a stranger, by sad experience, and therefore, being delivered, can the more easily put your souls into their souls' stead.

II. Commands concerning neighbourly kindnesses; we must be ready to do all good offices, as there is occasion for any body, yea, even for those who have done us ill offices, *v. 4, 5*. The command of loving our enemies, and doing good to them that hate us, is not only a *new*, but an *old*, commandment, *Prov. 25. 21, 22*. Infer from hence, 1. If we must do this kindness for an enemy, much more for a friend, though an enemy only is mentioned, because it is supposed that a man would not be unneighbourly to any, unless such as he has a particular spleen against. 2. If it be wrong not to prevent our enemy's loss and damage, how much worse is it to occasion harm and loss to him, or any thing he has. 3. If we must bring back our neighbours' cattle when they go astray, much more must we endeavour, by prudent admonitions and instructions, to bring back our neighbours themselves, when they go astray in any sinful path. See *Jam. 5. 19*. And if we must endeavour to help up a fallen ass, much more should we endeavour, by comforts and encouragements, to help up a sinking spirit, *saying to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong*. We must seek the relief and welfare of others as our own, *Phil. 2. 4*. *If thou sayest, Behold, we know it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it?* See *Prov. 24. 11, 12*.

10. And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: 11. But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy olive-yard. 12. Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed. 13. And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth. 14. Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. 15. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt; and none shall appear before me empty:) 16. And the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. 17. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the LORD God. 18. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning. 19. The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Here is,

I. The institution of the sabbatical year, *v. 10, 11*. Every seventh year the land was to rest; they must not plough or sow it at the beginning of the year, and then they could not expect any great harvest at the end of the year; but what the earth did produce of itself should be eaten from hand to mouth, and not laid up. Now this was designed, 1. To show what a plentiful land that was into which God was bringing them—that so numerous a people could have rich maintenance out of the produce of so small a country, without foreign trade, and yet could spare the increase of every seventh year. 2. To remind them of their dependence upon God their great Landlord, and their obligation to use the fruit of the land as he should direct. Thus he would try their obedience in a matter that nearly touched their interest. Afterward we find that their disobedience to this command was a forfeiture of the promises, 2 *Chron. 36. 21*. 3. To teach them a confidence in the Divine Providence, while they did their duty; that, as the sixth day's manna served for two days' meat, so the sixth year's increase should serve for two years' subsistence. Thus they must learn not to *take thought for their life*, *Matt. 6. 25*. If we are prudent and diligent in our affairs, we may trust Providence to furnish us with the bread of the day in its day.

II. The repetition of the law of the fourth commandment concerning the weekly sabbath, *v. 12*.

Even in the year of rest, they must not think that the sabbath-day was laid in common with the other days, but, even that year, it must be religiously observed; yet thus some have endeavoured to take away the observation of the sabbath, by pretending that every day must be a sabbath-day.

III. All manner of respect to the gods of the heathen is here strictly forbidden, *v.* 13. A general caution is prefixed to this, which has reference to all these precepts; *In all things that I have said unto you, be circumspect.* We are in danger of missing our way on the right hand and on the left, and it is at our peril if we do, therefore we have need to look about us. A man may ruin himself through mere carelessness, but he cannot save himself without great care and circumspection: particularly, since idolatry was a sin which they were much addicted to, and would be greatly tempted to, they must endeavour to blot out the remembrance of the gods of the heathen, and must disuse and forget all their superstitious forms of speech, and never mention them but with detestation. In Christian schools and academies, (for it is in vain to think of reforming the play-houses,) it were to be wished that the names and stories of the heathen deities, or *demons* rather, were not so commonly and familiarly used as they are, even with intimations of respect, and sometimes with forms of invocation. Surely we have *not so learned Christ.*

IV. Their solemn religious attendance on God in the place which he should choose, is here strictly required, *v.* 14. 17. 1. Thrice a year, all their males must come together in a holy convocation, that they might the better know and love one another, and keep up their communion as a dignified and peculiar people. 2. They must come together *before the Lord*, (*v.* 17.) to present themselves before him, looking toward the place where his honour dwelt, and to pay their homage to him as their great Lord, from and under whom they held all their enjoyments. 3. They must *feast* together before the Lord, eating and drinking together, in token of their joy in God, and their grateful sense of his goodness to them; for *a feast is made for laughter*, Eccl. 10. 19. Oh what a good Master do we serve, who has made it our duty to *rejoice before him*, who feasts his servants when they are in waiting? Never let religion be called a melancholy thing, when its solemn services are solemn *feasts*. 4. They must not *appear before God empty*, *v.* 15. Some free-will offering or other they must bring, in token of their respect and gratitude to their great Benefactor. As then they were not allowed to come empty-handed, so now we must not come to worship God empty hearted; our souls must be filled with grace, with pious and devout affections; holy desires toward him, and dedications of ourselves to him; for *with such sacrifices God is well-pleased*. 5. The passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles, in spring, summer, and autumn, were the three times appointed for their attendance; not in the midst of their harvest, because then they were otherwise employed; so that they had no reason to say that he *made them to serve with an offering*, or *swearied them with incense*.

V. Some particular directions are here given about the three feasts, though not so fully as afterward. 1. As to the *passover*, it was not to be offered with leavened bread, for at that feast all leaven was to be cast out, nor was the fat of it to remain until the morning, lest it should become offensive, *v.* 18. 2. At the feast of *pentecost*, when they were to begin their harvest, they must bring the *first of their first-fruits* to God, by the pious presenting of which the whole harvest was sanctified, *v.* 19. 3. At the feast of *in-gathering*, as it is called, (*v.* 16.) they must give God thanks for the

harvest-mercies they had received, and must depend upon him for the next harvest, and must not think to receive benefit by that superstitious usage of some of the Gentiles, who, it is said, at the end of their harvest, *seethed a kid in its own dam's milk*, and sprinkled that milk-pottage, in a magical way, upon their gardens and fields, to make them more fruitful next year. But Israel must abhor such foolish customs.

20. Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. 21. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. 22. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, an adversary unto thine adversaries. 23. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. 24. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. 25. And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread and thy water, and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. 26. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. 27. I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come; and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. 28. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. 29. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. 30. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. 31. And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. 32. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. 33. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

Three gracious promises are here made to Israel, to engage them to their duty, and encourage them in it; and each of the promises has some needful precepts and cautions joined to it.

I. It is here promised that they should be guided and kept in their way through the wilderness to the land of promise, *Behold, I send an Angel before*

thee, (v. 20.) *mine Angel*, (v. 23.) a created angel, say some, a minister of God's providence, employed in conducting and protecting the camp of Israel; that it might appear that God took a particular care of them, he appointed one of his chief servants to make it his business to attend them, and see that they wanted for nothing. Others suppose it to be the Son of God, the Angel of the covenant; for the Israelites in the wilderness are said to *tempt Christ*; and we may as well suppose him God's Messenger, and the Church's Redeemer, before his incarnation, as *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. And we may the rather think he was pleased to undertake the deliverance and conduct of Israel, because they were typical of his great undertaking. It is promised that this blessed Angel should *keep them in the way*, though it lay through a wilderness first, and afterward through their enemies' country; thus God's spiritual Israel shall be kept through the wilderness of this earth, and from the insults of the gates of hell. It is also promised that he should bring them into the place which God had not only designed, but prepared for them: and thus Christ has prepared a place for his followers, and will preserve them to it, for he is faithful to him that appointed him.

The precept joined with this promise, is, that they be observant of, and obedient to, this Angel whom God would send before them; (v. 21.) "*Be-ware of him, and obey his voice in every thing, pro-voke him not in any thing, for it is at your peri if you do, he will visit your iniquity.*" Note, 1. Christ is the Author of salvation to those only that obey him. The word of command is, *Hear ye him*, M.ith. 17. 5. *Observe what he hath commanded*, Matth. 28. 20. 2. Our necessary dependence upon the divine power and goodness should awe us into obedience. We do well to take heed of provoking our Protector and Benefactor; because, if our Defence depart from us, and the streams of his goodness be cut off, we are undone. Therefore, "*Be-ware of him, and carry it toward him with all possi-ble reverence and caution. Fear the Lord and his goodness.*" 3. Christ will be faithful to those who are faithful to him, and will espouse their cause who adhere to his; (v. 22.) *I will be an Ad-versary to thine adversaries*. The league shall be offensive and defensive, like that with Abraham, *I will bless him that blesseth thee, and curse him that curseth thee*. Thus is God pleased to twist his interests and friendships with his people's.

It is promised that they should have a comfortable settlement in the land of Canaan, which they hoped now, (though it proved otherwise,) within a few months, to be in the possession of, v. 24. 26. Observe, 1. How reasonable the conditions of this promise are—only that they should serve their own God, who was indeed the only true God, and not the gods of the nations, which were no gods at all, and which they had no reason at all to have any respect for. They must not only not worship their gods, but they must utterly overthrow them, in token of their great abhorrence of idolatry, their resolution never to worship idols themselves, and their care to prevent any other from worshipping them; as the converted conjurers *burnt their books*, Acts, 19. 19. 2. How rich the particulars of this promise are. (1.) The comfort of their food; He shall *bless thy bread and thy water*; and God's blessing will make bread and water more refreshing and nourishing than a feast of fat things and wines on the lees, without that blessing. (2.) The continuance of their health; *I will take sickness away*, either prevent it, or remove it. The land shall not be visited with epidemical diseases, which are very dreadful, and sometimes have laid countries waste. (3.) The increase of their wealth; their cattle

should not be barren, nor cast their young; which is mentioned as an instance of prosperity, Job 21. 10. (4.) The prolonging of their lives to old age; "*The number of thy days I will fulfil*, and they shall not be cut off in the midst by untimely deaths." Thus hath godliness the *promise of the life that now is*.

III. It is promised that they should conquer and subdue their enemies, the present occupants of the land of Canaan, who must be driven out to make room for them. This God would do, 1. Effectually by his power; (v. 27, 28.) not so much by the sword and bow of Israel, as by the terrors which he would strike into the Canaanites. Though they were so obstinate as not to be willing to submit to Israel, resign their country, and retire elsewhere, which they might have done; yet they were so dispirited, that they were not able to stand before them. This completed their ruin; such power had the Devil in them, that they would resist; but such power had God over them, that they could not. *I will send my fear before thee*; and they that fear will soon flee. Hosts of hornets made way for the hosts of Israel; such mean creatures can God make use of for the chastising of his people's enemies; as in the plagues of Egypt. When God pleases, hornets can drive out Canaanites as well as lions could, Josh. 24. 12. 2. He would do it gradually, in wisdom, (v. 29, 30.) not all at once, but by little and little. As the Canaanites had kept possession till Israel was grown into a people, so there should still be some remains of them, till Israel should grow so numerous as to replenish the whole. The wisdom of God is to be observed in the gradual advances of the church's interests. It is in real kindness to the church, that its enemies are subdued by little and little, for thus we are kept upon our guard, and in a continual dependence upon God. Corruptions are thus driven out of the hearts of God's people; not all at once, but by little and little; the old man is crucified, and therefore dies slowly. God, in his providence, often delays mercy, because we are not ready for it. Canaan has room enough to receive Israel, but Israel is not numerous enough to occupy Canaan; we are not straitened in God; if we are straitened, it is in ourselves. The land of Canaan is promised them, (v. 31.) in its utmost extent, which yet they were not possessed of till the days of David; and by their sins they soon lost possession.

The precept annexed to this promise, is, that they should not make any friendship, nor have any familiarity, with idolaters, v. 32, 33. Idolaters must not so much as sojourn in their land, unless they renounced their idolatry. Thus they must avoid the reproach of intimacy with the worshippers of false gods, and the danger of being drawn to worship with them. By familiar converse with idolaters, their dread and detestation of the sin would wear off; they would think it no harm, in compliment to their friends, to pay some respect to their gods, and so by degrees would be drawn into the fatal snare. Note, Those that would be kept from bad courses must keep from bad company; it is dangerous living in a bad neighbourhood; others' sins will be our snares, if we look not well to ourselves. We must always look upon our greatest danger to be from these that would make us sin against God. Whatever friendship is pretended, that is really our worst enemy that draws us from our duty.

CHAP. XXIV.

Moses, as mediator between God and Israel, having received divers laws and ordinances from God privately, in the three foregoing chapters, in this chapter, 1. Comes down to the people, acquaints them with the laws he had re-

ceived, and takes their consent to those laws, (v. 3.) writes the laws, and reads them to the people, who repeat their contents, (v. 4. . 7.) and then, by sacrifice, and the sprinkling of blood, ratifies the covenant between them and God, v. 5, 6, 8. II. He returns to God again, to receive further directions. When he was dismissed from his former attendance, he was ordered to attend again, v. 1, 2. He did so with seventy of the elders, to whom God made a discovery of his glory, v. 9. . 11. Moses is ordered up into the mount, (v. 12, 13.) the rest are ordered down to the people, v. 14. The cloud of glory is seen by all the people on the top of mount Sinai, (v. 15. . 17.) and Moses is there with God forty days, and forty nights, v. 18.

1. **AND** he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. 2. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD; but they shall not come nigh, neither shall the people go up with him. 3. And Moses came, and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. 4. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the LORD. 6. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. 8. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

The two first verses are the appointment of a second session upon mount Sinai, for the making of laws, when an end was put to the first. When a communion is begun between God and us, it shall never fail on his side, if it do not first fail on ours. Moses is directed to bring Aaron and his sons, and the seventy elders of Israel, that they might be witnesses of the glory of God, and that communion with him to which Moses was admitted; and that their testimony might confirm the people's faith. In this approach, 1. They must all be very reverent; *Worship ye afar off*, v. 1. Before they came near, they must worship. Thus we must enter into God's gates with humble and solemn adorations, draw near as those that know our distance, and admire the condescensions of God's grace in admitting us to draw near. Are great princes approached with the profound reverences of the body? And shall not the soul that draws near to God be bowed before him? 2. They must none of them come so near as Moses, v. 2. They must come up to the Lord, (and those that would approach to God must *ascend*;) but Moses alone must come near; therein a type of Christ, who, as the High Priest, entered alone into the most holy place.

In the following verses, we have the solemn covenant made between God and Israel, and the ex-

changing of the ratifications; and a very solemn transaction it was, typifying the covenant of grace between God and believers, through Christ.

I. Moses told the people the words of the Lord, v. 3. He did not lead them blindfold into the covenant, nor teach them a devotion that was the daughter of ignorance; but laid before them all the precepts, general and particular, in the foregoing chapters; and fairly put it to them, Whether they were willing to submit to these laws or no?

II. The people unanimously consented to the terms proposed, without reservation or exception; *All the words which the Lord hath said will we do*. They had before consented in general to be under God's government; (*ch.* 19. 8.) here they consent in particular to these laws now given. *Oh that there had been such a heart in them!* How well were it if people would but be always in the same good mind that sometimes they seem to be in! Many consent to the law, and yet do not live up to it; they have nothing to except against it, and yet will not persuade themselves to be ruled by it.

This is the tenor of the covenant, "That, if they would observe the foregoing precepts, God would perform the foregoing promises. 'Obey, and be happy.'" Here is the bargain made. Observe,

1. How it was engrossed in the book of the covenant; *Moses wrote the words of the Lord*, (v. 4.) that there might be no mistake; probably, he had written them as God dictated them on the mount. As soon as ever God had separated to himself a peculiar people in the world, he governed them by a written word, as he has done ever since, and will do while the world stands, and the church in it. Moses, having engrossed the articles of agreement concluded upon between God and Israel, *read them in the audience of the people*, (v. 7.) that they might be perfectly apprized of the thing, and might try whether their second thoughts were the same with their first, upon the whole matter. And we may suppose they were so; for their words (v. 7.) are the same with what they were, (v. 3.) but something stronger: *All that the Lord hath said* (be it good, or be it evil, to flesh and blood, Jer. 42. 6.) *we will do*; so they had said before, but now they add, "*And will be obedient*; not only we will do what has been commanded, but in every thing which shall be further ordained *we will be obedient*." Bravely resolved! if they had but stuck to their resolution. See here, That God's covenants and commands are so incontestably equitable is themselves, and so highly advantageous to us, that the more we think of them, and the more plainly and fully they are set before us, the more reason we shall see to comply with them.

2. How it was sealed by the blood of the covenant, that Israel might receive strong consolations from the ratifying of God's promises to them, and might lie under strong obligations from the ratifying of their promises to God. Thus has Infinite Wisdom devised means that we may be confirmed both in our faith and in our obedience; may be both encouraged in our duty, and engaged to it. The covenant must be made by sacrifice, (Ps. 50. 5.) because, since man has sinned, and forfeited his Creator's favour, there can be no fellowship by covenant, till there be first friendship and atonement by sacrifice.

(1.) In preparation, therefore, for the parties interchangeably putting their seals to this covenant, [1.] Moses builds an altar, to the honour of God, which was principally intended in all the altars that were built, and which was the first thing to be looked at in the covenant they were now to seal. No addition to the perfections of the divine nature can be made by any of God's dealings with the children of men, but in them his perfections are

manifested and magnified, and his honour showed forth; therefore he will now be represented by an altar, to signify, that all he expected from them, was, that they should do him honour, and that, being his people, they should be to him for a name and a praise. [2.] He erects twelve pillars, according to the number of the tribes; these were to represent the people, the other party to the covenant; and we may suppose that they were set up over against the altar, and that Moses, as mediator, passed to and fro between them. Probably, each tribe set up and knew its own pillar, and their elders stood by it. [3.] He appointed sacrifices to be offered upon the altar, (v. 5.) burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, which yet were designed to be expiatory. We are not concerned to inquire who these young men were that were employed in offering these sacrifices; for Moses was himself the priest, and what they did was purely as his servants, by his order and appointment. No doubt, they were men who by their bodily strength were qualified for the service, and by their station among the people were fittest for the honour.

(2.) Preparation being thus made, their ratifications were very solemnly exchanged. [1.] The blood of the sacrifice which the people offered was (part of it) sprinkled upon the altar, (v. 6.) which signifies the people's dedicating of themselves, their lives, and beings, to God, and to his honour. In the blood (which is the life) of the dead sacrifices, all the Israelites were presented unto God as living sacrifices, Rom. 12. 1. [2.] The blood of the sacrifice which God had owned and accepted was (the remainder of it) sprinkled either upon the people themselves, (v. 8.) or upon the pillars that represented them; which signified God's gracious conferring of his favour upon them, and all the fruits of that favour, and his giving them all the gifts they could expect or desire from a God reconciled to them, and in covenant with them by sacrifice. This part of the ceremony was thus explained, "*Behold the blood of the covenant; see here how God has sealed to you to be a God, and you seal to him to be to him a people; his promises to you, and your's to him, are both yea, and amen.*"

Thus our Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, (of whom Moses was a type,) having offered up himself a sacrifice upon the cross, that his blood might be indeed the blood of the covenant, sprinkled it upon the altar in his intercession, (Heb. 9. 12.) and sprinkles it upon his church by his word and ordinances, and the influences and operations of the Spirit of promise, by whom we are sealed. He himself seemed to allude to this solemnity, when, in the institution of the Lord's supper, he said, *This cup is the New Testament, (or Covenant,) in my blood.* Compare with this, Heb. 9. 19, 20.

9. Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; 10. And they saw the God of Israel: and *there was* under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in *his* clearness. 11. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

The people having, beside their submission to the ceremony of the sprinkling of blood, declared their well-pleasedness in their God and his law, again and again, God here gives to their representatives some special tokens of his favour to them; for God meets him that rejoices and works righteousness, and admits them nearer to him than they could have expected. Thus, in the New Testament church, we

find the *four living creatures*, and the *four and twenty elders*, honoured with places *round the throne*, being *redeemed unto God*, by the *blood of the Lamb* which is in the *midst of the throne*, Rev. 4. 4, 6.—5. 8, 9. Observe,

1. *They saw the God of Israel*, (v. 10.) that is, they had some glimpse of his glory, in light and fire, though they saw *no manner of similitude*, and his being *no man hath seen or can see*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. They saw the place where the God of Israel stood, (so the LXX.) something that came near a similitude, but was not; whatever they saw, it was certainly something of which no image or picture could be made, and yet enough to satisfy them that God was with them of a truth.

Nothing is described but that which was *under his feet*: for our conceptions of God are all below him, and fall infinitely short of being adequate. They saw not so much as God's feet, but at the bottom of the brightness they saw (such as they never saw before or after, and, as the footstool or pedestal of it) a most rich and splendid pavement, as it had been of sapphires, azure, or sky-coloured. The heavens themselves are the pavement of God's palace, and his throne is above the firmament. See how much better Wisdom is than the precious onyx or the sapphires, for Wisdom was, from eternity, God's delight, (Prov. 8. 30.) and lay in his bosom, but the sapphires are the pavement under his feet; there let us put all the wealth of this world, and not in our hearts.

2. *Upon the nobles, or elders, of Israel, he laid not his hand*, v. 11. Though they were men, the dazzling splendour of his glory did not overwhelm them; but it was so moderated, (Job, 26. 9.) and they were so strengthened, (Dan. 10. 19.) that they were able to bear it. Nay, though they were sinful men, and obnoxious to God's justice, yet he did not lay his punishing avenging hand upon them, as they feared he would. When we consider what a consuming fire God is, and what stubble we are before him, we shall have reason to say, in all our approaches to him, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.*

3. *They saw God, and did eat and drink*; they had not only their *lives* preserved, but their vigour, courage, and comfort; it cast no damp upon their joy, but rather increased and elevated it. They *feasted upon the sacrifice*, before God, in token of their cheerful consent to the covenant now made, their grateful acceptance of the benefits of it, and their communion with God in pursuance of that covenant. Thus believers *eat and drink with Christ at his table*, Luke, 22. 30. Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the kingdom of our Father, and drink of the new wine there.

12. And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

13. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. 14. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. 15. And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. 16. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh,

day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17. And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

The public ceremony of sealing the covenant being over, Moses is called up to receive further instructions, which we have in the following chapters.

I. He is called up into the mount, and there he remained six days at some distance. Orders are given him, (v. 12.) *Come up to the mount, and be there*, that is, "Expect to continue there for some considerable time." Those that would have communion with God must not only come to ordinances, but they must abide by them. Blessed are they that *dwell* in his house, not that merely *call* there; "Come up, and *I will give thee a law, that thou mayest teach them.*" Moses taught them nothing but what he had received from the Lord, and he received nothing from the Lord but what he taught them; for he was faithful both to God and Israel, and did neither add nor diminish, but kept close to his instructions.

Having received these orders, 1. He appointed Aaron and Hur to be as lords justices in his absence, to keep the peace and good order in the congregation, v. 14. The care of his government he would leave behind him when he went up into the mount, that he might not have that to distract his mind; and yet he would not leave the people as sheep having no shepherd, no, not for a few days. Good princes find their government a constant care, and their people find it a constant blessing. 2. He took Joshua up with him into the mount, v. 13. Joshua was his minister, and it would be a satisfaction to him to have him with him as a companion, during the six days that he tarried in the mount, before God called to him. Joshua was to be his successor, and therefore thus he was honoured before the people, above the rest of the elders, that they might afterward the more readily take him for their governor; and thus he was prepared for service, by being trained up in communion with God. Joshua was a type of Christ, and (as the learned Bishop Pearson well observes) Moses takes him with him into the mount, because, without Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, there is no looking into the secrets of Heaven, nor approaching the glorious presence of God. 3. A cloud covered the mount six days; a visible token of God's special presence there, for he so shows himself to us, as, at the same time, to conceal himself from us. He lets us know so much as to assure us of his presence, power, and grace, but intimates to us that we cannot find him out to perfection. During these six days, Moses staid waiting upon the mountain for a call into the presence-chamber, v. 15, 16. God thus tried the patience of Moses, and his obedience to that command, (v. 12.) *Be there*. If Moses had been tired before the seventh day, (as Saul, 1 Sam. 13. 8, 9.) and had said, *What should I wait for the Lord any longer*, he had lost the honour of entering into the cloud; but communion with God is worth waiting for. And it is fit we should address ourselves to solemn ordinances with a solemn pause, taking time to compose ourselves, Ps. 108. 1.

II. He is called up into the cloud, on the seventh day, probably on the sabbath-day, v. 16. Now the thick cloud opened in the sight of all Israel, and the glory of the Lord brake forth like devouring fire, v. 17. God, even our God, is a consuming fire, and so

he was pleased to manifest himself in the giving of the law; that knowing the terrors of the Lord, we may be persuaded to obey, and may by them be prepared for the comforts of the gospel, and that the *grace and truth* which come by Jesus Christ may be more acceptable.

Now, 1. The entrance of Moses into the cloud was very wonderful; *Moses went into the midst of the cloud*, v. 8. It was an extraordinary presence of mind, which the grace of God furnished him with by six days' preparation, else he durst not have ventured into the cloud, especially when it brake out in devouring fire. Moses was sure that he who called him would protect him; and even those glorious attributes of God, which are most terrible to the wicked, the saints with a humble reverence rejoice in. He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly, is able to *dwell even with this devouring fire*, as we are told, Isa. 33. 14, 15. There are persons and works that will abide the fire, 1 Cor. 3. 12, &c. and some that will have confidence before God.

2. His continuance in the cloud was no less wonderful; he was there *forty days and forty nights*. It should seem, the six days (v. 16.) were not part of the forty; for, during those six days, Joshua was with Moses, who did eat of the manna, and drink of the brook, mentioned, Deut. 9. 21. and, while they were together, it is probable that Moses did eat and drink with him; but when Moses was called *into the midst of the cloud*, he left Joshua without, and continued to eat and drink daily while he waited for Moses's return, but from thenceforward Moses fasted. Doubtless, God could have said what he had now to say to Moses, in one day, but, for the greater solemnity of the thing, he kept him with him in the mount *forty days and forty nights*. We are hereby taught to spend much time in communion with God, and to think *that* time best spent which is *so* spent. They that would get the knowledge of God's will must meditate *thereon day and night*.

CHAP. XXV.

At this chapter begins an account of the orders and instructions God gave to Moses upon the mount, for the erecting and furnishing of a tabernacle to the honour of God. We have here, I. Orders given for a collection to be made among the people for this purpose, v. 1. . 9. II. Particular instructions, 1. Concerning the ark of the covenant, v. 10. . 22. 2. The table of show-bread, v. 23. . 30. 3. The golden candlestick, v. 31. . 40.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. 3. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, 4. And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, 5. And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim-wood, 6. Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, 7. Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breast-plate. 8. And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9. According to all that I show thee, *after* the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

We may suppose that when Moses went into the midst of the cloud and abode there so long, where

the holy angels attended the *Shechinah*, or Divine Majesty, he saw and heard very glorious things relating to the upper world, but they were things which it was not lawful or possible to utter; and therefore, in the records he kept of the transactions there, he said nothing to satisfy the curiosity of those who would intrude into the things which they have not seen, but writes that only which he was to speak to the children of Israel. For the scripture is designed to direct us in our duty, not to fill our heads with speculations, or to please our fancies.

In these verses, God tells Moses his intention, in general, that the children of Israel should build him a sanctuary, for he designed to *dwell among them*; (v. 8.) and some think that, though there were altars and groves used for religious worship, before this, yet there never was any house, or temple, built for sacred uses in any nation, before this tabernacle was erected by Moses; and that all the temples which were afterward so much celebrated among the heathen took rise from this, and pattern by it. God had chosen the people of Israel to be a peculiar people to himself, (above all people,) among whom divine revelation, and a religion according to it, should be lodged and established: he himself would be their king. As their King, he had already given them laws for the government of themselves, and their dealings one with another, with some general rules for religious worship, according to the light of reason and the law of nature, in the ten commandments, and the following comments upon them. But this was not thought sufficient to distinguish them from other nations, or to answer to the extent of that covenant which God would make with them to be *their God*, and therefore he orders a royal palace to be set up among them for himself, here called a *sanctuary*, or *holy place*, or *habitation*, of which it is said, (Jer. 17. 12.) *A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary*. This sanctuary is to be considered, 1. As *ceremonial*; consonant to the other institutions of that dispensation, which consisted in carnal ordinances; (Heb. 9. 10.) hence it is called a *worldly sanctuary*, Heb. 9. 1. God in it kept his court as Israel's King. (1.) There he manifested his presence among them, and it was intended for a sign or token of his presence, that, while they had that in the midst of them, they might never again ask, *Is the Lord among us or not?* And because in the wilderness they dwelt in tents, even this royal palace was ordered to be a tabernacle too, that it might move with them, and might be an instance of the condescension of the divine favour. (2.) There he ordered his subjects to attend him with their homage and tribute. Thither they must come to consult his oracles, thither they must bring their sacrifices, and there all Israel must meet, to pay their joint respects to the God of Israel. 2. As *typical*; the holy places made with hands were the *figures of the true*, Heb. 9. 24. The gospel-church is the true tabernacle which the Lord hath pitched, and not man, Heb. 8. 2. The body of Christ, in and by which he made atonement, was the *greater and more perfect tabernacle*, Heb. 9. 11. *The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*, as in a tabernacle.

Now, when Moses was to erect this palace, it was requisite that he should first be instructed where he must have the materials, and where he must have the model; for he could neither contrive it by his own ingenuity, nor build it at his own charge, he is therefore directed here concerning both.

I. The people must furnish him with the *materials*, not by a tax imposed upon them, but by a voluntary contribution. This is the first thing concerning which orders are here given; (v. 2.) *Speak*

unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering; and there was all the reason in the world that they should, for, 1. It was God himself that had not only enlarged them, but enriched them with the spoils of the Egyptians; he had instructed them to borrow, and he had inclined the Egyptians to lend, so that from him they had their wealth, and therefore it was fit they should devote it to him, and use it for him, and thus make a grateful acknowledgment of the favours they had received. Note. (1.) The best use we can make of our worldly wealth is, to honour God with it in works of piety and charity. (2.) When we have been blessed with some remarkable success in our affairs, and have had, as we say, a good turn, it may be justly expected that we should do something more than ordinary for the glory of God, consecrating our gain, in some reasonable proportion of it, to the Lord of the whole earth, Mic. 4. 13. 2. The sanctuary that was to be built was intended for their benefit and comfort, and therefore they must be at the expense of it. They had been unworthy of the privilege if they had grugged at the charge. They might well afford to offer liberally for the honour of God, while they lived at free quarters, having food for themselves and their families rained upon them daily from heaven. We also must own that we have our all from God's bounty, and therefore ought to use all for his glory. Since we live *upon* him, we must live *to* him.

This offering must be given willingly, and with the heart, that is, (1.) It was not prescribed to them what or how much they must give, but it was left to their generosity, that they might show their good will to the house of God and the offices thereof, and might do it with a holy emulation, the zeal of a few *provoking many*, 2 Cor. 9. 2. We should ask not only, "What *must* we do?" but, "What *may* we do for God?" (2.) Whatever they gave they must give it cheerfully, not grudgingly and with reluctance, for *God loves a cheerful giver*, 2 Cor. 9. 7. What is laid out in the service of God we must reckon well bestowed.

The particulars are here mentioned which they must offer; (v. 3. . 7.) all of them things that there would be occasion for in the tabernacle, or the service of it. Some observe that here was gold, silver, and brass, provided, but no iron; that is the military metal, and this was to be a house of peace. Every thing that was provided was very rich and fine, and the best of the sort; for God, who is the best, should have the best.

II. God himself would furnish him with the *model*; (v. 9.) *According to all that I show thee*. God showed him an exact plan of it in miniature, which he must conform to in all points. Thus Ezekiel saw in vision the form of the house and the fashion thereof, Ezek. 43. 11. Note, *Whoever is done in God's service must be done by his direction*, and not otherwise. Yet God did not only show him the model, but gave him also directions how to frame the tabernacle, according to that model, in all the parts of it, which he goes over distinctly in this and the following chapters. When Moses, in the beginning of Genesis, was to describe the creation of the world, though it is such a stately and curious fabric, and made up of such a variety and vast number of particulars, yet he gave a very short and general account of it, and nothing compared with what the wisdom of this world would have desired and expected from one that wrote by divine revelation; but when he comes to describe the tabernacle, he does it with the greatest niceness and accuracy imaginable. He that gave us no account of the lines and circles of the globe, the diameter of the earth, or the height and magnitude of the stars, has told us particularly the measure

of every board and curtain of the tabernacle; for God's church and instituted religion are more precious to him and more considerable than all the rest of the world. And the scriptures were written, not to describe to us the works of nature, a general view of which is sufficient to lead us to the knowledge and service of the Creator, but to acquaint us with the methods of grace, and those things which are purely matters of divine revelation. The blessedness of the future state is more fully represented under the notion of a new Jerusalem than under the notion of new heavens and a new earth.

10. And they shall make an ark of shittim-wood: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold: within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. 12. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in the four corners thereof; and two rings *shall be* in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. 13. And thou shalt make staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. 14. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. 15. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. 16. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony, which I shall give thee. 17. And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. 19. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end; *even* of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20. And the cherubims shall stretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces *shall look* one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. 21. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

The first thing which is here ordered to be made, is, the ark with its appurtenances, the furniture of the most holy place, and the special token of God's presence; the tabernacle was erected to be the receptacle of that.

I. The ark itself was a chest or coffer, in which the two tables of the law, written with the finger of God, were to be honourably deposited, and carefully kept. The dimensions of it are exactly ordered; if the Jewish cubit was, as some learned men compute, three inches longer than our half-yard, (twenty-one inches in all,) the chest or cabinet was about fifty-two inches long, thirty-one broad, and thirty-one deep. It was overlaid within and without with thin plates of gold. It had a crown, or cornice, of gold, round it, with rings and staves to carry it with; and in it he must put the testimony, v. 10. 16. The tables of the law are called the *testimony*, because God did in them testify his will: his giving them that law was a token of his favour to them; and their acceptance of it was in token of their subjection and obedience to him. This law was a testimony *to* them, to direct them in their duty, and would be a testimony *against* them, if they transgressed. The ark is called the *ark of the testimony*, (ch. 30. 6.) and the tabernacle, *the tabernacle of the testimony*, (Numb. 10. 11.) or witness, Acts 7. 44. The gospel of Christ is also called a *testimony* or *witness*, Matth. 24. 14. It is observable, 1. That the tables of the law were carefully preserved in an ark for the purpose; to teach us to make much of the word of God, and to hide it in our hearts, in our innermost thoughts, as the ark was placed in the holy of holies. It intimates likewise the care which Divine Providence ever did, and ever will, take, to preserve the records of divine revelation in the church, so that even in the latter days there shall be seen in his temple the *ark of his testament*. See Rev. 11. 19. 2. That this ark was the chief token of God's presence; which teaches us that the first and great evidence and assurance of God's favour is, the putting of his law in the heart. God dwells where that rules, Heb. 8. 10. 3. That provision was made for the carrying of this ark about with them in all their removes; which intimates to us, that wherever we go, we should take our religion along with us, always bearing about with us the love of the Lord Jesus and his law.

II. The mercy-seat was the covering of the ark or chest, made of solid gold, exactly to fit the dimensions of the ark, v. 17, 21. This *propitiatory covering*, as it might well be translated, was a type of Christ, the great Propitiation, whose satisfaction fully answers the demands of the law, covers our transgressions, and comes between us and the curse we deserve. Thus he is the *end of the law for righteousness*.

III. The cherubims of gold were fixed to the mercy-seat, and of a piece with it, and spread their wings over it, v. 18. It is supposed that these cherubims were designed to represent the holy angels, who always attended the *Shechinah*, or Divine Majesty, particularly at the giving of the law; not by any effigies of an angel, but some emblem of the angelical nature; probably some one of these four faces spoken of, Ezek. 1. 10. Whatever the faces were, they looked one towards another, and both downward toward the ark, while their wings were stretched out so as to touch one another. The apostle calls them *Cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat*, Heb. 9. 5. It denotes their attendance upon the Redeemer, to whom they were ministering spirits, their readiness to do his will, their special presence in the assemblies of saints, (Ps. 68. 17. 1 Cor. 11. 10,) and their desire to look into the mysteries of the gospel, which they diligently contemplate, 1. Pet. 1. 12. God is said to dwell, or sit, *between the cherubims*, on the mercy-seat, (Ps. 80. 1.) and from thence he here promises, for the future, to meet with Moses, and to *commune with him*, v. 22. There he would give

law, and there he would give audience, as a prince on his throne; and thus he manifests himself willing to be reconciled to us, and keep up communion with us, in and by the mediation of Christ. In allusion to this mercy-seat, we are said to come boldly to the throne of grace, (Heb. 4. 16.) for we are not under the law, that is covered, but under grace, that is displayed; its wings are stretched out, and we are invited to come under the shadow of them, Ruth 2. 12.

23. Thou shalt also make a table of shittim-wood: two cubits *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 24. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. 25. And thou shalt make unto it a border of a hand-breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. 26. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that *are* on the four feet thereof. 27. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. 28. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. 29. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal; of pure gold shalt thou make them. 30. And thou shalt set upon the table show-bread before me always.

Here is,

1. A table ordered to be made of wood overlaid with gold, which was to stand, not in the holy of holies, (nothing was in that but the ark and its appurtenances,) but in the outer part of the tabernacle, called the *sanctuary*, or *holy place*, Heb. 9. 2. v. 23, &c. There must also be the usual furniture of the sideboard, dishes and spoons, &c. and all of gold, v. 29.

2. This table was to be always spread, and furnished with the show-bread, (v. 30.) or *bread of faces*, twelve loaves, one for each tribe, set in two rows, six in a row: see the law concerning them, Lev. 24. 5, &c. The tabernacle being God's house, in which he was pleased to say that he would dwell among them, he would show that he kept a good house. In the royal palace it was fit that there should be a royal table. Some make the twelve loaves to represent the twelve tribes, set before God as his people, and the *corn of his floor*, as they are called, Isa. 21. 10. As the ark signified God's being present with them, so the twelve loaves signified their being presented to God. This bread was designed to be, (1.) A thankful acknowledgment of God's goodness to them, in giving them their daily bread, manna in the wilderness, where he prepared a table for them, and, in Canaan, the corn of the land. Hereby they owned their dependence upon Providence, not only for the corn in the field, which they gave thanks for in offering the sheaf of first-fruits, but for the bread in their houses, that, when it was brought home, God did not *blow upon it*, Hag. 1. 9. Christ has taught us to pray every day for the bread of the day. (2.) A token of their communion with God; this bread on God's table being made of the same corn with the

bread on their own tables, God and Israel did, as it were, eat together, as a pledge of friendship and fellowship; he supped with them, and they with him. (3.) A type of the spiritual provision which is made in the church, by the gospel of Christ, for all that are made priests to our God. *In our father's house there is bread enough, and to spare*, a loaf for every tribe. All that attend in God's house shall be abundantly satisfied with the goodness of it, Ps. 36. 8. Divine consolations are the continual feast of holy souls, notwithstanding there are those to whom *the table of the Lord*, and the *meat thereof*, (because it is plain bread,) are *contemptible*, Mal. 1. 12. Christ has a *table in his kingdom*, at which all his saints shall for ever eat and drink with him, Luke 22. 30.

31. And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold; of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. 32. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: 33. Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower; so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. 34. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. 35. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. 36. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same; all of it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. 37. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof; and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. 38. And the tongs thereof, and the snuff-dishes thereof shall be of pure gold. 39. Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. 40. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount.

The next thing ordered to be made for the furnishing of God's palace, was, a rich stately candlestick, all of pure gold, not hollow, but solid. The particular directions here given concerning it show, 1. That it was very magnificent, and a great ornament to the place; it had many branches drawn from the main shaft, which had not only their bowls, (to put the oil and the kindled wick in,) for necessity, but knops and flowers, for ornament. 2. That it was very convenient, and admirably well contrived both to scatter the light and to keep the tabernacle clean from smoke and snuffs. 3. That it was very significant. The tabernacle had no windows by which to let in the light of the day, all its light was candle-light; which intimates the comparative darkness of that dispensation, while the Sun of righteousness was not as yet risen, nor had the day-

star from on high yet visited his church; yet God left not himself without witness, nor them without instruction; the commandment was a lamp, and the law a light, and the prophets were branches from that lamp, which gave light in their several ages to the Old-Testament church. The church is still dark, as the tabernacle was, in comparison with what it will be in heaven; but the word of God is the candlestick, *a light shining in a dark place*; (2 Pet. 1. 19.) and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. The Spirit of God, in his various gifts and graces, is compared to the *seven lamps which burn before the throne*, Rev. 4. 5. The churches are golden candlesticks, the lights of the world, *holding forth the word of life*, as the candlestick does the light, Philip. 2. 15, 16. Ministers are to light the lamps and snuff them, (v. 37.) by opening the scriptures. The treasure of this light is now put into *earthen vessels*, 2 Cor. 4. 6, 7. The branches of the candlestick spread every way, to denote the diffusing of the light of the gospel into all parts by the Christian ministry, Matth. 5. 14, 15. There is a *diversity of gifts*, but the same Spirit gives to each to profit withal.

Lastly, There is, in the midst of these instructions, an express caution given to Moses to take heed of varying from his model; (v. 40.) *Make them after the pattern showed thee*. Nothing was left to his own invention, or the fancy of the workmen, or the people's humour; but the will of God must be religiously observed in every particular. Thus, (1.) All God's providences are exactly according to his counsels, and the copy never varies from the original. Infinite Wisdom never changes its measures; whatever is purposed shall undoubtedly be performed. (2.) All his ordinances must be administered according to his institutions. Christ's instruction to his disciples, (Matth. 28. 20.) is like this here, *Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*.

CHAP. XXVI.

Moses here receives instructions, I. Concerning the inner curtains of the tent or tabernacle, and the coupling of those curtains, v. 1. 6. II. Concerning the outer curtains, which were of goats' hair, to strengthen the former, v. 7. 13. III. Concerning the case or cover which was to secure it from the weather, v. 14. IV. Concerning the boards which were to be reared up to support the curtains, with their bars and sockets, v. 15. 30. V. The partition between the holy place and the most holy, v. 31. 35. VI. The veil for the door, v. 36, 37. These particulars, thus largely recorded, seem of little use to us now; yet having been of great use to Moses and Israel, and God having thought fit to preserve down to us the remembrance of them, we ought not to overlook them. Even the antiquity renders this account venerable.

1. **M**OREOVER, thou shalt make the tabernacle *with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them*. 2. The length of one curtain *shall be* eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. 3. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and *other five curtains shall be* coupled one to another. 4. And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain, from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge

of *another* curtain in the coupling of the second. 5. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second, that the loops may take hold one of another. 6. And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches; and it shall be one tabernacle.

The house must be a *tabernacle* or *tent*, such as soldiers now use in the camp, which was both a mean dwelling and a moveable one; and yet the ark of God had no better till Solomon built the temple, 480 years after this, 1 Kings, 6. 1. God manifested his presence among them thus in a tabernacle, 1. In compliance with their present condition in the wilderness, that they might have him with them wherever they went. Note, God suits the tokens of his favour, and the gifts of his grace, to his people's wants and necessities, according as they are; accommodating his mercy to their state, prosperous or adverse, settled or unsettled. *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee*, Isa. 43. 2. That it might represent the state of God's church in this world, it is a *tabernacle state*, Ps. 15. 1. *We have here no continuing city*; being strangers in this world, and travellers towards a better, we shall never be fixed till we come to heaven. Church-privileges are moveable goods from one place to another; the gospel is not tied to any place; the candlestick is in a tent, and may easily be taken away, Rev. 2. 5. If we make much of the tabernacle, and improve the privilege of it, wherever we go it will accompany us; but, if we neglect and disgrace it, wherever we stay it will forsake us; *What hath my beloved to do in my house?* Jer. 11. 15.

Now, (1.) The curtains of the tabernacle were to be very rich, the best of the kind, *fine twined linen*; and colours very pleasing, *blue, and purple, and scarlet*. (2.) They were to be embroidered with cherubims, (v. 1.) to intimate that the angels of God pitch their tents round about the church, Ps. 34. 7. As there were cherubims over the mercy-seat, so there were round the tabernacle; for we find the angels compassing, not only the throne, but the elders; see Rev. 5. 11. (3.) There were to be two hangings, five breadths in each sewed together, and the two hangings coupled together with golden clasps, or tacks, so that it might be all one tabernacle, v. 6. Thus the churches of Christ and the saints, though they are many, yet they are one, being *fifty joined together* in holy love, and, by the *unity of the Spirit*, so growing into one *holy temple in the Lord*, Eph. 2. 21, 22.—4. 16. This tabernacle was very strait and narrow; but, at the preaching of the gospel, the church is bid to *enlarge the place of her tent*, and to *stretch forth her curtains*, Isa. 54. 2.

7. And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair, to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. 8. The length of one curtain *shall be* thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains *shall be all of* one measure. 9. And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle. 10. And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge

of the one curtain *that is* outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. 11. And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. 12. And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half-curtain, that remaineth, shall hang over the back side of the tabernacle. 13. And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. 14. And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers' skins.

Moses is here ordered to make a double covering for the tabernacle, that it might not rain in, and that the beauty of those fine curtains might not be damaged.

1. There was to be a covering of hair camlet curtains, which were somewhat larger every way than the inner curtains, because they were to inclose them, and probably were stretched out at some little distance from them, v. 7, &c. These were coupled together with brass clasps. The stuff being less valuable, the tacks were so; but the brass tacks would answer the intention as effectually as the golden ones. The bonds of unity may be as strong between curtains of goat's hair as between those of purple and scarlet.

2. Over this there was to be another covering, and that a double one; (v. 14.) one of *rams' skins dyed red*, probably dressed with the wool on; another of *badgers' skins*, so we translate it; but it should rather seem to have been some strong sort of leather, (but very fine,) for we read of the best sort of shoes being made of it, Ezek. 16. 10. Now observe here, (1.) That the outside of the tabernacle was coarse and rough, the beauty of it was in the inner curtains. Those in whom God dwells, must labour to be better than they seem to be. Hypocrites put the best side outward, like *whited sepulchres*; but *the king's daughter is all glorious within*; (Ps. 45. 13.) in the eye of the world, black as the tents of Kedar, but in the eye of God, comely as the curtains of Solomon, Cant. 1. 5. Let our adorning be that of the hidden man of the heart, which God values, 1 Pet. 3. 4. (2.) That where God places his glory, he will create a defence upon it; even upon the habitations of the righteous there *shall be a covert*, Isa. 6. 5, 6. The protection of Providence shall always be upon the beauty of holiness. God's tent will be a *pavilion*. Ps. 27. 5.

15. And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle of shittim-wood standing up. 16. Ten cubits *shall be* the length of a board, and a cubit and a half *shall be* the breadth of one board. 17. Two tenons *shall there be* in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. 18. And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward. 19. And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two

tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. 20. And for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, *there shall be* twenty boards. 21. And their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 22. And for the sides of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. 23. And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. 24. And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. 25. And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 26. And thou shalt make bars of shittim-wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, 27. And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the two sides westward. 28. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. 29. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. 30. And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was showed thee in the mount.

Very particular directions are here given about the boards of the tabernacle, which were to bear up the curtains, as the stakes of a tent, which had need to be strong, Isa. 54. 2. These boards had tenons, which fell into the mortises, that were made for them in silver bases. God took care to have every thing strong, as well as fine, in his tabernacle. Curtains without boards would have been shaken by every wind; but it is a good thing to have the *heart established with grace*, which is as the boards to support the curtains of profession, which otherwise will not hold out long. The boards were coupled together with gold rings at top and bottom, (v. 24.) and kept firm with bars that ran through golden staples in every board; (v. 26.) and the boards and bars were all richly gilded, v. 29. Thus every thing in the tabernacle was very splendid, agreeable to that infant state of the church, when such things were proper enough to please children, to possess the minds of the worshippers with a reverence of the divine glory, and to affect them with the greatness of that Prince who said, *Here will I dwell*; in allusion to this, the new Jerusalem is said to be of *pure gold*, Rev. 21. 18. But the builders of the gospel-church said, *Silver and gold have we none*; and yet the glory of their building far exceeded that of the tabernacle, 2 Cor. 3. 10, 11. *How much better is wisdom than gold!* No orders are given here about the floor of the tabernacle; probably, that also was boarded; for we cannot think that within all these fine curtains they trod upon the cold or wet ground; if it were so left, it may remind us of ch. 20. 24, *An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me.*

31. And thou shalt make a vail of blue

and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made. 32. And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim-wood overlaid with gold: their hooks *shall be of gold*, upon the four-sockets of silver. 33. And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy *place* and the most holy. 34. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy *place*. 35. And thou shalt set the table without the vail, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. 36. And thou shalt make a hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work. 37. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, *and their hooks shall be of gold*: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.

Two vails are here ordered to be made. 1. One for a partition between the holy place and the most holy: which not only forbade any to enter, but forbade them so much as to look into, the holiest of all, v. 31, 33. Under that dispensation, divine grace was veiled, but now we behold it with open face, 2 Cor. 3. 18. The apostle tells us, (Heb. 9. 8.) what was the meaning of this vail; it intimated that the ceremonial law *could not make the comers thereunto perfect*, nor would the observance of it bring men to heaven; *the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest, while the first tabernacle was standing; life and immortality lay concealed, till they were brought to light by the gospel*; which was therefore signified by the rending of this vail at the death of Christ, Matth. 27. 51. We have now *boldness to enter into the holiest*, in all acts of devotion, *by the blood of Jesus*; yet such as obliges us to a holy reverence, and a humble sense of our distance. 2. Another vail was for the outer door of the tabernacle, v. 36, 37. Through this first vail the priests went in every day to minister in the holy place, but not the people, Heb. 9. 6. This vail was all the defence the tabernacle had against thieves and robbers, which might easily be broken through, for it could be neither locked nor barred, and the abundance of wealth in the tabernacle, one would think, might be a temptation; but by leaving it thus exposed, (1.) The priests and Levites would be so much the more obliged to keep a strict watch upon it, and, (2.) God would show his care of his church on earth, though it is weak and defenceless, and continually exposed. A curtain shall be (if God please to make it so) as strong a defence to his house, as gates of brass and bars of iron.

CHAP. XXVII.

In this chapter, directions are given, I. Concerning the brazen altar for burnt-offerings, v. 1. . 8. II. Concerning the court of the tabernacle, with the hangings of it, v. 9. . 19. III. Concerning oil for the lamp, v. 20, 21.

I. **AND** thou shalt make an altar of shittim-wood, five cubits long, and five

cubits broad: the altar shall be foursquare, and the height thereof *shall be* three cubits. 2. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. 3. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his flesh-hooks, and his fire-pans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. 4. And thou shalt make for it a grate of net-work of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof. 5. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. 6. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with brass. 7. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. 8. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

As God intended in the tabernacle to manifest his presence among his people, so there they were to pay their devotions to him, not in the tabernacle itself, (into *that* only the priests entered as God's domestic servants,) but in the court before the tabernacle, where, as common subjects, they attended. There an altar was ordered to be set up, to which they must bring their sacrifices, and on which their priests must offer them to God; and this altar was to sanctify their gifts; hence they were to present their services to God, as from the mercy-seat he gave his oracles to them; and thus a communion was settled between God and Israel. Moses is here directed about, 1. The *dimensions* of it; it was four-square, v. 1. 2. The *horns* of it, (v. 2.) which were for ornament and for use; the sacrifices were *bound with cords to the horns of the altar*, and to them malefactors fled for refuge. 3. The *materials*; it was of wood overlaid with brass, v. 1, 2. 4. The *apfurntenances* of it, (v. 3.) which were all of brass. 5. The *grate*, which was let into the hollow of the altar, about the middle of it, in which the fire was kept, and the sacrifice burnt; it was made of net-work like a sieve, and hung hollow, that the fire might burn the better, and that the ashes might fall through into the hollow of the altar, v. 4, 5. 6. The *staves* with which it must be carried, v. 6. 7. And, *lastly*, He is referred to the pattern showed him, v. 8.

Now this brazen altar was a type of Christ dying to make atonement for our sins: the wood had been consumed by the fire from heaven, if it had not been secured by the brass; nor could the human nature of Christ have borne the wrath of God, if it had not been supported by a divine power. Christ sanctified himself for his church, as their altar, (John 17. 19.) and by his mediation sanctifies the daily services of his people, who also have a *right to eat of this altar*, (Heb. 13. 10.) for they serve at it as spiritual priests. To the horns of this altar poor sinners fly for refuge when justice pursues them, and there they are safe in the virtue of the sacrifice there offered.

9. And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward *there shall be* hangings for the court of fine

twined linen, of a hundred cubits long, for one side. 10. And the twenty pillars thereof, and their twenty sockets, *shall be of brass*: the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *shall be of silver*. 11. And likewise for the north side in length *there shall be hangings of a hundred cubits long*, and his twenty pillars, and their twenty sockets of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. 12. And for the breadth of the court on the west side *shall be hangings of fifty cubits*: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. 13. And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward *shall be fifty cubits*. 14. The hangings of one side of the gate *shall be fifteen cubits*: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15. And on the other side *shall be hangings, fifteen cubits*: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16. And for the gate of the court *shall be a hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work*: and their pillars *shall be four*, and their sockets four. 17. All the pillars round about the court *shall be filleted with silver*: their hooks *shall be of silver*, and their sockets of brass. 18. The length of the court *shall be a hundred cubits*, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. 19. All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, *shall be of brass*.

Before the tabernacle there was to be a court or yard, enclosed with hangings, of the finest linen that was used for tents. This court, according to the common computation of cubits, was fifty yards long, and twenty-five broad. Pillars were set up at convenient distances, in sockets of brass, the pillars filleted with silver, and silver tenter-hooks in them, on which the linen hangings were fastened; the hanging which served for the gate was finer than the rest, v. 16. This court was a type of the church, enclosed and distinguished from the rest of the world. The enclosure supported by pillars, denoting the stability of the church, hung with the clean linen, which is said to be the *righteousness of saints*, Rev. 19. 8. These were the courts David longed for, and coveted to reside in, (Ps. 84. 2, 10.) and into which the people of God entered with praise and thanksgiving; (Ps. 100. 4.) yet this court would contain but a few worshippers; thanks be to God, now, under the gospel, the enclosure is taken down; God's will is, that men *pray every where*; and there is room for all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ.

20. And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. 21. In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before

the LORD. *It shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.*

We read of the candlestick in the twenty-fifth chapter; here is an order given for the keeping of the lamps constantly burning in it, else it was useless; in every candlestick there should be a burning and shining light; candlesticks without candles are as *wells without water*, or as *clouds without rain*. Now, 1. The people were to provide the oil; from them the Lord's ministers must have their maintenance. Or, rather, the pure oil signified the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which are communicated to all believers from Christ the good Olive, of whose fulness we receive, (Zech. 4. 11, 12.) and without which our light cannot shine before men. 2. The priests were to light the lamps, and to tend them; it was part of their daily service to *cause the lamp to burn always*, night and day; thus it is the work of ministers, by the preaching and expounding of the scriptures, (which are as a lamp,) to enlighten the church, God's tabernacle upon earth, and to direct the spiritual priests in his service. This is to be a *statute for ever*, that the lamps of the word be lighted as duly as the incense of prayer and praise is offered.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Orders being given for the fitting up of the place of worship, in this and the following chapter, care is taken about the priests that were to minister in this holy place, as the menial servants of the God of Israel. He hired servants, as a token of his purpose to reside among them. In this chapter, I. He pitches upon the persons who should be his servants, v. 1. II. He appoints their livings; their work was holy, and so must their garments be; and answerable to the glory of the house which was now to be erected, v. 2..5. 1. He appoints the garments of his head servant, the high priest, which were very rich. (1.) An ephod and girdle, v. 6..14. (2.) A breast-plate of judgment, (v. 15..29.) in which must be put the Urim and Thummim, v. 30. (3.) The robe of the ephod, v. 31..35. (4.) The mitre, v. 36..39. 2. The garments of the inferior priests, v. 40..43. And these also were shadows of good things to come.

1. **AND** take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, *even* Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. 2. And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. 3. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 4. And these are the garments which they shall make; a breast-plate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 5. And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.

We have here,

I. The priests nominated, *Aaron and his sons*, v. 1. Hitherto, every master of a family was priest to his own family, and offered, as he saw cause, upon altars of earth; but now that the families of Israel

began to be incorporated into a nation, and a *tabernacle of the congregation* was to be erected, as a visible centre of their unity, it was requisite there should be a public priesthood instituted. Moses, who had hitherto officiated, and is therefore reckoned among the *priests of the Lord*, (Ps. 99. 6.) had enough to do as their prophet to consult the oracle for them, and as their prince to judge among them; nor was he desirous to engross all the honours to himself, or to entail that of the priesthood, which alone was hereditary, upon his own family, but was very well pleased to see his brother Aaron invested in this office, and his sons after him, while (how great soever he was) his sons after him would be but common Levites. It is an instance of the humility of that great man, and an evidence of his sincere regard for the glory of God, that he had so little regard to the preferment of his own family. Aaron, who had humbly served as a prophet to his younger brother Moses, and did not decline the office, (ch. 7. 1.) is now advanced to be a priest, a high priest, to God; for he will exalt those that abase themselves. Nor could any man have *taken this honour to himself*, but he that was *called of God to it*, Heb. 5. 4. God had said of Israel in general, that they should be to him a *kingdom of priests*, ch. 19. 6. But, because it was requisite that those who ministered at the altar should give themselves wholly to the service, and because that which is every body's work will soon come to be nobody's work, God here chose from among them one to be a family of priests, the father and his four sons; and from Aaron's loins descended all the priests of the Jewish church, whom we read so often of, both in the Old Testament and in the New. A blessed thing it is, when real holiness goes, as this ceremonial holiness did, by succession in a family.

II. The priest's garments, appointed *for glory and beauty*, v. 2. Some of the richest materials were to be provided, (v. 5.) and the best artists employed in the making of them, whose skill God, by a *special gift* for this purpose, would improve to a very high degree, v. 3. Note, Eminence, even in common arts, is a gift of God, it comes from him, and, as there is occasion, it ought to be used for him. He that teaches the husbandman discretion, teaches the tradesman also; both therefore ought to honour God with their gain. Human learning ought particularly to be consecrated to the service of the priesthood, and employed for the adorning of those that minister about holy things.

The garments appointed were, 1. Four, which both the high priest and the inferior priests wore, namely, the linen breeches, the linen coat, the linen girdle which fastened it to them, and the bonnet or turban; that which the high priest wore is called a *mitre*. 2. Four more, which were peculiar to the high priest, namely, the ephod, with the curious girdle of it, the breast-plate of judgment, the long robe with the bells, and pomegranates at the bottom of it, and the golden plate on his forehead. These glorious garments were appointed, (1.) That the priests themselves might be reminded of the dignity of their office, and might behave themselves with due decorum. (2.) That the people might thereby be possessed with a holy reverence of that God whose ministers appeared in such grandeur. (3.) That the priests might be types of Christ, who should offer himself without spot to God, and of all Christians who have the beauty of holiness put upon them, in which they are consecrated to God. Our adorning, now under the gospel, both that of ministers and Christians, is not to be of gold, and pearl, and costly array, but the *garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness*, Isa. 61. 10. Ps. 132. 9, 16. As the filthy garments, wherewith Joshua the high priest was

clothed, signified the iniquity which cleaved to his priesthood, from which care was taken that it should be purged, (Zech. 3. 3, 4.) so those *holy garments* signified the perfect purity that there is in the priesthood of Christ; he is holy, harmless, and undefiled.

6. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work. 7. It shall have the two shoulder-pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. 8. And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9. And thou shalt take two onyx-stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: 10. Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. 11. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. 12. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod, for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial. 13. And thou shalt make ouches of gold; 14. And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen-work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches.

Directions are here given concerning the ephod, which was the outmost garment of the high priest: *linen ephods* were worn by the inferior priests, 1 Sam. 22. 18. Samuel wore one when he was a child, (1 Sam. 2. 18.) and David when he danced before the ark; (2 Sam. 6. 14.) but this, which the high priest only wore, was called a *golden ephod*, because there was a great deal of gold woven into it: it was a short coat without sleeves, buttoned close to him with a curious girdle of the same stuff; (v. 6, 8.) the shoulder pieces were buttoned together with two precious stones set in gold, one on each shoulder, on which were graven the names of the *children of Israel*, v. 9. 12. In allusion to this, 1. Christ, our High Priest, appeared to John, *girt about the paps with a golden girdle*; such as was the curious girdle of the ephod, Rev. 1. 13. Righteousness is the girdle of his loins, (Isa. 11. 5.) and should be of ours, Eph. 6. 14. He is girt with strength for the work of our salvation, and is ready for it. 2. The government is said to be *upon his shoulders*, (Isa. 9. 6.) as Aaron had the names of all Israel upon his shoulders in precious stones. He presents to himself and to his Father a *glorious church*, Eph. 5. 27. He has power to support them, interest to recommend them, and it is in him that they are remembered with honour and favour: he bears them before the Lord *for a memorial*, (v. 12.) in token of his *appearing before God* as the Representative of all Israel, and an Advocate for them.

15. And thou shalt make the breast-plate of judgment with cunning work; after

the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. 16. Foursquare it shall be, being doubled; a span *shall be* the length thereof, and a span *shall be* the breadth thereof. 17. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: *the first row shall be* a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: *this shall be* the first row. 18. And the second row *shall be* an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 19. And the third row a figure, an agate, and an amethyst. 20. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. 21. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes. 22. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen-work of pure gold. 23. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 24. And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings *which are* on the ends of the breastplate. 25. And *the other* two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put *them* on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod before it. 26. And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate, in the border thereof, *which is* in the side of the ephod inward. 27. And two *other* rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over against the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. 28. And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that *it* may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. 29. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. 30. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.

The most considerable of the ornaments of the high priest was this breast-plate, a rich piece of cloth, curiously wrought with gold and purple, &c.

two spans long, and a span broad, so that, being doubled, it was a span square, v. 16. This was fastened to the ephod with wreathen chains of gold, (v. 13, 14, 22, &c.) both at top and bottom, so that *the breast-plate might not be loosed from the ephod*, v. 28. The ephod was the garment of service, the breast-plate of judgment was an emblem of honour; these two must by no means be separated. If any man will minister unto the Lord, and do his will, he shall know his doctrine. In this breast-plate,

1. The tribes of Israel were recommended to God's favour in twelve precious stones, v. 17.. 21, 29. Some question whether Levi had a precious stone with his name on or no. If not, Ephraim and Manasseh were reckoned distinct, as Jacob had said they should be, and the high priest himself, being head of the tribe of Levi, sufficiently represented that tribe. If there was a stone for Levi, as is intimated by that, that they were *engraven according to their birth*, (v. 10.) Ephraim and Manasseh were one in Joseph. Aaron was to bear their names for a memorial before the Lord continually, being ordained for men, to represent them in things pertaining to God, herein typifying our great High Priest, who always appears in the presence of God for us.

1. Though the people were forbidden to come near, and obliged to keep their distance, yet, by the high priest, who had their names on his breast-plate, they entered into the holiest; so believers, even while they are here on this earth, not only enter into the holiest, but by faith are made to sit with Christ in heavenly places, Eph. 2. 6. 2. The name of each tribe was engraven in a precious stone, to signify how precious, in God's sight, believers are, and how honourable, Isa. 43. 4. They shall be his in the day he makes up his jewels, Mal. 3. 17. How small and poor soever the tribe was, it was a precious stone in the breast-plate of the high-priest; thus are all the saints dear to Christ; and his delight is in them as the excellent ones of the earth, however men esteem them as *earthen pitchers*, Lam. 4. 2. 3. The high priest had the names of the tribes both on his shoulders and on his breast, intimating both the power and the love with which our Lord Jesus intercedes for those that are his. He not only bears them up in his arms with an almighty strength, but he bears them upon his heart, as the expression here is; (v. 29.) carries them in his bosom, (Isa. 40. 11.) with the most tender affection. How near should Christ's name be to our hearts, since he is pleased to lay our names so near his; and what a comfort is it to us, in all our addresses to God, that the great High Priest of our profession has the names of all his Israel upon his breast before the Lord, for a memorial, presenting them to God, as the people of his choice, who were to be made accepted in the beloved! Let not any good Christians fear that God has forgotten them, nor question his being mindful of them upon all occasions, when they are not only graven upon the palms of his hands, (Isa. 49. 16.) but graven upon the heart of the great Intercessor. See Cant. 8. 6.

II. The Urim and Thummim, by which the will of God was made known in doubtful cases, were put in this breast-plate, which is therefore called the breast-plate of judgment, v. 30. Urim and Thummim signify light and integrity; many conjectures there are among the learned what they were; we have no reason to think they were any thing that Moses was to make, more than what was before ordered; so that either God made them himself, and gave them to Moses, for him to put into the breast-plate, when other things were prepared, (Lev. 8. 8.) or, no more is meant than a declaration of the further use of what was already ordered to be made. I think the words may be read thus: And thou shalt give, or add, or deliver, to the breast-plate of

judgment, the illuminations and perfections, and they shall be upon the heart of Aaron; that is, "He shall be endued with the power of knowing and making known the mind of God in all difficult doubtful cases, relating either to the civil or ecclesiastical state of the nation." Their government was a theocracy; God was their King, the high priest was, under God, their ruler, the Urim and Thummim were his cabinet council; probably Moses wrote upon the breast-plate, or wove into it, these words, *Urim and Thummim*, to signify that the high priest, having on him this breast-plate, and asking counsel of God in any emergency relating to the public, should be directed to take those measures, and give that advice, which God would own. If he was standing before the ark, (but without the veil,) probably he received instructions from off the mercy-seat, as Moses did; (*ch.* 25. 22.) thus, it should seem, Phineas did; *Judg.* 20. 27, 28. If he was at a distance from the ark, as Abiathar was when he inquired of the Lord for David, (1 Sam. 23. 6, &c.) then the answer was given either by a voice from heaven, or rather by an impulse upon the mind of the High Priest, which last is perhaps intimated in that expression, *He shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart.* This oracle was of great use to Israel; Joshua consulted it, (*Numb.* 27. 21.) and, it is likely, the judges after him. It was lost in the captivity, and never regained after, though, it should seem, it was expected, *Ezra* 2. 63. But it was a shadow of good things to come, and the substance is Christ. He is our Oracle; by him God in these last days makes known himself and his mind to us, *Heb.* 1. 1. *John* 1. 18. Divine revelation centres in him, and comes to us through him; he is the Light, the true Light, the faithful Witness, the Truth itself, and from him we receive the Spirit of truth, who leads into all truth. The joining of the breast-plate to the ephod denotes that his prophetic office was founded in his priesthood; and it was by the merit of his death that he purchased this honour for himself, and this favour for us. It was the *Lamb that had been slain*, that was worthy to take the book, and to open the seals, *Rev.* 5. 9.

31. And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32. And there shall be a hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of a habergeon, that it be not rent. 33. And beneath, upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: 34. A golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. 35. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister; and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not. 36. And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre: upon the fore-front of the mitre it shall be. 38. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy

things which the children of Israel shall hail-low in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. 39. And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needle-work.

Here is,

1. Direction given concerning the robe of the ephod, *v.* 31.. 35. This was next under the ephod, and reached down to the knees, without sleeves, and was put on over their head, having holes on the sides to put the arms through, or, as Maimonides describes it, was not sewed together on the sides at all. The hole on the top, through which the head was put, was carefully bound about, that it might not tear in the putting on. In religious worship, care must be taken to prevent every thing that may distract the minds of the worshippers, or render the service despicable. Round the skirts of the robe were hung golden bells, and the representations of pomegranates made of yarn of divers colours. The pomegranates added to the beauty of the robe, and the sound of the bells gave notice to the people in the outer court, when he went in to the holy place to burn incense, that they might then apply themselves to their devotions at the same time, (*Luke* 1. 10.) in token of their concurrence with him in his offering, and their hopes of the ascent of their prayers to God in the virtue of the incense he offered. Aaron must come near, to minister in the garments that were appointed him, *that he die not.* It is at his peril if he attend otherwise than according to the institution. This intimates, that we must serve the Lord with fear and holy trembling, as those that know we deserve to die, and are in danger of making some fatal mistake. Some make the bells of the holy robe to typify the sound of the gospel of Christ in the world, giving notice of his entrance within the veil for us; *Blessed are they that hear this joyful sound*, *Ps.* 89. 15. The joining of the pomegranates, which are a fragrant fruit, denotes the sweet savour of the gospel, as well as the joyful sound of it, for it is a savour of life unto life. The church is called an orchard of pomegranates.

2. Concerning the golden plate fixed upon Aaron's forehead, on which must be engraven, *Holiness to the Lord*, (*v.* 36, 37.) or the *Holiness of Jehovah*. Aaron must hereby be reminded that God is holy, and that his priests must be holy; *Holiness becomes his house* and household. The High Priest must be sequestered from all pollution, and consecrated to God, and to his service and honour, and so must all his ministrations be. All that attend in God's house must have *Holiness to the Lord* engraven upon their foreheads, that is, they must be holy, devoted to the Lord, and designing his glory in all they do. This must appear in their forehead, in an open profession of their relation to God, as those that are not ashamed to own it, and in a conversation in the world answerable to it. It must likewise be engraven like the engravings of a signet, so deep, so durable, not painted to be washed off, but sincere and lasting; such must our holiness to the Lord be. Aaron must have this upon his forehead, that he may bear the iniquity of the holy things, (*v.* 38.) and that they may be accepted before the Lord. Herein he was a type of Christ, the great Mediator between God and man, through whom it is that we have to do with God. (1.) Through him what is amiss in our services is pardoned. The divine law is strict; in many things we come short of our duty, so that we cannot but be conscious to ourselves of much iniquity cleaving

even to our holy things; when we would do good, evil is present; even this would be our ruin if God should enter into judgment with us. But Christ, our High Priest, bears this iniquity, bears it for us, so as to bear it from us, and through him it is forgiven to us, and not laid to our charge. (2.) Through him, what is good is accepted; our persons, our performances, are pleasing to God upon the account of Christ's intercession, and not otherwise, 1 Pet. 2. 5. His being *Holiness to the Lord*, recommends all those to the divine favour that are interested in his righteousness, and clothed with his Spirit. And therefore he has said, it was for our sakes that he *sanctified himself*, John 17. 19. Having *such a High Priest*, we come *boldly to the throne of grace*, Heb. 4. 14.-16.

3. The rest of the garments are but named, (v. 39.) because there was nothing extraordinary in them. The embroidered coat of fine linen was the innermost of the priestly garments; it reached to the feet, and the sleeves to the wrists, and was bound to the body with a girdle or sash of needlework. The mitre, or diadem, was of linen, such as kings anciently wore in the East, typifying the kingly office of Christ. He is a *Priest upon a throne*, (Zech. 6. 13.) a Priest with a crown. These two God has joined, and we must not think to separate them.

40. And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. 41. And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 42. And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach. 43. And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die. *It shall be a statute for ever unto him, and his seed after him.*

We have here,

1. Particular orders about the vestments of the inferior priests. They were to have coats, and girdles, and bonnets, of the same materials with those of the high priest; but there was a difference in shape between their bonnets and his mitre. Theirs, as his, were to be *for glory and beauty*, (v. 40.) that they might look great in their ministrations: yet all this glory was nothing compared with the glory of grace, this beauty nothing to the beauty of holiness, of which these holy garments were typical. They are particularly ordered, in their ministrations, to wear *linen breeches*, v. 42. This teaches us modesty and decency of garb and gesture, at all times, especially in public worship, in which a veil is becoming, 1 Cor. 11. 5, 6, 10. It also intimates what need our souls have of a covering, when we come before God, that the *shame of their nakedness may not appear*.

2. A general rule concerning the garments both of the high priest, and of the inferior priests, that they were to be put upon them, at first, when they were consecrated, in token of their being invested in the office; (v. 41.) and then, they were to wear them in all their ministrations, but not at other

times, (v. 43.) and this, at their peril, lest they *bear iniquity, and die*. Those who are guilty of omissions in duty, as well as omissions of duty, shall *bear their iniquity*. If the priests perform the instituted service, and do not do it in the appointed garments, it is (say the Jewish doctors) as if a stranger did it, and the *stranger that comes nigh shall be put to death*. Nor will God connive at the presumptions and irreverences even of those whom he causes to draw most near to him; if Aaron himself put a slight upon the divine institution, he shall bear iniquity, and die. To us these garments typify, (1.) *The righteousness of Christ*; if we appear not before God in that, we shall *bear iniquity, and die*. What have we to do at the wedding-feast, without a *wedding garment*? or at God's altar, without the array of his priests? Matth. 22. 12, 13. (2.) *The armour of God* prescribed, Eph. 6. 13. If we venture without that armour, our spiritual enemies will be the death of our souls, and we shall bear the iniquity, our blood will be upon our own heads. Blessed is he therefore that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, Rev. 16. 15.

Lastly, This is said to be a *statute for ever*, that is, it is to continue as long as the priesthood continues. But it is to have its perpetuity in the substance, of which these things were the shadows.

CHAP. XXIX.

Particular orders are given in this chapter, I. Concerning the consecration of the priests, and the sanctification of the altar, v. 1.-37. II. Concerning the daily sacrifice, v. 38.-41. To which gracious promises are annexed, that God would own and bless them in all their services, v. 42.-46.

1. **AND** this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them, to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, 2. And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil; of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. 3. And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. 4. And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. 5. And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: 6. And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. 7. Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. 8. And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. 9. And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons. 10. And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. 11. And

thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 12. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. 13. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul *that is* above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, and burn *them* upon the altar. 14. But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin-offering. 15. Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. 16. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle *it* round about upon the altar. 17. And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put *them* unto his pieces, and unto his head. 18. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt-offering unto the LORD: *it is* a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 19. And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. 20. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. 21. And thou shalt take of the blood that *is* upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. 22. Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul *above* the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, and the right shoulder; for it *is* a ram of consecration: 23. And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that *is* before the LORD: 24. And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons, and shalt wave them *for a* wave-offering before the LORD. 25. And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn *them* upon the altar for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savour before the LORD: *it is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 26. And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration, and wave *it*

for a wave-offering before the LORD: and it shall be thy part. 27. And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the shoulder of the heave-offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, *even of that* which is for Aaron, and of *that* which is for his sons: 28. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel; for it *is* a heave-offering: and it shall be a heave-offering from the childrer of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace-offerings, *even* their heave-offering unto the LORD. 29. And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them. 30. *And* that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation, to minister in the holy *place*. 31. And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. 32. And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that *is* in the basket, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 33. And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made to consecrate *and* to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat *thereof*, because they *are* holy. 34. And if aught of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it *is* holy. 35. And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all *things* which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. 36. And thou shalt offer every day a bullock *for a* sin-offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. 37. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.

Here is,

1. The law concerning the confirmation of Aaron and his sons to the priest's office, which was to be done with a great deal of ceremony and solemnity, that they themselves might be duly affected with the greatness of the work to which they were called, and that the people also might learn to magnify the office, and none might dare to invade it. The ceremonies wherewith it was to be done were very fully and particularly appointed, because nothing of this kind had been done before, and because it was to be a statute for ever, that the high priest should be thus inaugurated. Now,

1. The work to be done was the consecrating of the persons whom God had chosen to be priests; by which they devoted and gave up themselves to

the service of God, and God declared his acceptance of them; and the people were made to know that they *glorified not themselves* to be made priests, but were *called of God*, Heb. 5. 4, 5. They were thus distinguished from common men, sequestered from common services, and set apart for God and an immediate attendance on him. Note, All that are to be employed for God are to be sanctified to him. The person must first be accepted, and then the performance. The Hebrew phrase for consecrating, is, *filling the hand*; (v. 9.) *Thou shalt fill the hand of Aaron and his sons*, and the *ram of consecration* is the *ram of fillings*, v. 22, 26. The consecrating of them was the perfecting of them; Christ is said to be *perfected or consecrated for evermore*; Heb. 7. 28. Probably, the phrase here is borrowed from the putting of the sacrifice into their hand, to be waved before the Lord, v. 24. But it intimates, (1.) That ministers have their hands full; they have no time to trifle, so great, so copious, so constant, is their work. (2.) That they must have their hands *filled*. Of necessity, they must have something to offer, and they cannot find it in themselves, it must be given them from above. They cannot fill the people's hearts, unless God fill their hands; to him therefore they must go, and *receive from his fulness*.

2. The person to do it was Moses, by God's appointment. Though he was *ordained for men*, yet the people were not to consecrate him; Moses the *servant of the Lord*, and his agent herein, must do it. By God's special appointment he now did the priest's work, and the office which was the priest's part of the sacrifice was here ordered to be his, v. 26.

3. The place was at the *door of the tabernacle of meeting*, v. 4. God was pleased to dwell in the tabernacle, the people attending in the courts, so that the door between the court and the tabernacle was the fittest place for them to be consecrated in, who were to mediate between God and man, and so to stand between both, and *lay their hands* (as it were) *upon both*. They were consecrated at the door, for they were to be door-keepers.

4. It was done with many ceremonies. (1.) They were to be washed, (v. 4.) signifying that they must be clean who *bear the vessels of the Lord*, Isa. 52. 11. They that would *perfect holiness, must cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Isa. 1. 16..18. They were now washed all over; but afterward, when they went in to minister, they washed only their hands and feet; (ch. 30. 19.) for *he that is washed, needs no more*, John 13. 10. (2.) They were to be clothed with the holy garments, (v. 5, 6, 8, 9.) to signify that it was not sufficient for them to put away the pollutions of sin, but they must put on the graces of the Spirit, *be clothed with righteousness*, Ps. 132. 9. They must be girded as men prepared and strengthened for their work; and they must be robed, and crowned, as men that counted their work and office their true honour. (3.) The high priest was to be anointed with the *holy anointing oil*, (v. 7.) that the church might be filled, and delighted, with the sweet savour of his administrations, (for *ointment and perfume rejoice the heart*;) and in token of the pouring out of the Spirit upon him, to qualify him for his work. Brotherly love is compared to this oil with which Aaron was anointed, Ps. 133. 2. The inferior priests are said to be anointed, (ch. 30. 30.) not on their *heads*, as the high priest, (Lev. 21. 10.) the oil was only mingled with the blood that was sprinkled upon their *garments*. (4.) Sacrifices were to be offered for them. The covenant of priesthood, as all other covenants, must be *made by sacrifice*.

[1.] There must be a *sin-offering* to make atone-

ment for them, v. 10..14. The law made *them* priests, that had infirmity, and therefore they must first offer for their own sin, before they could make atonement for the people, Heb. 7. 27, 28. They were to put their hand on the head of their sacrifice, (v. 10.) confessing that they deserved to die for their own sin, and desiring that the killing of the beast might expiate their guilt, and be accepted as a vicarious satisfaction. It was used as other sin-offerings were; only, whereas the flesh of other sin-offerings was eaten by the priests, (Lev. 10. 18.) in token of the priests' taking away the sin of the people, this was appointed to be all burnt without the camp, (v. 14.) to signify the imperfection of the legal dispensation; (as the learned Bishop Patrick notes;) for the sins of the priests themselves could not be taken away by those sacrifices, but they must expect a better High Priest, and a better sacrifice.

[2.] There must be a *burnt-offering*, a ram wholly burnt, to the honour of God, in token of the dedication of themselves wholly to God and to his service, as *living sacrifices*, kindled with the fire, and ascending in the flame, of holy love, v. 15..18. The sin-offering must first be offered, and then the burnt-offering; for, till guilt be removed, no acceptable service can be performed, Isa. 6. 7.

[3.] There must be a *peace-offering*; it is called the *ram of consecration*, because there was more in this, peculiar to the occasion, than in the other two. In the burnt-offering, God had the glory of their priesthood, in this, they had the comfort of it; and, in token of a mutual covenant between God and them, *First*, The blood of the sacrifice was divided between God and them; (v. 20, 21.) part of the blood was *sprinkled upon the altar round about*, and part put upon them, upon their bodies, (v. 20.) and upon their garments, v. 21. Thus the benefit of the expiation made by the sacrifice was applied and assured to them, and their whole selves from head to foot sanctified to the service of God. The blood was put upon the extreme parts of the body, to signify that it was all, as it were, enclosed and taken in for God, the tip of the ear, and the great toe, not excepted. We reckon that the blood and oil, sprinkled upon garments, spotted and stained them; yet the holy oil, and the blood of the sacrifice, sprinkled upon their garments, must be looked upon as the greatest adorning imaginable to them, for they signified the blood of Christ, and the graces of the Spirit, which constitute and complete the beauty of holiness, and recommend us to God: we read of robes *made white with the blood of the Lamb*. *Secondly*, The *flesh of the sacrifice*, with the meat-offering annexed to it, was likewise divided between God and them, that (to speak with reverence) God and they might feast together, in token of friendship and fellowship.

1. Part of it was to be first waved before the Lord, and then burnt upon the altar; part of the *flesh*, (v. 22.) part of the *bread*, for bread and flesh must go together; (v. 23.) these were first put into the hands of Aaron to be waved; and so, in token of their being offered to God, (who, though unseen, yet compasses us round on every side, and then they were to be burnt upon the altar, (v. 24, 25.) for the altar was to devour God's part of the sacrifice. Thus God admitted Aaron and his sons to be his servants, and wait at his table, taking the meat of his altar from their hands. Here, in a parenthesis, as it were, comes in the law concerning the priests' part of the peace-offerings afterward, the breast and shoulder, which were now divided; Moses had the breast, and the shoulder was burnt on the altar with God's part, v. 26..28.

2. The other part, both of the flesh of the ram, and of the bread, Aaron and his sons were to eat at the door of the tabernacle, (v. 31.. 33.) to signify that he called them not only *servants*, but *friends*, John 15. 15. He *supped with them*, and *they with him*. Their eating of the things where-with the atonement was made, signified their *receiving the atonement*, as the expression is, (Rom. 5. 11.) their thankful acceptance of the benefit of it, and their joyful communion with God thereupon, which was the true intent and meaning of a feast upon a sacrifice. If any of it were left, it must be burnt, that it might not be in any danger of putrefying, and to show that it was an extraordinary peace-offering.

Lastly, The time that was to be spent in this consecration: *Seven days shalt thou consecrate them*, v. 35. Though all the ceremonies were performed on the first day, yet, (1.) They were not to look upon their consecration as completed till the seven days' end, which put a solemnity upon their admission, and a distance between this and their former state, and obliged them to enter upon their work with a pause, giving them time to consider the weight and seriousness of it. This was to be observed in after-ages, v. 30. He that was to succeed Aaron in the high priesthood must put on the holy garments seven days together, in token of a deliberate and gradual advance into his office, and that one sabbath might pass over him in his consecration. (2.) Every day of the seven, in this first consecration, a bullock was to be offered for a sin-offering, (v. 36.) which was to intimate to them, [1.] That it was of very great concern to them to get their sins pardoned, and that, though atonement was made, and they had had the comfort of it, yet they must still keep up a penitent sense of sin, and often repeat the confession of it. [2.] That those sacrifices, which were thus offered day by day to make atonement, could not make the *comers thereunto perfect*, for then they would have ceased to be offered, as the apostle argues, Heb. 10. 1, 2. They must therefore expect the *bringing in of a better hope*.

Now this consecration of the priests was a *shadow of good things to come*. *First*, Our Lord Jesus is the great High Priest of our profession, called of God to be so, consecrated for evermore, anointed with the Spirit above his fellows, whence he is called *Messiah*, the *Christ*; clothed with the holy garments, even with glory and beauty: sanctified by his own blood, not that of bullocks and rams; (Heb. 9. 12.) *made perfect*, or consecrated, *through sufferings*, Heb. 2. 10. Thus in him this was a perpetual statute, v. 9. *Secondly*, All believers are spiritual priests, to offer spiritual sacrifices, (1 Pet. 2. 5.) washed in the blood of Christ, and so *made to our God priests*, Rev. 1. 5, 6. They also are clothed with the beauty of holiness, and have received the anointing, 1 John 2. 27. Their hands are filled with work which they must continually attend to; and it is through Christ, the Great Sacrifice, that they are dedicated to this service. His blood *sprinkled upon the conscience, purged it from dead works, that they may, as priests, serve the living God*. The Spirit of God (as Ainsworth notes) is called the *finger of God*, (Luke 11. 20. compared with Matth. 12. 28.) and by him the merit of Christ is effectually applied to our souls, as here Moses with his finger was to put the blood upon Aaron. It is likewise intimated that gospel-ministers are to be solemnly set apart to the work of the ministry, with great deliberation and seriousness, both in the ordainers and in the ordained, as those that are to be employed in a great work, and entrusted with a great charge.

II. The consecration of the altar, which seems

to have been coincident with that of the priests, and the sin-offerings which were offered every day for seven days together, had reference to the altar as well as the priests, v. 36, 37. An *atonement was made for the altar*. Though that was not a subject capable of sin, nor, having never yet been used, could it be said to be polluted with the sins of the people, yet, since the fall, there can be no sanctification to God, but there must first be an *atonement for sin*, which renders us both unworthy and unfit to be employed for God. The altar was also *sanctified*, not only set apart itself to a sacred use but made so holy as to *sanctify the gifts* that were offered upon it, Matth. 23. 19. Christ is our Altar; for our sakes he sanctified himself, that we and our performances might be sanctified and recommended to God, John 17. 19.

38. Now this *is that* which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. 39. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: 40. And with the one lamb a tenth-deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink-offering. 41. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 42. *This shall be* a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD; where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. 43. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. 44. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. 45. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. 46. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.

Here is,

1. The daily service appointed; a lamb was to be offered upon the altar every morning, and a lamb every evening, each with a meat-offering, both made by fire, as a *continual burnt-offering throughout their generations*, v. 38.. 41. Whether there were any other sacrifices to be offered or not, these were sure to be offered, at the public charge, and for the benefit and comfort of all Israel, to make atonement for their daily sins, and to be an acknowledgment to God of their daily mercies. This was that which the *duty of every day required*. The taking away of this daily sacrifice by Antiochus, for so many evenings and mornings, was that great calamity of the church which was foretold, Dan. 8. 11. Now, (1.) This typified the continual intercession which Christ ever lives to make, in the virtue of his satisfaction, for the continual sanctification of his church: though he offer

ed himself *once for all*, yet that one offering thus becomes a continual offering. (2.) This teaches us to offer up to God the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise every day, morning and evening, in humble acknowledgment of our dependence upon him, and our obligations to him. Our daily devotions must be looked upon as the most needful of our daily works, and the most pleasant of our daily comforts: whatever business we have, this must never be omitted either morning or evening; prayer-time must be kept up as duly as meat-time: the daily sacrifices were as the daily meals in God's house, and therefore they were always attended with bread and wine; those starve their own souls, that keep not up a constant attendance on the throne of grace.

2. Great and precious promises made of God's favour to Israel, and the tokens of his special presence with them, while they thus kept up his institutions among them. He speaks as one well pleased with the appointment of the daily sacrifice; for, before he proceeds to the other appointments that follow, he interposes these promises. It is constancy in religion that brings in the comfort of it. He promises, (1.) That he would keep up communion with them; that he would not only meet Moses, and speak to him, but that he would *meet the children of Israel*, (v. 43.) to accept the daily sacrifices offered up on their behalf. Note, God will not fail to give those the meeting, who diligently and conscientiously attend upon him in the ordinances of his own appointment. (2.) That he would own his own institutions, the tabernacle, the altar, the priesthood; (v. 43, 44.) he would take possession of that which was consecrated to him. Note, What is sanctified to the glory of God, shall be sanctified *by* his glory. If we do our part, God will do his, and will mark and fit that for himself which is in sincerity given up to him. (3.) That he would reside among them as a God in covenant with them, and would give them sure and comfortable tokens of his peculiar favour to them, and his special presence with them; (v. 45, 46.) *I will dwell among the children of Israel*. Note, Where God sets up the tabernacle of his ordinances, he will himself dwell: *Lo, I am with you always*, Matth. 28. 20. Those that abide in God's house shall have God to abide with them. *I will be their God, and they shall know that I am so*. Note, These are truly happy, that have a covenant interest in God as theirs, and the comfortable evidence of that interest. If we have this we have enough, and need no more to make us happy.

CHAP. XXX.

Moses is, in this chapter, further instructed, I. Concerning the altar of incense, v. 4. 10. II. Concerning the ransom-money which the Israelites were to pay, when they were numbered, v. 11. 16. III. Concerning the laver of brass, which was set for the priests to wash in, v. 17. 21. IV. Concerning the making up of the anointing oil, and the use of it, v. 22. 33. V. Concerning the incense and perfume which were to be burned on the golden altar, v. 34. 38.

1. **A**ND thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon; of shittim-wood shalt thou make it. 2. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. 3. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. 4.

And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof; upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. 5. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. 6. And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. 7. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. 8. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it; a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. 9. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt-sacrifice, nor meat-offering; neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon. 10. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it, throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

The orders given concerning the altar of incense, are,

1. That it was to be made of wood, and covered with gold, pure gold, about a yard high, and half a yard square, with horns at the corners, a golden cornice round it, with rings and staves of gold, for the convenience of carrying it, v. 1. 5. It does not appear that there was any grate to this altar, for the ashes to fall into, that they might be taken away; but, when they burnt incense, a golden censer was brought with coals in it, and placed upon the altar, and in that censer the incense was burnt, and with it all the coals were taken away, so that no coals or ashes fell upon the altar. The measure of the altar of incense, in Ezekiel's temple, is double to what it is here; (Ezek. 41. 22.) and it is there called *an altar of wood*, and there is no mention of gold, to signify that the incense, in gospel-times, should be spiritual, the worship plain, and the service of God enlarged, for *in every place incense should be offered*, Mal. 1. 11.

2. That it was to be placed before the vail, on the outside of that partition, but before the mercy-seat which was within the vail, v. 6. For though he that ministered at the altar could not see the mercy-seat, the vail interposing, yet he must look towards it, and direct his incense that way, to teach us, that though we cannot with our bodily eyes see the throne of grace, that blessed mercy-seat, (for it is such a throne of glory, that God, in compassion to us, holds back the face of it, and spreads a cloud upon it,) yet we must in prayer by faith set ourselves before it, direct our prayer, and look up.

3. That Aaron was to burn sweet incense upon this altar, every morning and every evening, about half a pound at a time, which was intended, not only to take away the ill smell of the flesh that was burnt daily on the brazen altar, but for the honour of God, and to show the acceptableness of his people's services to him, and the pleasure which they should take in ministering to him, v. 7, 8. As, by the offerings on the brazen altar, satisfaction was made for what had been done displeasing to God, so, by

the offering on this, what they did well, was, as it were, recommended to the divine acceptance; for our two great concerns with God are, to be acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous in his sight.

4. That nothing was to be offered upon it but incense, nor any incense but that which was appointed, v. 9. God will have his own service done according to his own appointment, and not otherwise.

5. That this altar should be purified with the blood of the sin-offering put upon the *horns of it*, every year, upon the *day of atonement*, v. 10. See Lev. 16. 18, 19. The high priest was to take this in his way, as he came out from the holy of holies. This was to intimate to them, that the sins of the priests who ministered at this altar, and of the people for whom they ministered, put a ceremonial purity upon it, from which it must be cleansed by the blood of atonement.

This incense-altar typified, (1.) The mediation of Christ. The brazen altar in the court was a type of Christ dying on earth; the golden altar in the sanctuary was a type of Christ interceding in heaven, in the virtue of his satisfaction. This altar was before the mercy-seat; for Christ always appears in the presence of God for us; he is our *Advocate with the Father*, (1 John 2. 1.) and his intercession is unto God of a sweet-smelling savour. This altar had a crown fixed to it; for Christ intercedes as a King, *Father, I will*, John 17. 24. (2.) The devotions of the saints, whose prayers are said to be set forth before God as incense, Ps. 141. 2. As the smoke of the incense ascended, so must our desires toward God rise in prayer, being kindled with the fire of holy love and other pious affections. When the priest was burning incense, the people were praying (Luke 1. 10.) to signify that prayer is the true incense. This incense was offered daily, it was a perpetual incense; (v. 8.) for we must pray always, that is, we must keep up stated times for prayer every day, morning and evening, at least, and never omit it, but thus pray without ceasing. The lamps were dressed or lighted, at the same time that the incense was burnt, to teach us that the reading of the scriptures (which are our light and lamp) is a part of our daily work, and should ordinarily accompany our prayers and praises. When we speak to God, we must hear what God says to us, and thus the communion is complete. The devotions of sanctified souls are well pleasing to God, of a sweet-smelling savour; the prayers of saints are compared to sweet odours, (Rev. 5. 8.) but it is the incense which Christ adds to them that makes them acceptable, (Rev. 8. 3.) and his blood that atones for the guilt which cleaves to our best services. And if the heart and life be not holy, even *incense is an abomination*, (Isa. 1. 13.) and he that offers it is as *if he blessed an idol*, Isa. 66. 3.

11. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12. When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them. 13. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs :) a half shekel *shall be* the offering of the LORD. 14. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above,

shall give an offering unto the LORD. 15. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when *they give an offering unto the LORD*, to make an atonement for your souls. 16. And thou shalt take the atonement-money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

Some observe, that the repetition of those words, *The Lord spake unto Moses*, here and afterward, (v. 17, 22, 34.) intimates that God did not deliver these precepts to Moses in the mount, in a continued discourse, but with many intermissions, giving him time either to write what was said to him, or, at least, to charge his memory with it. Christ gave instructions to his disciples, as they were able to hear them. He is here ordered to levy money upon the people by way of poll, so much a head, for the service of the tabernacle. This he must do when he numbered the people: some think that it refers only to the first numbering of them, now when the tabernacle was set up; and that this tax was to make up what was wanting in the voluntary contributions for the finishing of the work, or rather for the beginning of the service in the tabernacle. Others think that it was afterward repeated upon any emergency, and always when the people were numbered; and that David offended in not demanding it when he numbered the people. But many of the Jewish writers, and others from them, are of opinion, that it was to be an annual tribute, only it was begun when Moses first numbered the people. This was that tribute-money which Christ paid for fear of offending his adversaries, Matth. 17. 24. when yet he showed good reason why he should have been excused. Men were appointed in every city to receive this payment yearly. Now, 1. The tribute to be paid was *half a shekel*, about fifteen pence of our money. The rich were not to give more, nor the poor less; (v. 15.) to intimate that the souls of the rich and poor are alike precious, and that God is *no Respector of persons*, Acts 10. 34. Job 34, 19. In other offerings, men were to give according to their ability, but this, which was the *ransom of the soul*, must be alike for all; for the rich have as much need of Christ as the poor, and the poor are as welcome to him as the rich. They both alike contributed to the maintenance of the temple-service, because both were to have a like interest in it, and benefit by it. In Christ and his ordinances, *rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker*, the Lord Christ is the Redeemer of them both, Prov. 22. 2. The Jews say, "If a man refused to pay this tribute, he was not comprehended in the expiation." 2. This tribute was to be paid as a *ransom of the soul*, *that there might be no plague among them*. Hereby they acknowledged that they received their lives from God, that they had forfeited their lives to him, and that they depended upon his power and patience for the continuance of them; and thus they did homage to the God of their lives, and deprecated those plagues which their sins had deserved. 3. This money that was raised was to be employed in the service of the tabernacle; (v. 16.) with it they bought sacrifices, flour, incense, wine, oil, fuel, salt, priests' garments, and all other things which the whole congregation was interested in. Note, Those that have the benefit of God's tabernacle among them, must be willing to defray the expenses of it, and not grudge the

ne. essary charges of God's public worship. Thus we must honour the Lord with our substance, and reckon that best laid out, which is laid out in the service of God. Money, indeed, cannot make an *atonement for the soul*, but it may be used for the honour of him who has made the atonement, and for the maintenance of the gospel by which the atonement is applied.

17. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18. Thou shalt also make a laver *of brass*, and his foot *also of brass*, to wash *withal*: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein: 19. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. 20. When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: 21. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, *even* to him and to his seed, throughout their generations.

Orders are here given, 1. For the *making* of a *laver*, or font, of brass, a large vessel, that would contain a good quantity of water, which was to be set near the door of the tabernacle, *v.* 18. The foot of *brass*, it is supposed, was so contrived as to receive the water, which was let into it out of the laver by spouts, or cocks. They then had a laver for the *priests* only to wash in, but to us now there is a fountain open for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in, (*Zech.* 13. 1.) an inexhaustible *fountain of living water*, so that it is our own fault if we remain in our pollution. 2. For the *using* of this laver; Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet at this laver, every time they went in to minister, every morning, at least, *v.* 19. 21. For this purpose, clean water was put into the laver fresh every day. Though they washed themselves ever so clean at their own houses, that would not serve, they must wash at the laver, because that was appointed for washing, 2 *Kings*, 5. 12. 14. This was designed, (1.) To teach them purity in all their ministrations, and to possess them with a reverence of God's holiness, and a dread of the pollutions of sin. They must not only wash and be made clean, when they were first consecrated, but they must wash and be kept clean, whenever they went in to minister. He only shall *stand in God's holy place*, that has *clean hands and a pure heart*, *Ps.* 24. 3, 4. And, (2.) It was to teach us, who are daily to attend upon God, daily to renew our repentance for sin, and our believing application of the blood of Christ to our souls for remission; for in many things we daily offend and contract pollution, *John* 13. 8, 10. *Jam.* 4. 2. This is the preparation we are to make for solemn ordinances; *Cleanse your hands, and purify your hearts*, and then *draw nigh to God*, *Jam.* 4. 8. To this law David alludes, (*Ps.* 26. 6.) *I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.*

22. Moreover, the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23. Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred *shekels*, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, *even* two hundred and fifty

shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty *shekels*, 24. And of cassia five hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil-olive a hin: 25. And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be a holy anointing oil. 26. And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, 27. And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, 28. And the altar of burnt-offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. 29. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. 30. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister unto me in the priest's office. 31. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be a holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations. 32. Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured; neither shall ye make *any other* like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. 33. Whosoever compoundeth *any* like it, or whosoever putteth *any* of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people. 34. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; *these* sweet spices, with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like *weight*. 35. And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: 36. And thou shalt beat *some* of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. 37. And *as for* the perfume which thou shalt make, you shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD. 38. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto shall even be cut off from his people.

Directions are here given for the composition of the holy anointing oil and the incense that were to be used in the service of the tabernacle; with these God was to be honoured, and therefore he would appoint the making of them: for nothing comes to God but what comes from him.

1. The holy anointing oil is here ordered to be made up: the ingredients, and their quantities, are here prescribed, *v.* 23. 25. Interpreters are not agreed concerning them; we are sure, in general, they were the best and fittest for the purpose; they must needs be so, when the divine wisdom appointed them for the divine honour. It was to be compounded *secundum artem*—after the art of the apothecary; (*v.* 25.) the spices, which were in all near half a hundred weight, were to be infused in

the oil, which was to be about five or six quarts, and then strained out, leaving an admirable sweet smell in the oil. With this oil God's tent and all the furniture of it were to be anointed; it was to be used also in the consecration of the priests, *v. 26.. 30.* It was to be continued *throughout their generations, v. 31.* The tradition of the Jews is, that this very oil, which was prepared by Moses himself, lasted till near the captivity. But Bishop Patrick shows the great improbability of the tradition, and supposes that it was repeated according to the prescription here, for Solomon was anointed with it, (*1 Kings 1. 39.*) and some other of the kings; and all the high priests, with such a quantity of it, that it ran down to the skirts of the garments; and we read of the making up of this ointment; (*1 Chron. 9. 30.*) yet all agree that in the second temple there was none of this holy oil; which he supposes was owing to a notion they had, that it was not lawful to make it up; Providence over-ruling that want, as a presage of the better unction of the Holy Ghost in gospel-times, the variety of whose gifts was typified by these several sweet ingredients; to show the excellency of holiness, there was that in the tabernacle, which was in the highest degree grateful both to the sight and to the smell. Christ's name is said to be as *ointment poured forth*, (*Cant. 1. 3.*) and the good name of Christians better than *precious ointment*, (*Ecl. 7. 1.*)

2. The incense which was burned upon the golden altar; this was prepared of sweet spices likewise, though not so rare and rich as those which the anointing oil was compounded of, *v. 34, 35.* This was prepared once a year, (the Jews say,) a pound for each day of the year, and three pounds over for the day of atonement; when it was used, it was to be beaten very small; thus it pleased the Lord to bruise the Redeemer, when he offered himself for a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour.

Concerning both these preparations the same law is here given, (*v. 32, 33, 37, 38.*) that the like should not be made for any common use. Thus God would preserve in the people's minds a reverence for his own institutions, and teach us not to profane or abuse any thing whereby God makes himself known, as they did, who invented to themselves (for their common entertainments) instruments of music like David, *Amos 6. 5.* It is a great affront to God to jest with sacred things, and to make sport with the word and ordinances of God. That which is God's peculiar must not be used as a common thing.

CHAP. XXXI.

God is here drawing towards a conclusion of what he had to say to Moses upon the mount, where he had now been with him forty days and forty nights; and yet no more is recorded of what was said to him in all that time, than what we have read in the six chapters foregoing. In this, I. He appoints what workmen should be employed in the building and furnishing of the tabernacle, *v. 1.. 11.* II. He repeats the law of the sabbath, and the religious observation of it, *v. 12.. 17.* III. He delivers him the two tables of the testimony at parting, *v. 18.*

1. **AND** the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: 3. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship. 4. To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 5. And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving

of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. 6. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; 7. The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, 8. And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, 9. And the altar of burnt-offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, 10. And the clothes of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, 11. And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.

A great deal of fine work God had ordered to be done about the tabernacle; the materials the people were to provide, but who must put them into form? Moses himself was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, nay, he was well acquainted with the words of God, and the visions of the Almighty; but he knew not how to engrave or embroider; we may suppose that there were some very ingenious men among the Israelites; but they having lived all their days in bondage in Egypt, we cannot think they were any of them instructed in these curious arts. They knew how to make brick, and work in clay, but to work in gold, and cut diamonds, was what they had never been brought up to. How should the work be done with the neatness and exactness that were required, when they had no goldsmiths or jewellers but what must be made out of masons and bricklayers? We may suppose that there was a sufficient number, who would gladly be employed, and would do their best; but it would be hard to find out a proper person to preside in this work; *Who was sufficient for these things?* But God takes care of this matter also.

1. He nominates the persons that were to be employed, that there might be no contest about the preferment, nor envy at those that were preferred, God himself having made the choice. (1.) Bezaleel was to be the architect, or master-workman, *v. 2.* He was of the tribe of Judah, a tribe that God delighted to honour; the grandson of Hur, probably that Hur who had helped to hold up Moses's hand, (*ch. 17.*) and was at this time in commission with Aaron for the government of the people in the absence of Moses; (*ch. 24. 14.*) out of that family, which was of note in Israel, was this workman chosen; and it added no little honour to the family, that a branch of it was employed, though but as a mechanic, or handicraft-tradesman, for the service of the tabernacle. The Jews' tradition is, that Hur was the husband of Miriam, and then it was requisite that God should appoint him to this service, lest, if Moses himself had done it, he should have been thought partial to his own kindred, his brother Aaron also being advanced to the priesthood. God will put honour upon Moses's relations, and yet will make it to appear that he takes not the honour to himself or his own family, but that it is purely the Lord's doing. (2.) Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan, is appointed next to Bezaleel, and partner with him, *v. 6.* Two are better than

one. Christ sent forth his disciples who were to rear the gospel-tabernacle, two and two, and we read of his two witnesses. Aholiab was of the tribe of Dan, which was one of the less honourable tribes, that the tribes of Judah and Levi might not be lifted up, as if they were to engross all the preferences; to prevent a schism in the body, God gives honour to *that part which lacked*, 1 Cor. 12. 24. *The head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee.* Hiram, who was the head-workman in the building of Solomon's temple, was also of the tribe of Dan, 2 Chron. 2. 14. (3.) There were others that were employed by and under these, in the several operations about the tabernacle, v. 6. Note, When God has work to do, he will never want instruments to do it with, for all hearts and heads too are under his eye, and in his hand; and those may cheerfully go about any service for God, and go on in it, who have reason to think that, one way or other, he has called them to it; for whom he calls, he will own and bear out.

2. He qualifies these persons for the service; (v. 3.) *I have filled him with the Spirit of God*; and, (v. 6.) *in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom.* Note, (1.) Skill in common arts and employments is the gift of God; from him are both the faculty and the improvement of the faculty. It is he that puts even this *wisdom into the inward parts*, Job. 38. 36. He teaches the husbandman discretion, (Isa. 28. 26.) and the tradesmen too; and he must have the praise of it. (2.) God dispenses his gifts variously, one gift to one, another to another, and all for the good of the whole body, both of mankind and of the church. Moses was fittest of all to govern Israel, but Bezaleel was fitter than he to build the tabernacle. The common benefit is very much supported by the variety of men's faculties and inclinations; the genius of some leads them to be serviceable one way, of others another way, and *all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 11. This forbids pride, envy, contempt, and carnal emulation, and strengthens the bond of mutual love. (3.) These whom God calls to any service, he will either find or make fit for it. If God give the commission, he will in some measure give the qualifications, according as the service is. The work that was to be done here, was, to make the tabernacle, and the utensils of it, which are here particularly reckoned up, v. 7, &c. And for this the persons employed were enabled to *work in gold, and silver, and brass.* When Christ sent his apostles to rear the gospel tabernacle, he poured out his Spirit upon them, to enable them to speak with tongues the wonderful works of God: not to work upon metal, but to work upon men; so much the more excellent were the gifts, as the tabernacle to be pitched was a *greater and more perfect tabernacle*, as the apostle calls it, Heb. 9. 11.

12. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 13. Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. 14. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 15. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whoso-

ever doeth any work in the sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death. 16. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. 17. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. 18. And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Here is,

1. A strict command for the sanctification of the sabbath-day, v. 13. . 17. The law of the sabbath had been given them, before any other law, by way of preparation; (*ch. 16. 33.*) it had been inserted in the body of the moral law, in the fourth commandment; it had been annexed to the judicial law, *ch. 23. 12.* And here it is added to the first part of the ceremonial law, because the observation of the sabbath is indeed the hem and hedge of the whole law; where no conscience is made of that, farewell both godliness and honesty; for, in the moral law, it stands in the midst between the two tables. Some suggest that it comes in here; upon another account. Orders were now given that a tabernacle should be set up and furnished for the service of God, and with all possible expedition, but lest they should think that the nature of the work, and the haste that was required, would justify them in working at it on sabbath-days, that they might get it done the sooner, this caution is seasonably inserted, *Verily, or Nevertheless, my sabbaths ye shall keep.* Though they must hasten the work, yet they must not make more haste than good speed; they must not break the law of the sabbath in their haste: even tabernacle-work must give way to the sabbath-rest; so jealous is God for the honour of his sabbaths. Observe what is here said concerning the sabbath-day.

1. The nature, meaning, and intention, of the sabbath, by the declaration of which God puts an honour upon it, and teaches us to value it. Divers things are here said of the sabbath. (1.) *It is a sign between me and you*, (v. 13.) and again, v. 17. The institution of the sabbath was a great instance of God's favour to them, and a sign that he had distinguished them from all other people; and their religious observance of the sabbath was a great instance of their duty and obedience to him. God, by sanctifying this day among them, let them know that he sanctified them, and set them apart for himself and his service; otherwise he would not have revealed to them his holy sabbaths, to be the support of religion among them. Or, it may refer to the law concerning the sabbath, *Keep my sabbaths, that ye may know that I the Lord do sanctify you.* Note, if God by his grace incline our hearts to keep the law of the fourth commandment, it will be an evidence of a good work wrought in us by his Spirit. If we sanctify God's day, it is a sign between him and us, that he has sanctified our hearts: hence it is the character of the blessed man, that he *keepeth the sabbath from polluting it*, Isa. 56. 2. The Jews, by observing one day in seven, after six days' labour, testified and declared that they worshipped the God who made the world in six days, and rested the seventh; and so distinguished themselves from other nations, who, having first lost the sabbath, which was instituted to be a memorial of the creation, by degrees lost the knowledge of the Cre-

at, and gave that honour to the creature which was due to him alone. (2.) *It is holy unto you*, (v. 14.) that is, "It is designed for your benefit as well as for God's honour;" *the Sabbath was made for man*. Or, "It shall be accounted holy by you, and shall so be observed, and you shall look upon it as sacrilege to profane it." (3.) It is the *sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord*, v. 15. It is separated from common use, and designed for the honour and service of God, and by the observance of it we are taught to rest from worldly pursuits and the service of the flesh, and to devote ourselves, and all we are, have, and can do, to God's glory. (4.) It was to be observed *throughout their generations*, in every age, *for a perpetual covenant*, v. 16. This was to be one of the most lasting tokens of that covenant which was between God and Israel.

2. The law of the sabbath; they must keep it, (v. 13, 14, 16.) keep it as a treasure, as a trust; regard it, preserve it; keep it from polluting it; keep it up as a sign between God and them; keep it, and never part with it. The Gentiles had anniversary feasts, to the honour of their gods; but it was peculiar to the Jews to have a weekly festival; this therefore they must carefully observe.

3. The reason of the sabbath; for God's laws are not only backed with the highest authority, but supported with the best reason. *God's own example* is the great reason, v. 17. As the work of creation is worthy to be thus commemorated, so the great Creator is worthy to be thus imitated, by a holy rest, the seventh day, after six days' labour, especially since we hope, in further conformity to the same example, shortly to rest with him *from all our labours*.

4. The penalty to be inflicted for the breach of this law; Every one that *defileth the sabbath*, by doing *any work therein*, but works of piety and mercy, *shall be cut off from among his people*; (v. 14.) *he shall surely be put to death*, v. 15. The magistrate must cut him off with the sword of justice, if the crime can be proved; if it cannot, or if the magistrate be remiss, and do not do his duty, God will take the work into his own hands, and cut him off by a stroke from heaven, and his family shall be rooted out of Israel. Note, The contempt and profanation of the sabbath-day is an iniquity to be punished by the judges; and if men do not punish it, God will, here or hereafter, unless it be repented of.

II. The delivering of the two tables of testimony to Moses; God had promised him these tables when he called him up into the mount, (ch. 24. 12.) and now, when he was sending him down, he delivered them to him, to be carefully and honourably deposited in the ark, v. 18. 1. The ten commandments, which God had spoken upon mount Sinai in the hearing of all the people, were now written, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*—for a perpetual memorial: because that which is written remains. 2. They were written in *tables of stone*, prepared, not by Moses, as it should seem, (for it is intimated (ch. 24. 12.) that he found them ready written when he went up to the mount,) but, as some think, by the ministry of angels. The law was written in *tables of stone*, to denote the perpetual duration of it; (what can be supposed to last longer than that which is written in stone, and laid up?) to denote likewise the hardness of our hearts; one might more easily write in stone, than write any thing that is good in our corrupt and sinful hearts. 3. They were written *with the finger of God*, that is, by his will and power immediately, without the use of any instrument. It is God only that can write his law in the heart; he *gives a heart of flesh*, and then, by his Spirit, which is the *finger of God*, he writes his will in the *fleshy tables of the heart*, 2. Cor. 3. 3.

4. They were written in *two tables*, being designed to direct us in our duty both toward God and toward man. 5. They are called *tables of testimony*, because this written law testified both the will of God concerning them, and his good-will toward them, and would be a testimony against them, if they were disobedient. 6. They were delivered to Moses, probably, with a charge, before he laid them up in the ark, to show them publicly, that they might be *seen and read of all men*, and so what they had heard with the hearing of the ear might now be brought to their remembrance. *Thus the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*.

CHAP. XXXII.

It is a very lamentable interruption which the story of this chapter gives to the record of the establishment of the church and of religion among the Jews. Things went on admirably well toward that happy settlement: God had shewed himself very favourable, and the people also had seemed to be pretty tractable; Moses had now almost completed his forty days upon the mount, and, we may suppose, was pleasing himself with the thoughts of the very joyful welcome he should have to the camp of Israel at his return, and the speedy setting up of the tabernacle among them. But, behold, the measures are broken, the sin of Israel turns away those good things from them, and puts a stop to the current of God's favours; the sin that did the mischief, (would you think it?) was, worshipping a golden calf. The marriage was ready to be solemnized between God and Israel, but Israel plays the harlot, and so the match is broken, and it will be no easy matter to piece it again. Here is, I. The sin of Israel, and of Aaron particularly, in making the golden calf for a god, (v. 1. . 4.) and worshipping it, v. 5, 6. II. The notice which God gave of this to Moses, who was now in the mount with him, (v. 7, 8.) and the sentence of his wrath against them, v. 9, 10. III. The intercession which Moses immediately made for them in the mount, (v. 11. . 13.) and the prevalence of that intercession, v. 14. IV. His coming down from the mount, when he became an eye-witness of their idolatry, (v. 15. . 19.) in abhorrence of which, and as an expression of just indignation, he brake the tables, (v. 19.) and burnt the golden calf, v. 20. V. The examination of Aaron about it, v. 21. . 24. VI. Execution done upon the ring-leaders in the idolatry, v. 25. . 29. VII. The further intercession Moses made for them, to turn away the wrath of God from them, (v. 30. . 32.) and a reprieve granted thereupon, reserving them for a further reckoning, v. 33. . 35.

1. **A**ND when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for this Moses*, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 2. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me. 3. And all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron. 4. And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5. And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the LORD. 6. And they rose up

early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings: and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

While Moses was in the mount, receiving the law from God, the people had time to meditate upon what had been delivered, and prepare themselves for what was further to be revealed, and forty days were little enough for that work; but, instead of that, there were those among them that were contriving how to break the laws they had already received, and to anticipate those which they were in expectation of. On the thirty-ninth day of the forty, the plot broke out of rebellion against the Lord.

Here is,

I. A tumultuous address which the people made to Aaron, who was intrusted with the government, in the absence of Moses; (*v. 1.*) *Up, make us gods, which shall go before us.* 1. See the ill effect of Moses's absence from them; if he had not had God's call both to go and stay, he had not been altogether free from blame. Those that have the charge of others, as magistrates, ministers, and masters of families, ought not, without just cause, to absent themselves from their charge, *lest Satan get advantage* thereby. 2. See the fury and violence of a multitude, when they are influenced and corrupted by such as lie in wait to deceive. Some few, it is likely, were at first possessed with this humour, while many, who would never have thought of it, if they had not put it into their hearts, were brought to follow their pernicious ways; and, presently, such a multitude were carried down this stream, that the few who abhorred the proposal durst not so much as enter their protestation against it. *Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles!*

Now what was the matter with this giddy multitude?

(1.) They were weary of waiting for the promised land. They thought themselves detained too long at mount Sinai; though there they lay very safe and very easy, well-fed and well taught, yet they were impatient to be going forward; they had a God that stayed with them, and manifested his presence with them by the cloud, but that would not serve, they must have a God to go before them; they are for hastening to the land *flowing with milk and honey*, and cannot stay to take their religion along with them. Note, Those that would anticipate God's counsels are commonly precipitate in their own. We must first wait for God's law before we catch at his promises. He that believeth doth not make haste; nor more haste than good speed.

(2.) They were weary of waiting for the return of Moses. When he went up into the mount, he had not told them, (for God had not told him,) how long he must stay; and therefore, when he had outstaid their time, though they were every way well provided for, in his absence, some bad people advanced I know not what surmises concerning his delay; *As for this Moses, the man that brought us out of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.* Observe, [1.] How slightly they speak of his person, *this Moses*. Thus ungrateful are they to Moses, who had showed such a tender concern for them, and thus do they walk contrary to God. While God delights to put honour upon him, they delight to put contempt upon him, and this to the face of Aaron his brother, and now his viceroy. Note, The greatest merits cannot secure men from the greatest indignities and affronts in this ungrateful world. [2.] How suspiciously they speak of this delay; *We wot not what is become of him.* They thought he was either consumed by the de-

vouring fire, or starved for want of food, as if that God, who kept and fed them that were so unworthy, would not take care for the protection and supply of Moses his favourite. Some of them, that were willing to think well of Moses, perhaps suggested that he was translated to heaven like Enoch; while others, that cared not how ill they thought of him, insinuated that he had outrun his undertaking, as unable to go on with it, and was returned to his father-in-law to keep his flock. All these suggestions were perfectly groundless and absurd, nothing could be more so; it was easy to tell *what was become of him*: he was seen to go into the cloud, and the cloud he went into was still seen by all Israel upon the top of the mount; they had all the reason in the world to conclude that he was safe there; if the Lord had been pleased to kill him, he would not have showed him such favours as these. If he tarried long, it was because God had a great deal to say to him, for their good; he resided upon the mount as their ambassador, and he would certainly return, as soon as he had finished the business he went upon; and yet they make this the colour of their wicked proposal—*We wot not what is become of him.* Note, *First*, Those that are resolved to think ill, when they have ever so much reason to think well, commonly pretend that they know not what to think. *Secondly*, Misinterpretations of our Redeemer's delays are the occasion of a great deal of wickedness. Our Lord Jesus is gone up into the mount of glory, where he is appearing in the presence of God for us, but out of our sight; the heavens must contain him, must conceal him, that we may live by faith. There he has been long, there he is yet; hence unbelievers suggest that they wot not what is become of him; and ask, *Where is the promise of his coming?* (2 Pct. 3. 4.) as if, because he is not come yet, he would never come. The wicked servant insolbends himself in his impieties, with this consideration, *My Lord delays his coming.* *Thirdly*, Weariness in waiting betrays us to a great many temptations. This began Saul's ruin; he staid for Samuel to the last hour of the time appointed, but had not patience to stay that hour; (1 Sam. 13. 8, &c.) so Israel here, if they could but have staid one day longer, would have seen what was become of Moses. *The Lord is a God of judgment*, and must be waited for till he comes, waited for though he tarry; and then we shall not lose our labour, for he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

(3.) They were weary of waiting for a divine institution of religious worship among them, for that was the thing they were now in expectation of. They were told that they must serve *God in this mountain*, and fond enough they would be of the pomp and ceremony of it; but, because that was not appointed them so soon as they wished, they would set their own wits on work to devise signs of God's presence with them, and would glory in them, and have a worship of their own invention, probably, such as they had seen among the Egyptians; for Stephen says, that when they said unto Aaron, *Make us gods*, they did, in heart, *turn back into Egypt*, Acts 7. 39, 40. This was a very strange notion, *Up, make us gods.* If they wot not what was become of Moses, and thought him lost, it had been decent for them to have appointed a solemn mourning for him for certain days; but see how soon so great a benefactor is forgotten. If they had said, "Moses is lost, make us a governor," there had been some sense in it, though a great deal of ingratitude to the memory of Moses, and contempt of Aaron and Hur, who were left lords-justices in his absence; but to say, *Moses is lost, make us a god*, was the greatest absurdity imaginable. Was Moses their God? Had he ever

pretended to be so? Whatever was become of Moses, was it not evident, beyond contradiction, that God was still with them? And had they any room to question his leading of their camp, who victualled it so well every day? Could they have any other god that would provide so well for them as he had done, nay as he now did? And yet, *Make us gods, which shall go before us! Gods? How many would they have? Is not one sufficient? Make us gods; and what good would gods of their own making do them? They must have such gods to go before them as could not go themselves further than they were carried! So wretchedly besotted and intoxicated are idolaters: they are mad upon their idols*, Jer. 50. 38.

II. Here is the demand which Aaron makes of their jewels thereupon; (v. 2.) *Bring me your golden ear-rings*. We do not find that he said one word to discourage their proposal; he did not reprove their insolence, did not reason with them to convince them of the sin and folly of it, but seemed to approve the motion, and showed himself not unwilling to humour them in it. One would hope he designed, at first, only to make a jest of it, and, by setting up a ridiculous image among them, to expose the motion, and show them the folly of it. But if so, it proved ill-jesting with sin, just as it is of dangerous consequence for the unwary fly to play about the candle. Some charitably suppose, that when Aaron bid them break off their ear-rings, and bring him those, he did it with design to crush the proposal; believing, that, though their covetousness would have let them *lavish gold out of the bag* to make an idol of, (Isa. 46. 6.) yet their pride would not have suffered them to part with their golden ear-rings. But it is not safe to try how far men's sinful lusts will carry them in a sinful way, and what expense they will be at; it proved here a dangerous experiment.

III. Here is the making of the golden calf, v. 3, 4. 1. The people brought in their ear-rings to Aaron, whose demand of them, instead of discouraging the motion, perhaps did rather gratify their superstition, and beget in them a fancy that the gold taken from their ears would be the most acceptable, and would make the most valuable god. Let their readiness to part with their rings to make an idol of, shame us out of our nigardliness in the services of the true God. Did they not draw back from the charge of their idolatry? And shall we grudge the expenses of our religion, or starve so good a cause? 2. Aaron melted down their rings, and, having a mould prepared for the purpose, poured the melted gold into it, and then produced it in the shape of an ox or calf, giving it some finishing strokes with a graving tool. Some think that Aaron chose this figure for a sign or token of the divine presence, because he thought the head and horns of an ox a proper emblem of the divine power, and yet, being so plain and common a thing, he hoped the people would not be so sottish as to worship it. But it is probable that they had learnt of the Egyptians thus to represent the Deity, for it is said, (Ezek. 20. 8.) *They did not forsake the idols of Egypt*, and, (ch. 23. 8.) *Neither left she her whoredoms brought from Egypt. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox*, (Ps. 106. 20.) and proclaimed their own folly, beyond that of other idolaters, who worshipped the host of heaven.

IV. Having made the calf in Horeb, they *worshipped the graven image*, Ps. 106. 19. 1. Aaron, seeing the people fond of their calf, was willing yet further to humour them, and he built an altar before it, and proclaimed a feast to the honour of it, (v. 5.) a feast of dedication. Yet he calls it a *feast to Jehovah*; for, brutish as they were, they did not

imagine that this image was itself a god, nor did they design to terminate their adoration in the image, but they made it for the representation of the true God, whom they intended to worship in and through this image; and yet this did not excuse them from gross idolatry, any more than it will excuse the Papists, whose plea it is, that they do not worship the image, but God by the image; so making themselves just such idolaters as the worshippers of the golden calf, whose feast was a feast to Jehovah, and proclaimed to be so, that the most ignorant and unthinking might not mistake it. 2. The people are forward enough to celebrate this feast; (v. 6.) *They rose up early on the morrow*, to show how well pleased they were with the solemnity, and, according to the ancient rites of worship, they offered sacrifice to this new-made deity, and then feasted upon the sacrifice; thus having, at the expense of their ear-rings, made their god, they endeavoured, at the expense of their beasts, to make this god propitious. Had they offered the sacrifices immediately to Jehovah, without the intervention of an image, they might (for aught I know) have been accepted, (ch. 20. 24.) but, having set up an image before them, as a symbol of God's presence, and so changed the truth of God into a lie, these sacrifices were an abomination, nothing could be more so. When this idolatry of their's is spoken of in the New Testament, the account of their feast upon the sacrifice is quoted and referred to; (1 Cor. 10. 7.) *They sat down to eat and drink of the remainder of what was sacrificed*, and then *rose up to play*; to play the fool, to play the wanton. Like god, like worship. They would not have made a calf of their god, if they had not first made their belly their god; but when the god was a jest, no marvel that the service was sport; being *vain in their imaginations*, they became vain in their worship, so great was this vanity.

Now, (1.) It was strange that any of the people, especially so great a number of them, should do such a thing. Had they not, but the other day, in this very place, heard the voice of the Lord God speaking to them out of the midst of the fire, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image*? Had they not heard the thunder, seen the lightnings, and felt the earthquake, with the dreadful pomp of which this law was given? Had they not been particularly cautioned not to make *gods of gold*? ch. 20. 23. Nay, had they not themselves solemnly entered into covenant with God, and promised that all that which he had said unto them they *would do, and would be obedient*? ch. 24. 7. And yet, before they stirred from the place where this covenant had been solemnly ratified, and before the cloud was removed from the top of mount Sinai, thus to break an express command, in defiance of an express threatening, that this *iniquity should be visited upon them and their children*—what shall we think of it? It is a plain indication that the law was no more able to sanctify, than it was to justify; by it is the *knowledge* of sin, but not the *cure* of it. This is intimated in the emphasis laid upon the place where this sin was committed; (Ps. 106. 19.) *They made a calf in Horeb*, the very place where the law was given. It was otherwise with those that received the gospel; they immediately *turned from idols*, 1 Thess. 1. 9.

(2.) It was especially strange that Aaron should be so deeply concerned in this sin, that he should make the calf and proclaim the feast! Is this Aaron, the saint of the Lord; the brother of Moses his prophet, that could *speak so well*, (ch. 4. 14.) and yet speaks not one word against this idolatry? Is this he that had not only seen, but had been employed in summoning, the plagues of Egypt, and the judgments executed upon the gods of the

Egyptians? What! and yet himself copying out the abandoned idolatries of Egypt? With what face could they say, *These are the gods that brought thee out of Egypt*, when they thus bring the idolatry of Egypt (the worst thing there) along with them? Is this Aaron, who had been with Moses in the mount, (*ch.* 19. 24.—24. 9.) and knew that there was no manner of similitude seen there, by which they might make an image? Is this Aaron, who was intrusted with the care of the people, in the absence of Moses? Is he aiding and abetting in this religion against the Lord? How was it possible that he should ever do so sinful a thing? Either he was strangely surprised into it, and did it when he was half asleep; or he was frightened into it by the outrages of the rabble. The Jews have a tradition, that his colleague Hur opposing it, the people fell upon him and stoned him, (and therefore we never read of him after,) and that this frightened Aaron into a compliance. And God left him to himself, [1.] To teach us what the best of men are when they are so left, that we may *cease from man*, and that he who *thinks he stands may take heed lest he fall*. [2.] Aaron was, at this time, destined by the divine appointment to the great office of the priesthood; though he knew it not, Moses in the mount did; now, lest he should be *lifted up above measure* with the honours that were to be put upon him, a messenger of Satan was suffered to prevail over him, that the remembrance thereof might keep him humble all his days. He who had once shamed himself so far as to build an altar to a golden calf, must own himself altogether unworthy of the honour of attending at the altar of God, and purely indebted to free grace for it. Thus pride and boasting were for ever silenced, and a good effect brought out of a bad cause. By this likewise it was showed that *the law made them priests which had infirmity; and needed first to offer for their own sins*.

7. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: 10. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. 11. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? 12. Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people: 13. Remember

Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Here,

1. God acquaints Moses with what was doing in the camp, while he was absent, *v.* 7, 8. He could have told him sooner, as soon as the first step was taken towards it, and have hastened him down to prevent it; but he suffered it to come to this height, for wise and holy ends, and then sent him down to punish it. Note, It is no reproach to the holiness of God, that he suffers sin to be committed, since he knows, not only how to restrain it when he pleases, but how to make it serviceable to the designs of his own glory. Observe what God here says to Moses concerning this sin. 1. That they had *corrupted themselves*. Sin is the corruption or depravation of the sinner, and it is a self-corruption; *every man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lust*. 2. That they had *turned aside out of the way*. Sin is a deviation from the way of our duty into a by-path; when they promised to do all that God should command them, they set out as fair as could be; but now they missed their way, and *turned aside*. 3. That they had turned *aside quickly*; quickly after the law was given them, and they had promised to obey it; quickly after God had done such great things for them, and declared his kind intentions to do greater. *They soon forgot his works*. To fall into sin quickly after we have renewed our covenants with God, or received special mercy from him, is very provoking. 4. He tells him particularly what they had done; *They have made a calf, and worshipped it*. Note, These sins which are concealed from our governors are naked and open before God. He sees that which they cannot discover, nor is any of the wickedness of the world hid from him. We could not bear to see the thousandth part of that provocation which God sees every day, and yet keeps silence. 5. He seems to disown them, in saying to Moses, *They are thy people which thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt*; as if he had said, "I will not own any relation to them, or concern for them; let it never be said that they are my people, or that I brought them out of Egypt." Note, Those that corrupt themselves, not only shame themselves, but even make God himself ashamed of them, and of his kindness to them. 6. He sends him down to them with all speed; *Go, get thee down*. He must break off even his communion with God, to go and do his duty as a magistrate among the people; so must Joshua, *ch.* 7. 10. Every thing is beautiful in its season.

II. He expresses his displeasure against Israel for this sin, and the determination of his justice to cut them off, *v.* 9, 10. 1. He gives this people their true character; "*It is a stiff-necked people*, unapt to come under the yoke of the divine law, and governed, as it were, by a spirit of contradiction, averse to all good, and prone to evil; obstinate against the methods employed for their cure." Note, The righteous God sees, not only what we do, but what we are; not only the actions of our lives, but the dispositions of our spirits, and has an eye to them in all his proceedings. 2. He declares what was their just desert—that his wrath should *wax hot against them*, so as to consume them at once, and *blot out their name from under heaven*; (*Deut.* 9. 14.) not

only not them out of covenant, but chase them out of the world. Note, Sin exposes us to the wrath of God; and that wrath, if it be not allayed by divine mercy, will burn us up as stubble. It was just with God to let the law have its course against sinners, and to cut them off immediately in the very act of sin; and if he should do so, it would be neither loss nor dishonour to him. 3. He desires Moses (though in a gentle manner) not to intercede for them; Therefore *let me alone*. What did Moses, or what could he do, to hinder God from consuming them? When God resolves to abandon a people, and the decree of ruin is gone forth, no intercession can prevent it, Ezek. 14. 14. Jer. 15. 1. But God would thus express the greatness of his just displeasure against them, after the manner of men who would have none to intercede for those they resolve to be severe with. Thus also he would put an honour upon prayer, intimating that nothing but the intercession of Moses could save them from ruin, that he might be a type of Christ, by whose mediation alone God would *reconcile the world unto himself*. That the intercession of Moses might appear the more illustrious, God fairly offers him, that if he would not interpose in this matter, he would *make of him a great nation*; that either, in process of time, he would raise up a people out of his loins, or that he would immediately, by some means or other, bring another great nation under his government and conduct, so that he should be no loser by their ruin. Had Moses been of a narrow selfish spirit, he would have closed with this offer; but he prefers the salvation of Israel before the advancement of his own family: here was a man fit to be a governor.

III. Moses earnestly intercedes with God on their behalf; v. 11. . 13.) he besought the Lord his God. If God would not be called *the God of Israel*, yet he hoped he might address him as *his own God*. What interest we have at the throne of grace we should improve for the church of God, not for our friends.

Now Moses is *standing in the gap* to turn away the wrath of God, Ps. 106. 23. He wisely took the hint which God gave him, when he said, *Let me alone*; which, though it seemed to forbid his interceding, did really encourage it, by showing what power the prayer of faith has with God. In such a case, *God wonders if there be no intercessor*, Isa. 59. 16.

Observe, 1. His prayer; (v. 12.) *Turn from thy fierce wrath*; not as if he thought God was not justly angry; but he begs that he would not be so greatly angry as to consume them. "Let mercy rejoice against judgment; *repent of this evil*; change the sentence of destruction into that of correction."

2. His pleas. He fills his mouth with arguments, not to move God, but to express his own faith, and to excite his own fervency in prayer. He urges,

(1.) God's interest in them, the great things he had already done for them, and the vast expense of favours and miracles he had been at upon them, v. 11. God had said to Moses, (v. 7.) *They are thy people which thou broughtest up out of Egypt*; but Moses humbly turns them back upon God again, "They are *thy people*, thou art their Lord and Owner, I am but their servant; *thou broughtest them forth out of Egypt*, I was but the instrument in thy hand; that was done in order to their deliverance, which thou only couldst do." Though their being his people was a reason why he should be angry with them for setting up another god, yet it was a reason why he should not be angry with them, so as to consume them. Nothing is more natural than for a father to correct his son, but nothing more unnatural than for a father to *slay* his son. And as the relation is a good plea, ("They are *thy people*,")

so is the experience they had of his kindness to them; "Thou *broughtest them out of Egypt*, though they were unworthy, and had there *served the gods of the Egyptians*, Josh. 24. 15. If thou didst that for them, notwithstanding their sins in Egypt, wilt thou undo it for their sins of the same nature in the wilderness?"

(2.) He pleads the concern of God's glory; (v. 12.) *Wherefore should the Egyptians say, For mischief did he bring them out?* Israel is dear to Moses, as his kindred, as his charge; but it is the glory of God that he is most concerned for, *that lies nearer his heart than any thing else*. If Israel could perish without any reproach to God's name, Moses could persuade himself to sit down contented; but he cannot bear to hear God reflected on, and therefore this he insists upon, *Lord what will the Egyptians say?* Their eyes, and the eyes of all the neighbouring nations, were now upon Israel; from the wondrous beginnings of that people, they raised their expectations of something great in their latter end; but if a people, so strangely saved, should be suddenly ruined, what would the world say of it, especially the Egyptians, who have such an implacable hatred both to Israel and to the God of Israel? They will say, "God was either weak, and could not, or fickle, and would not, complete the salvation he began; he brought them forth to that mountain, not to sacrifice, (as was pretended,) but to be sacrificed." They will not consider the provocation given by Israel to justify the proceeding, but will think it cause enough for triumph that God and his people could not agree, but that their God had done that which they (the Egyptians) wished to see done. Note, The glorifying of God's name, as it ought to be our first petition, (it is so in the Lord's prayer,) so it ought to be our great plea; (Ps. 79. 9.) *Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory*; (Jer. 14. 21.) and see Jer. 33. 8, 9. And if we would with comfort plead this with God, as a reason why he should not destroy us, we ought to plead it with ourselves as a reason why we should not offend him; *What will the Egyptians say?* We ought always to be very careful that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed through us.

(3.) He pleads God's promise to the patriarchs that he would multiply their seed, and give them the land of Canaan for an inheritance, and this promise confirmed by an oath, an oath by himself, since he could swear by no greater, v. 13. God's promises are to be our pleas in prayer; for what he has promised he is able to perform, and the honour of his truth is engaged for the performance of it. "Lord, if Israel be cut off, what will become of the promise? Shall their unbelief make that of no effect? God forbid." Thus we must take our encouragement in prayer from God only.

IV. God graciously abates of the rigour of the sentence, and *repented of the evil he thought to do*; (v. 14.) though he designed to punish them, yet he would not ruin them. See here, 1. The power of prayer; God suffers himself to be prevailed with by the humble believing importunity of intercessors. 2. The compassion of God toward poor sinners, and how ready he is to forgive. Thus he has given other proofs beside his own oath, that he has no pleasure in the death of them that die: for he not only pardons, upon the repentance of sinners, but spares and reprieves, upon the intercession of others for them.

15. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides: on the one side

and on the other *were* they written. 16. And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables. 17. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, *There is a noise of war in the camp.* 18. And he said, *It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear.* 19. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. 20. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

Here is,

I. The favour of God to Moses, in trusting him with the two tables of the testimony, though of common stone, yet far more valuable than all the precious stones that adorned the breast-plate of Aaron. The topaz of Ethiopia could not equal them, v. 15, 16. God himself, without the ministry either of man or angel, (for aught that appears,) wrote the ten commandments on these tables, *on both their sides*, some on one table and some on the other, so that they were folded together like a book, to be deposited in the ark.

II. The familiarity between Moses and Joshua. While Moses was in the cloud, as in the presence-chamber, Joshua continued as near as he might in the ante-chamber, (as it were,) waiting till Moses came out, that he might be ready to attend him; and though he was all alone for forty days, (fed, it is likely, with manna,) yet he was not weary of waiting, as the people were, but when Moses came down he came with him, and not till then. And here we are told what constructions they put upon the noise that they heard in the camp, v. 17, 18. Though Moses had been so long in immediate converse with God, yet he did not disdain to talk freely with his servant Joshua. Those whom God advances he preserves from being puffed up. Nor did he disdain to talk of the affairs of the camp. Blessed Paul was not the less mindful of the church on earth, for his having been in the third heavens, where he heard unspeakable words. Joshua, who was a military man, and had the command of the train-bands, feared there was a *noise of war in the camp*, and then he would be missed; but Moses, having received notice of it from God, better distinguished the sound, and was aware that it was *the voice of them that sing*; but it does not appear that he told Joshua what he knew of the occasion of their singing; for we should not be forward to proclaim men's faults, they will be known too soon.

III. The great and just displeasure of Moses against Israel for their idolatry. Knowing what to expect, he was presently aware of the golden calf, and the sport the people made with it: he saw how merry they could be in his absence, how soon he was forgotten among them, and what little thought they had of him and his return. He might justly take this ill, as an affront to himself, but that was the least part of the grievance; he resented it as an offence to God, and the scandal of his people. See what a change it is, to come down from the mount

of communion with God to converse with a world that *lies in wickedness*; in God we see nothing but what is pure and pleasant, in the world nothing but pollution and provocation. Moses was the meekest man on the earth, and yet, when he saw *the calf, and the dancing, his anger waxed hot*. Note, It is no breach of the law of meekness to show our displeasure at the wickedness of the wicked. Those are *angry*, and *sin not*, that are angry at sin only, not as against themselves, but as against God. Ephesus is famous for patience, and yet *cannot bear them which are evil*, Rev. 2. 2. It becomes us to be cool in our own cause, but warm in God's. Moses showed himself very angry, both by breaking the tables, and burning the calf, that he might, by these expressions of strong indignation, awaken the people to a sense of the greatness of the sin they had been guilty of, which they would have been ready to make light of, if he had not thus showed his resentments, as one in earnest for their convictions.

1. To convince them that they had forfeited and lost the favour of God, *he brake the tables*, v. 19. Though God knew of their sin before Moses came down, yet he did not order him to leave the tables behind him, but gave them to him, to take down in his hand, that the people might see how forward God was to take them into covenant with himself, and that nothing but their own sin prevented it; yet he put it into his heart, when the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, (as the expression is, Hosea 7. 1.) *to break their tables before their eyes*, (as it is Deut. 9. 17.) that the sight of it might the more affect them, and fill them with confusion, when they saw what blessings they had lost. Thus by being guilty of so notorious an infraction of the treaty now on foot, the writings were torn, then when they lay ready to be sealed. Note, The greatest sign of God's displeasure, against any person or people, is his taking of his law from them. The breaking of the tables is the breaking of the *staff of beauty and band*; (Zech. 11. 10, 14.) it leaves a people unchurched and undone. Some think that Moses sinned in breaking the tables, and observe, that, when men are angry, they are in danger of breaking all God's commandments; but it rather seems to be an act of justice than of passion, and we do not find that he himself speaks of it afterward (Deut. 9. 17.) with any regret.

2. To convince them that they had betaken themselves to a god that could not help them, he *burnt the calf*, (v. 20.) melted it down, and then filed it to dust; that the powder to which it was reduced might be taken notice of through out the camp, he *strawed it upon that water* which they all drank of. That it might appear that *an idol is nothing in the world*, (1 Cor. 8. 4.) he reduced this to atoms, that it might be as near nothing as could be. To show that false gods cannot help their worshippers, he here showed that this could not save itself. Isa. 46. 1, 2. And to teach us that all the relics of idolatry ought to be abolished, and that the names of Baalim should be taken away, the very dust to which it was ground was scattered. Filings of gold are precious, (we say,) and therefore are carefully gathered up; but the filings of the golden calf were odious, and must be scattered with detestation. Thus the idols of silver and gold must be cast to the moles and the bats, (Isa. 2. 20.—30. 22.) and Ephraim shall say, *What have I to do any more with idols?* His mixing this powder with their drink signified to them that the curse they had thereby brought upon themselves would mingle itself with all their enjoyments, and imbitter them; it would enter into their bowels like water, and like oil into their bones. *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways*; he shall drink as he brews. These were in deed waters of Marah.

21. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? 22. And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. 23. For they said unto me, Make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 24. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. 25. And when Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame, among their enemies,) 26. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. 29. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

Moses having showed his just indignation against the sin of Israel, by breaking the tables and burning the calf, now proceeds to reckon with the sinners, and to call them to an account; herein acting as God's representative, who is not only a holy God, and hates sin, but a just God, and is engaged in honour to punish it, Isa. 59. 18. Now,

I. He begins with Aaron, as God began with Adam, because he was the principal person, though not first in the transgression, but drawn into it. Observe here,

1. The just reproof Moses gives him, v. 21. He does not order him to be cut off as those (v. 27.) that had been the ring-leaders in the sin. Note, A great deal of difference will be made between those that presumptuously rush into sin, and those that through infirmity are surprised into it; between those that overtake the fault that flees from them, and those that are overtaken in the fault they flee from: see Gal. 6. 1. Not but that Aaron deserved to have been cut off for this sin, and had been so, if Moses had not interceded particularly for him, as appears Deut. 9. 20. And having prevailed with God for him, to save him from ruin, he here expostulates with him, to bring him to repentance. He puts Aaron upon considering, (1.) What he had done to his people; *Thou hast brought so great a sin upon them.* The sin of idolatry is a great sin, so great a sin, that the evil of it cannot be expressed; the people, as the first movers, might be said to bring the sin upon Aaron; but he, being a magistrate, who should have suppressed it, and yet aiding and abetting it, might truly be said to bring it

upon them, because he hardened their hearts and strengthened their hands in it. It is a bad thing for governors to humour people in their sins, and give countenance to that to which they should be a terror. Observe, in general, Those who bring sin upon others, either by drawing them into it, or encouraging them in it, do more mischief than they are aware of; we really hate those whom we either bring to suffer sin upon, Lev. 19. 17. Those that share in sin help to break their partners, and really ruin one another. (2.) What moved him to it; *What did this people unto thee?* He takes it for granted that it must needs be something more than ordinary that prevailed with Aaron to do such a thing, thus insinuating an excuse for him, because he knew that his heart was upright; "*What did they?*" Did they accost thee fairly, and wheedle thee into it; and dost thou displease thy God to please the people? Did they overcome thee by importunity; and hadst thou so little resolution left as to yield to the stream of a popular clamour? Did they threaten to stone thee; and couldst not thou have opposed God's threatenings to their's, and frightened them worse than they could frighten thee?" Note, We must never be drawn into sin by any thing that man can say or do to us, for it will not justify us to say that we were so drawn in. Men can but tempt us to sin, they cannot force us. Men can but frighten us; if we do not comply, they cannot hurt us.

2. The frivolous excuse Aaron makes for himself. We will hope that he testified his repentance for the sin, afterward, better than he did now; for what he says here has little in it of the language of a penitent. If a just man fall, he shall rise again, but perhaps not quickly. (1.) He deprecates the anger of Moses only, whereas he should have deprecated God's anger in the first place; *Let not the anger of my Lord wax hot, v. 22.* (2.) He lays all the fault upon the people; *They are set on mischief, and they said, Make us gods.* It is natural to us to endeavour thus to transfer our guilt; we have it in our kind, Adam and Eve did so: sin is a brat that nobody is willing to own. Aaron was now the chief magistrate, and had power over the people, and yet pleads that the people overpowered him: he that had authority to restrain them, yet had so little resolution as to yield to them. (3.) It is well if he did not intend a reflection upon Moses, as accessory to the sin, by staying so long on the mount, in repeating, without need, that invidious surmise of the people, *As for this Moses, we wot not what is become of him, v. 23.* (4.) He extenuates and conceals his own share in the sin, as if he had only bid them *break off their gold* that they had about them, intending to make a hasty assay for the present, and to try what he could make of the gold that was next at hand; and childishly insinuates, that, when he cast the gold into the fire, it came out, either by accident or by the magic art of some of the mixed multitude, (as the Jewish writers dream,) in this shape; but not a word of his graving and fashioning it, v. 24. But Moses relates to all ages what he did, (v. 4.) though he himself here would not own it. Note, *He that covers his sins shall not prosper,* for sooner or later it will be discovered. Well, this was all Aaron had to say for himself; and he had better have said nothing, for his defence did but aggravate his offence; and yet he is not only spared, but preferred; as sin did abound, grace did much more abound.

II. The people are next to be judged for this sin. The approach of Moses soon spoiled their sport, and turned their dancing into trembling. They that hector Aaron into a compliance with them in their sin durst not look Moses in the face, nor make the least opposition to the severity which he thought fit

to use both against the idol and against the idolaters. Note, It is not impossible to make those sins which were committed with daring presumption appear contemptible, when the insolent perpetrators of them sink away overwhelmed in their own confusion. *The king that sits upon the throne of judgment scatters away all evil from his eyes.* Observe two things:

1. How they were exposed to shame by their sin; *the people were naked*, (v. 25.) not so much because they had some of them lost their ear-rings, (that was inconsiderable, but because they had lost their integrity, and lay under the reproach of ingratitude to their best Benefactor, and a treacherous revolt from their rightful Lord. It was a shame to them, and a perpetual blot, that they *changed their glory into the similitude of an ox.* Other nations boasted that they were true to their false gods; well may Israel blush for being false to the true God. Thus were they *made naked*, stripped of their ornaments, and exposed to contempt; stripped of their armour, and liable to insults. Thus our first parents, when they had sinned, became *naked, to their shame.* Note, Those that do dishonour to God really bring the greatest dishonour upon themselves: so Israel here did, and Moses was concerned to see it, though they themselves were not; he *saw that they were naked.*

2. The course that Moses took to roll away this reproach; not by concealing the sin, or putting any false colour upon it, but by pun shing it, and so bearing a public testimony against it; whenever it should be cast in their teeth that they had *made a calf in Horeb*, they might have this to say, in answer to them that reproach them, that, though it was true there were those that did so, yet justice was executed upon them. The government disallowed the sin, and suffered not the sinners to go unpunished. They did so, but they paid dear for it. Thus (said God) thou shalt *put the evil away*, Deut. 13. 5. Observe here,

(1.) By whom vengeance was taken; by the children of Levi; (v. 26. 28.) not by the immediate hand of God himself, as on Nadab and Abihu, but by the sword of man, to teach them that idolatry was an *iniquity to be punished by the judge*, being a *denial of the God that is above*, Job, 31. 28. Deut. 13. 9. It was to be done by the sword of their own brethren, that the execution of justice might redound more to the honour of the nation. And if they must fall now into the hands of man, better so than flee before their enemies. The innocent must be called out to be the executioners of the guilty, that it might be the more effectual warning to themselves that they did not the like another time; and the putting of them upon such an unpleasant service, and so much against the grain as this must needs be, to kill their next neighbours, was a punishment to them too, for not appearing sooner to prevent the sin, and make head against it. The Levites particularly were employed in doing this execution, for, it should seem, there were more of them than of any other tribe that had kept themselves free from the contagion, which was the more laudable, because Aaron, the head of their tribe, was so deeply concerned in it. Now here we are told,

[1.] How the Levites were called out to this service; *Moses stood in the gate of the camp*, the place of judgment; there he *displayed a banner*, as it were, because of the truth, to enlist soldiers for God. He proclaimed, *Who is on the Lord's side?* The idolaters had set up the golden calf for their standard, and now Moses set up his in opposition to them. Now *Moses clad himself with zeal* as with a robe, and summoned all those to appear forthwith, that were on God's side, against the golden calf. He does not proclaim, as Jehu, "*Who is on my side,*" (2

Kings 9. 32.) to avenge the indignity done to me?" but, *Who is on the Lord's side?* It was God's cause that he espoused *against the evil-doers*, Ps. 94. 16. Note, *First*, There are two great interests on foot in the world, with the one or the other of which all the children of men are siding. The interest of sin and wickedness is the Devil's interest, and all wicked people side with that interest; the interest of truth and holiness is God's interest, with which all godly people side; and it is a case that will not admit a neutrality. *Secondly*, It concerns us all to inquire whether we are on the Lord's side or not. *Thirdly*, Those who are on his side are, comparatively, but few, and sometimes seem fewer than really they are. *Fourthly*, God does sometimes call out those that are on his side, to appear for him as witnesses, as soldiers, as intercessors.

[2.] How they were commissioned for this service; (v. 27.) *Slay every man his brother*, that is, "Slay all those that you know to have been active for the making and worshipping of the golden calf, though they were your own nearest relations or dearest friends." The crime was committed publicly, the Levites saw who of their acquaintance were concerned in it, and therefore needed no other direction than their own knowledge whom to slay. And probably the greatest part of those who were guilty were known, and known to be so by some or other of the Levites who were employed in the execution. Yet, it should seem, they were to slay those only whom they found *abroad in the streets* of the camp; for it might be hoped that those who were retired into their tents were ashamed of what they had done, and were upon their knees, repenting. Those are marked for ruin who persist in sin, and are *not ashamed of the abominations they have committed*, Jer. 8. 12. But how durst the Levites encounter so great a body, who probably were much enraged by the burning of their calf? It is easy to account for this; sense of guilt disheartened the delinquents, and a divine commission animated the executioners. And one thing that put life into them was, that Moses had said, *Consecrate yourselves to-day, to the Lord, that he may bestow a blessing upon you*; thereby intimating to them that they now stood fair for preferment, and that, if they would but signalize themselves upon this occasion, it would be construed into such a *consecration of themselves* to God, and to his service, as would put upon their tribe a perpetual honour. These that *consecrate themselves* to the Lord he will set apart for himself. Those that do the duty shall have the dignity; and if we do signal services for God, he will bestow special blessings upon us. There was a blessing designed for the tribe of Levi; now, says Moses, "*Consecrate yourselves to the Lord*, that you may qualify yourselves to receive that blessing." The Levites were to assist in the offering of sacrifice to God; and now they must begin with the offering of these sacrifices to the honour of divine justice. Those that are to minister about holy things must be not only sincere and serious, but warm and zealous, bold and courageous, for God and godliness. Thus all Christians, but especially ministers, must *forsake father and mother*, and prefer the service of Christ and his interest far before their nearest and dearest relations; for if we love them *better than Christ*, we are not *worthy of him*. See how the zeal of the Levites is applauded, Deut. 33. 9.

(2.) On whom vengeance is taken; *There fell of the people that day about three thousand men*, v. 28. Probably these were but few, in comparison with the many that were guilty; but these were the men that headed the rebellion, and were therefore picked out, to be made examples of, for terror to all others. They that in the morning were shouting and dancing, before night were dying in their

own blood: such a sudden change do the judgments of God sometimes make with sinners that are secure and jovial in their sin, as with Belshazzar by the handwriting upon the wall. This is written for warning to us; (1 Cor. 10. 7.) *Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them.*

30. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 31. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; 32. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. 35. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

Moses, having executed justice upon the principal offenders, is here dealing both with the people and with God.

1. With the people, to bring them to repentance, v. 30. When some were slain, lest the rest should imagine, that, because they were exempt from the capital punishment, they were therefore looked upon as free from guilt, Moses here tells the survivors, *Ye have sinned a great sin*, and therefore, though ye have escaped this time, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* That they might not think lightly of the sin itself, he calls it a *great sin*; and that they might not think themselves innocent, because perhaps they were not all so deeply guilty as some of them that were put to death, he tells them all, *Ye have sinned a great sin.* The work of ministers is to show people their sins, and the greatness of their sins; "*You have sinned*, and therefore you are undone if your sins be not pardoned, for ever undone without a Saviour. It is a great sin, and therefore calls for great sorrow, for it puts you in great danger." To affect them with the greatness of their sin, he intimates to them what a difficult thing it would be to make up the quarrel which God had with them for it. 1. It would not be done, unless he himself *go up unto the Lord*, on purpose, and give as long and as solemn attendance as he had done for the receiving of the law. And yet, 2. Even so, it was but a peradventure that he should make atonement for them: the case was extremely hazardous. This should convince us of the great evil there is in sin, that he who undertook to make atonement found it no easy thing to do it; he must *go up to the Lord*, with his own blood, to make atonement. The malignity of sin appears in the price of pardons.

Yet it was some encouragement to the people, (when they were told that they had *sinned a great sin*), to hear that Moses, who had so great an interest in heaven, and so true an affection for them, would *go up unto the Lord to make atonement* for them. Consolation should go along with conviction: first wound, and then heal; show people first the greatness of their sin, and then make known to

them the atonement, and give them hopes of mercy. *Moses will go up unto the Lord*, though it be but a *peradventure* that he should make atonement. Christ, the great Mediator, went upon greater certainty than this, for he had lain in the bosom of the Father, and perfectly knew all his counsels. But to us poor supplicants it is encouragement enough, in prayer for particular mercies, that, *peradventure*, we may obtain them, though we have not an absolute promise, Zeph. 2. 3. *It may be, ye shall be hid.* In our prayers for others, we should be humbly earnest with God, though it is but a *peradventure* that God will give them repentance, 2 Tim. 2. 25.

II. He intercedes with God for mercy; wherein observe,

1. How pathetic his address was. *Moses returned unto the Lord*, not to receive further instructions about the tabernacle, there were no more conferences now about the matter. Thus men's sins and follies make work for their friends and ministers, unpleasant work, many times, and give great interruptions to that work which they delight in. Moses in this address expresses,

(1.) His great detestation of the people's sins, v. 31. He speaks as one overwhelmed with the horror of it: *Oh! this people have sinned a great sin.* God had first told him of it, (v. 7.) and now he tells God of it, by way of lamentation. He does not call them *God's people*, he knew they were unworthy to be called so; but *this people*, this treacherous ungrateful people, they have made them gods of gold. It is a great sin indeed to make gold our god, as they do that make it their hope, and set their heart on it. He does not go about to excuse or extenuate the sin; but what he had said to them, by way of conviction, he says to God, by way of confession; *They have sinned a great sin*; he came not to make apologies, but to make atonement: "Lord, pardon the sin, for it is great," Ps. 25. 11.

(2.) His great desire of the people's welfare; (v. 32.) *Yet now it is not too great a sin for infinite mercy to pardon, and therefore if thou wilt forgive their sin*; What then, Moses? It is an abrupt expression, "*If thou wilt*, I desire no more; *if thou wilt*, thou wilt be praised, I shall be praised, and abundantly recompensed for my intercession." It is an expression like that of the dresser of the vineyard; (Luke 13. 9.) *If it bear fruit; or, If thou wilt forgive*, is as much as, "O that thou wouldst forgive!" as, (Luke 19. 42.) *If thou hadst known*, is, *O that thou hadst known.* "But if not, if the decree is gone forth, and there is no remedy, but they must be ruined; if this punishment, which has already been inflicted on many, is not sufficient, (2 Cor. 2. 6.) but they must all be cut off, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written; that is, "If they must be cut off, let me be cut off with them, and cut short of Canaan; if all Israel must perish, I am content to perish with them; let not the land of promise be mine by survivorship." This expression may be illustrated from Ezek. 13. 9, where this is threatened against the false prophets, *They shall not be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel.* God had told Moses, if he would not interpose, he would make of him a *great nation*, v. 10. "No," says Moses, "I am so far from desiring to see my name and family built upon the ruins of Israel, that I will choose rather to sink with them. If I cannot prevent their destruction, let me not see it; (Numb. 11. 15.) let me not be written among the living, (Isa. 4. 3.) nor among those that are marked for preservation; even let me die in the last ditch." Thus he expresses his tender affection for the people, and is a type of the good Shepherd that *lays down his life for the sheep*,

(Jhn 10. 11.) who was to be *cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people*, Isa. 53. 8 Dan. 9. 26. He is also an example of public spiritedness to all, especially to those in public stations. All private interests must be made subordinate to the good and welfare of communities. It is no great matter what becomes of us and our families in this world, so that it go well with the church of God, and there be peace upon Israel. Moses thus importunes for a pardon, and wrestles with God; not prescribing to him, "If thou wilt not forgive, thou art either unjust or unkind;" no, he is far from that; but, "If not, let me die with the Israelites, and the will of the Lord be done."

2. Observe how prevalent his address was; God would not take him at his word; no, he will not blot any out of his book, but those that by their wilful disobedience have forfeited the honour of being enrolled in it; (v. 33.) the soul that sins shall die, and not the innocent for the guilty. This was also an intimation of mercy to the people, that they should not all be destroyed in a body, but those only that had a hand in the sin. Thus Moses gets round by degrees. God would not, at first, give him full assurance of his being reconciled to them, lest, if the comfort of a pardon were too easily obtained, they would be emboldened to do the like again, and should not be made sensible enough of the evil of the sin. Comforts are suspended, that convictions may be the deeper impressed: also God would hereby exercise the faith and zeal of Moses, their great intercessor. Further, in answer to the address of Moses. (1.) God promises to go on with his kind intention of giving them the land of Canaan, (notwithstanding this,) the land he had *spoken to them of*, v. 34. Therefore he sends Moses back to them to lead them, though they were unworthy of him, and promises that his angel should go before them. Some created angel that was employed in the common services of the kingdom of providence, which intimated that they were not to expect any thing for the future to be done for them, out of the common road of providence, nor any thing extraordinary. Moses afterward obtained a promise of God's special presence with them; (ch. 33. 14, 17.) but, at present, this was all he could prevail for. (2.) Yet he threatened to remember this sin against them, when hereafter he should see cause to punish them for other sins; "*When I visit, I will visit for this among the rest*. Next time I take the rod in hand, they shall have one stripe the more for this." The Jews have a saying, grounded on this, that henceforward, no judgment fell upon Israel, but there was in it an ounce of the powder of the golden calf. I see no ground in scripture for the opinion some are of, that God would not have burdened them with such a multitude of sacrifices and other ceremonial institutions, if they had not provoked him by worshipping the golden calf. On the contrary, St. Stephen says, that when they *made a calf and offered sacrifice to the idol, God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven*, (Acts 7. 41, 42.) so that the strange addictedness of that people to the sin of idolatry was a just judgment upon them for making and worshipping the golden calf, and a judgment they were never quite freed from, till the captivity in Babylon. See Rom. 1. 23. . 25. Note, Many, that are not immediately cut off in their sins, are reserved for a further day of reckoning; vengeance is slow, but sure. For the present, *the Lord plagued the people*, (v. 35.) probably by the pestilence, or some other infectious disease, which was a messenger of God's wrath, and an earnest of worse. Aaron made the calf, and yet it is said the people made it, because they worshipped it. *Deos qui rogat, ille facit*—He who asks for gods, makes them. Aaron

was not plagued, but the people; for this was a sin of infirmity, their's a presumptuous sin, between which there is a great difference, not always discernible to us, but evident to God, whose judgment therefore, we are sure, is according to truth. Thus Moses prevailed for a reprieve, and a mitigation of the punishment, but could not wholly turn away the wrath of God; which (some think) bespeaks the inability of the law of Moses to reconcile men to God, and to perfect our peace with him. That was reserved for Christ to do, in whom alone it is that God so pardons sin as to *remember it no more*.

CHAP. XXXIII.

In this chapter, we have a farther account of the mediation of Moses between God and Israel, for the making up of the breach that sin had made between them. I. He brings a very humbling message from God to them, (v. 1. . 3, 5.) which has a good effect upon them, and helps to prepare them for mercy, v. 4, 6. II. He settles a correspondence between God and them, and both God and the people signify their approbation of that correspondence; God, by descending in a cloudy pillar, and the people, by worshipping at the tent-doors, v. 7. . 11. III. He is earnest with God in prayer, and prevails, 1. For a promise of his presence with the people, v. 12. . 17. 2. For a sight of his glory for himself, v. 18. . 23.

1. **AND** the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it. 2. And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: 3. Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way. 4. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments. 5. For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. 6. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.

Here is,

1. The message which God sent by Moses to the children of Israel, signifying the continuance of the displeasure against them, and the bad terms they yet stood upon with God. This he must let them know for their further mortification. I. He applies to them a mortifying name, by giving them their just character, *a stiff-necked people*; (v. 3, 5.) "Go," says God to Moses, "go, tell them that they are so." He that knows them better than they know themselves, says so of them. God would have brought them under the yoke of his law, and into the bond of his covenant, but their necks were too stiff to bow to them. God would have cured them of their corrupt and crooked dispositions, and have set them straight; but they were wilful and obstinate, and hated to be reformed, and would not have God to reign over them. Note, God judges

of men by the temper of their minds. We know what man *does*, God knows what he *is*; we know what proceeds *from* man, God knows what is *in* man; and nothing is more displeasing to him than stiff-neckedness; as nothing in children is more offensive to their parents and teachers than stubbornness. 2. He tells them what they deserved, that he should come in the midst of them in a moment, and consume them, v. 5. Had he dealt with them according to their sins, he had taken them away with a swift destruction. Note, Those whom God pardons, must be made to know what their sin deserved, and how miserable they had been, if they had been unpardoned, that God's mercy may be the more magnified. 3. He bids them depart and go up hence to the land of Canaan, v. 1. This mount Sinai, where they now were, was the place appointed for the setting up of God's tabernacle and solemn worship among them: this was not yet done, so that, in bidding them depart hence, God intimates that it should not be done; ("Let them go forward as they are;") and so, it was very expressive of God's displeasure. 4. He turns them over to Moses, as the people which he had brought up out of the land of Egypt, and leaves it to him to lead them to Canaan. 5. Though he promises to make good his covenant with Abraham, in giving them Canaan, yet he denies them the extraordinary tokens of his presence, such as they had hitherto been blessed with, and leaves them under the common conduct of Moses their prince, and the common convoy of a guardian angel. *I will send an angel before thee*, for thy protector, otherwise the evil angels would soon destroy thee; but *I will not go up in the midst of thee, lest I consume thee*; (v. 2, 3.) not as if an angel would be more patient and compassionate than God, but that their affronts given to an angel would not be so provoking as those given to the *Shechinah*, or Divine Majesty itself. Note, The greater privileges we enjoy, the greater is our danger, if we do not improve them, and live up to them. 6. He speaks as one that was at a loss what course to take with them. Justice said, "Cut them off, and consume them; Mercy said, *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?*" Hos. 11. 8. Well, says God, *put off thine ornaments, that I may know what to do with thee*; that is, "Put thyself into the posture of a penitent, that the dispute may be determined in thy favour, and mercy may rejoice against judgment," v. 5. Note, Calls to repentance are plain indications of mercy designed. If the Lord were pleased to kill us, justice knows what to do with a stiff-necked people; but God has no pleasure in the death of them that die; let them return and repent, and then mercy, which is otherwise at a loss, knows what to do.

II. The people's melancholy reception of this message; it was *evil-tidings* to them, to hear that they should not have God's special presence with them, and therefore, 1. *They mourned*, (v. 4.) mourned for their sin, which had provoked God to withdraw from them, and mourned for this as the sorest punishment of their sin. When three thousand of them were at one time laid dead upon the spot by the Levites' sword, we do not find that they mourned for that; (hoping that would help to expiate the guilt;) but when God denied them his favourable presence, then they mourned and were in bitterness. Note, Of all the bitter fruits and consequences of sin, that which true penitents most lament, and dread most, is God's departure from them. God had promised that, notwithstanding their sin, he would give them the land *flowing with milk and honey*. But they could have small joy of that, if they had not God's presence with them. Canaan itself would be no pleasant land without that; therefore, if they want that, they mourn. 2.

In token of great shame and humiliation, they that were undressed did not put on their ornaments; (v. 4.) and they that were dressed stript themselves of their ornaments, by the mount; or, as some read it, at a distance from the mount, (v. 6.) standing afar off like the publican, Luke, 18. 13. God bid them lay aside their ornaments, (v. 5.) and they did so; both to show, in general, their deep mourning, and, in particular, to take a holy revenge upon themselves for giving their ear-rings to make the golden calf of. They that would part with their ornaments, for the maintenance of their sin, could do no less than lay aside their ornaments, in token of their sorrow and shame for it. When the Lord God calls to weeping and mourning, we must comply with the call, and not only fast from pleasant bread, (Dan. 10. 3.) but lay aside our ornaments; even those that are decent enough at other times, are unseasonably worn on days of humiliation, or in times of public calamity, Isa. 3. 18.

7. And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it, The Tabernacle of the Congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. 8. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent-door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle. 9. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. 10. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle-door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent-door. 11. And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Here is,

I. One mark of displeasure put upon them, for their further humiliation. *Moses took the tabernacle*, not his own tent for his family, but the tent wherein he gave audience, heard causes, and inquired of God, the *Guild-Hall* (as it were) of their camp, and pitched it without, afar off from the camp, (v. 7.) to signify to them that they had rendered themselves unworthy of it, and that, unless peace was made, it would return to them no more. God would thus let them know that he was at variance with them; *the Lord is far from the wicked*. Thus the glory of the Lord departed from the temple, when it was polluted with sin, Ezek. 10. 4.—11. 23. Note, It is a sign that God is angry, when he removes his tabernacle, for his ordinances are fruits of his favour, and tokens of his presence; while we have them with us, we have him with us. Perhaps this tabernacle was a plan, or model rather, of the tabernacle that was afterwards to be erected, a hasty draught from the pattern showed him in the mount, designed for direction to the workmen, and used, in the meantime, as a *tabernacle of meeting* between God and Moses about public

affairs. This was set up at a distance, to affect the people with the loss of that glorious structure, which, if they had not forsaken their own mercies for lying vanities, was to have been set up in the midst of them. Let them see what they have forfeited.

II. Many encouragements given them, notwithstanding, to hope that God would yet be reconciled to them.

1. Though the tabernacle was removed, yet every one that was disposed to seek the Lord was welcome to follow it, *v. 7*. Private persons, as well as Moses, were invited and encouraged to apply themselves to God, as intercessors upon this occasion. A place was appointed for them to go *without the camp*, to solicit God's return to them.

Thus, when Ezra (a second Moses) interceded for Israel, there were assembled to him many that *trembled at God's word*, Ezra 9. 4. When God designs mercy, he stirs up prayer. *He will be sought unto*; (Ezek. 36. 37.) and, thanks be to his name, he may be sought unto, and will not reject the poorest intercession. Every Israelite that sought the Lord was welcome to his tabernacle, as well as Moses *the man of God*.

2. Moses undertook to mediate between God and Israel. *He went out to the tabernacle*, the place of treaty, probably, pitched between them and the mount, (*v. 8*.) and he *entered into the tabernacle*, *v. 9*. That cause could not but speed well, which had so good a manager; when their judge (under God) becomes their advocate, and he who was appointed to be their law-giver is an intercessor for them, there is *hope in Israel concerning this thing*.

3. The people seemed to be in a very good mind, and well disposed towards a reconciliation. (1.) When Moses went out to go to the tabernacle, the people *looked after him*, (*v. 8*.) in token of their respect to him whom before they had slighted, and their entire dependence upon his mediation. By this it appeared that they were very solicitous about this matter, desirous to be at peace with God, and concerned to know what would be the issue. Thus the disciples *looked after* our Lord Jesus, when he ascended on high to enter into the holy place not made with hands, till a *cloud received him out of their sight*, as Moses here. And we must with an eye of faith follow him likewise thither, where he is appearing in the presence of God for us; then shall we have the benefit of his mediation. (2.) When they saw the cloudy pillar, that symbol of God's presence, give Moses the meeting, they all *worshipped*, every man at his tent-door, *v. 10*. Thereby they signified, [1.] Their humble adoration of the Divine Majesty which they will ever worship, and not *gods of gold* any more. [2.] Their joyful thankfulness to God, that he was pleased to show them this token for good, and give them hopes of a reconciliation; for, if he had been pleased to kill them, he would not have showed them such things as these, would not have raised them up such a mediator, nor given him such countenance. [3.] Their hearty concurrence with Moses as their advocate, in every thing he should promise for them, and their expectation of a comfortable and happy issue of this treaty. Thus must we worship God, in our tents, with an eye to Christ, as the Mediator. Their worshipping in their tent-doors, declared plainly that they were not ashamed publicly to own their respect to God and Moses, as they had publicly worshipped the calf.

4. God was, in Moses, reconciling Israel to himself, and manifested himself very willing to be at peace. (1.) God met Moses at the place of treaty, *v. 9*. The cloudy pillar which had withdrawn itself from the camp when it was polluted with

idolatry, now returned to this tabernacle at some distance, coming back gradually. If our hearts go forth toward God, to meet him, he will graciously come down to meet us. (2.) God *talked with Moses*, (*v. 9*.) *spake to him face to face*, as a man *speaks to his friend*, (*v. 11*.) which intimates that God revealed himself to Moses, not only with greater clearness and evidence of divine light, than to any other of the prophets, but also with greater expressions of particular kindness and grace. He spake, not as a prince to a subject, but as a *man to his friend*, whom he loves, and with whom he takes sweet counsel. This was great encouragement to Israel, to see their advocate so great a favourite; and, that they might be encouraged by it, *Moses turned again into the camp*, to tell the people what hopes he had of bringing this business to a good issue, and that they might not despair if he should be long absent. But because he intended speedily to return to the tabernacle of the congregation, he left Joshua there, for it was not fit that the place should be empty, so long as the cloud of glory *stood at the door*, (*v. 9*.) but if God had any thing to say out of that cloud while Moses was absent, Joshua was there ready to hear it.

12. And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. 13. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people. 14. And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest. 15. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence. 16. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? *Is it not in that thou goest with us?* So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are upon the face of the earth*. 17. And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. 18. And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. 19. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. 20. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live. 21. And the LORD said, Behold, *there is a place by me*, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: 22. And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: 23. And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen.

Moses is now returned to the door of the tabernacle, an humble and importunate supplicant there for two very great favours; and, as a prince, he has power with God, and prevails for both: herein he was a type of Christ, the great Intercessor, *whom the Father heareth always*.

I. He is here very earnest with God for a *grant of his presence* with Israel in the rest of their march to Canaan, notwithstanding their provocations. The people had by their sin deserved the *wrath of God*, and, for the turning away of that, Moses had already prevailed, *ch. 32. 14*. But they had likewise forfeited *God's favourable presence*, and all the benefit and comfort of that, and this, Moses is here begging for the return of. Thus, by the intercession of Christ, we obtain not only the removal of the curse, but an assurance of the blessing; we are not only saved from ruin, but become entitled to everlasting happiness.

Observe how admirably Moses orders this cause before God, and *fills his mouth with arguments*. What a value he expresses for God's favour, what a concern for God's glory, and the welfare of Israel. How he pleads, and how he speeds.

1. How he *pleads*.

(1.) He insists upon the commission God had given him to *bring up his people*, *v. 12*. This he begins with; "Lord, is it thou thyself that employest me; and wilt thou not own me? I am in the way of my duty; and shall I not have thy presence with me in that way?" Whom God calls out to any service he will be sure to furnish with necessary assistances. "Now, Lord, thou hast ordered me a great work, and yet left me at a loss how to go about it, and go through with it." Note, Those that sincerely design and endeavour to do their duty, may in faith beg of God direction and strength for the doing of it.

(2.) He improves the interest he himself had with God, and God's gracious expressions of kindness to him: *Thou hast said, I know thee by name*, as a particular friend and confidant, *and thou hast also found grace in my sight*, above any other. *Now therefore*, says Moses, if it be indeed so, *that I have found grace in thy sight, show me thy way*, *v. 13*. What favour God had expressed to the people, they had forfeited the benefit of, there was no insisting upon that; and therefore Moses lays the stress of his plea upon what God had said to him, which though he owns himself unworthy of, yet he hopes he has not thrown himself out of the benefit of. By this therefore he takes hold on God, "Lord, if ever thou wilt do any thing for me, do this *for the people*." Thus our Lord Jesus, in his intercession, presents himself to the Father, as one in whom he is always well-pleased, and so obtains mercy for us with whom he is justly displeased; and we are accepted in *the Beloved*. Thus also men of public spirit love to improve their interest both with God and man for the public good. Observe what it is he is thus earnest for; *Show me thy way*, that I may know that *I find grace in thy sight*. Note, Divine direction is one of the best evidences of divine favour. By this we may know that we *find grace in God's sight*, if we find grace in our hearts to guide and quicken us in the way of our duty. God's good work in us is the surest discovery of his good-will towards us.

(3.) He intimates that the people also, though most unworthy, yet were in some relation to God; "Consider that *this nation is thy people*, a people that thou hast done great things for, redeemed to thyself, and taken into covenant with thyself; Lord, they are thy own, do not leave them." The offended father considers this; "My child is foolish and froward, but he is my child, and I cannot abandon him."

(4.) He expresses the great value he had for the presence of God. When God said, *My presence shall go with thee*, he caught at that word, as that which he could not live and move without; (*v. 15*.) *If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence*. He speaks as one that dreaded the thought of going forward without God's presence, knowing that their marches could not be safe, nor their encampments easy, if they had not God with them. Better lie down and die here in the wilderness, than go forward to Canaan, without God's presence. Note, Those who know how to value God's favours are best prepared to receive them. Observe how earnest Moses is in this matter; he begs as one that would take no denial. "Here we will stay, till we obtain thy favour; like Jacob, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*." And observe how he grows upon God's concessions; kind intimations given him, make him yet more importunate. Thus God's gracious promises, and the advances of mercy towards us, should not only encourage our faith, but excite our fervency in prayer.

(5.) He concludes with an argument taken from God's glory; (*v. 16*.) "*Wherein shall it be known to the nations that have their eyes upon us, that I and thy people* (with whom my interests are all blended) *have found grace in thy sight*, distinguishing favour, so as to be separated from all people upon earth? How will it appear that we are indeed thus honoured, *Is it not in that thou goest with us?*" Nothing short of that can answer these characters: let it never be said that we are a peculiar people, and highly favoured, for we stand but upon a level with the rest of our neighbours, unless thou *go with us*; sending an angel with us will not serve." Doubtless, the mind of Moses adverted to the *place*, that *wilderness*, whither God had led them, and where they would certainly be lost, if God left them. Note, God's special presence with us here in this wilderness, by his Spirit and grace, to direct, defend, and comfort us, is the surest pledge of his special love to us, and will redound to his glory as well as our benefit.

2. Observe how he *speeds*. He obtained an assurance of God's favour (1.) To himself; (*v. 14*.) "*I will give thee rest*, I will take care to make thee easy in this matter; however it be, thou shalt have satisfaction." Moses never entered Canaan, and yet God did for him according to the promise which, long afterward, he gave Daniel; *Go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest*, Dan. 12. 13. (2.) To the people, for his sake. Moses was not content with that answer which bespoke favour to himself only, he must gain a promise, an express promise, for the people too, or he is not at rest; gracious generous souls think it not enough to get to heaven themselves, but would have all their friends go thither too. And in this also Moses prevailed; (*v. 17*.) *I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken*. Moses is not checked as an unreasonable beggar, whom no saying would serve, but he is encouraged: God grants as long as he asks; *gives liberally*, and does not upbraid him. See the power of prayer, and be quickened hereby to *ask, and seek, and knock*, and to *continue instant in prayer*; to *pray always, and not to faint*. See the riches of God's goodness: when he has done much, yet he is willing to do more; *I will do this also*—above what we are able to ask or think. See, in type, the prevalence of Christ's intercession, which he *ever lives to make* for all these that come to God by him, and the ground of that prevalence; it is purely his own merit, not any thing in those for whom he intercedes; it is because *thou hast found grace in my sight*. And now the matter is settled, God is perfectly reconciled to them, his presence in the pillar of cloud returns to them, and shall

continue with them; all is well again, and henceforth we hear no more of the golden calf. *Lord, who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?*

II. Having gained this point, he next begs a sight of God's glory, and is heard in the matter also. Observe,

1. The humble request Moses makes; (v. 18.) *I beseech thee, show me thy glory.* Moses had lately been in the mount with God, had continued there a great while, and had enjoyed as intimate communion with God as ever any man had on this side heaven; and yet he is still desiring a further acquaintance. All that are effectually called to the knowledge of God and fellowship with him, though they desire nothing more *than God*, yet they are still coveting more and more of him, till they come to see as they are seen. Moses had wonderfully prevailed with God for one favour after another, and the success of his prayers imboldened him to go on still to seek God; the more he had, the more he asked; when we are in a good frame at the throne of grace, we should endeavour to preserve and improve it, and strike while the iron is hot. *Show me thy glory. Make me to see it;* so the word is: "Make it some way or other visible, and enable me to bear the sight of it." Not that he was so ignorant as to think God's essence could be seen with bodily eyes; but, having hitherto only heard a voice out of a pillar or cloud of fire, he desired to see some representation of the divine glory, such as God saw fit to gratify him with. It was not fit that the *people* should see *any similitude* when the Lord spake unto them, *lest they should corrupt themselves*; but he hoped that there was not that danger in his seeing some similitude. Something it was more than he had yet seen, that Moses desired: if it was purely for the assisting of his faith and devotion, the desire was commendable; but perhaps there was in it a mixture of human infirmity. God will have us walk by faith, not by sight, in this world: and *faith comes by hearing*. Some think that Moses desired a sight of God's glory as a token of his reconciliation, and an earnest of that presence he had promised them; but he *knew not what he asked*.

2. The gracious reply God made to this request.

(1.) He denied that which was not fit to be granted, and which Moses could not bear; (v. 20.) *Thou canst not see my face.* A full discovery of the glory of God would quite overpower the faculties of any mortal man in this present state, and overwhelm him, even Moses himself. Man is mean and unworthy of it, weak and could not bear it, guilty and could not but dread it. It is in compassion to our infirmity, that God *holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth a cloud upon it*, Job 26. 9. God has said, *here*, that is, in this world, *his face shall not be seen*; (v. 23.) that is an honour reserved for the future state, to be the eternal bliss of holy souls: should men in this state know what it is, they would not be content to live short of it. There is a knowledge and enjoyment of God, which must be waited for in another world, when we shall *see him as he is*, 1 John 3. 2. In the meantime, let us adore the *height* of what we *do know* of God, and the *depth* of what we *do not*. Long before this, Jacob had spoken of it with wonder, that he had *seen God face to face, and yet his life was preserved*, Gen. 32. 30. Sinful man dreads the sight of God his judge; but holy souls, being *by the Spirit of the Lord changed into the same image, behold with open face the glory of the Lord*, 2. Cor. 3. 18.

(2.) He granteth that which would be abundantly satisfying.

[1.] He should hear what would please him; (v. 10.) *I will make all my goodness pass before thee*; he had given him wonderful instances of his good-

ness in being reconciled to Israel; but that was only goodness in the stream, he would show him goodness in the spring; *all his goodness*. This was a sufficient answer to his request; "Show me thy glory," says Moses; "I will show thee my goodness," says God. Note, God's goodness is his glory: and he will have us to know him by the glory of his mercy, more than by the glory of his majesty; for we must fear even the *Lord and his goodness*, Hos. 3. 5. That especially which is the glory of God's goodness, is, the sovereignty of it, that he will be *gracious to whom he will be gracious*; that, as an absolute Proprietor, he makes what difference he pleases, in bestowing his gifts, and is not Debtor to any, nor accountable to any; (*May he not do what he will with his own?*) also, that all his reasons of mercy are fetched from within himself, not from any merit in his creatures: as he has mercy on *whom he will*, so *because he will*. *Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight.* It is never said, *I will be angry at whom I will be angry*, for his wrath is always just and holy; but *I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy*, for his grace is always free. He never damns by prerogative, but by prerogative he saves. The apostle quotes this, (Rom. 9. 15.) in answer to those who charged God with unrighteousness in giving that grace freely to some, which he withholds justly from others.

[2.] He should see what he could bear, and what would suffice him. The matter is concerted so as that Moses might be safe, and yet satisfied. *First*, Safe in a *clift of the rock*; (v. 21, 22.) in that he was to be sheltered from the dazzling light and devouring fire of God's glory. This was the rock in Horeb, out of which water was brought, of which it is said, *That rock was Christ*, 1 Cor. 10. 4. It is in the cliffs of this rock that we are secured from the wrath of God, which otherwise would consume us; God himself will protect those that are thus hid. And it is only *through Christ* that we have the *knowledge of the glory of God*. None can see that to their comfort, but those who *stand upon this rock*, and take shelter in it. *Secondly*, He was satisfied with a sight of his back-parts, v. 23. He should see more of God than any ever saw on earth, but not so much as they see who are in heaven. The face, in man, is the seat of majesty, and men are known by their faces, in them we take a full view of men; that sight of God Moses might not have, but such a sight as we have of a man who is gone past us, so that we only see his back, and have (as we say) a blush of him. We cannot be said to look at God, but rather to look after him. Gen. 16. 13.) for we see *through a glass darkly*; when we see what God has done in his works, observe the goings of our God, our King, we see (as it were) his back-parts. The best thus *know but in part*, and we cannot order our speech concerning God, by reason of darkness, any more than we can describe a man whose face we never saw. Now Moses was allowed to see only the back-parts; but, long afterward, when he was a witness to Christ's transfiguration, he saw *his face shine as the sun*. If we faithfully improve the discoveries God gives us of himself while we are here, a brighter and more glorious scene will shortly be opened to us; for *to him that hath shall be given*.

CHAP. XXXIV.

God, having, in the foregoing chapter, intimated to Moses his reconciliation to Israel, here gives proof of it, proceeding to settle his covenant and communion with them. Four instances of the return of his favour we have in this chapter. I. The orders he gives to Moses to come up to the mount, the next morning, and bring two tables of stone with him, v. 1. 4. II. His meeting him there, and the proclamation of his name, v. 5. 9. III. The instructions he gave him there, and his converse with him

for forty days together, without intermission, v. 10. . 29. IV. The honour he put upon him when he sent him down with his face shining, v. 29. . 35. In all which, God dealt with Moses as a public person, and mediator between him and Israel, and a type of the great Mediator.

1. **AND** the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. 2. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. 3. And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. 4. And he hewed two tables of stone, like unto the first: and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

The treaty that was on foot between God and Israel, being broken off abruptly by their worshipping the golden calf, when peace was made, all must be begun anew, not where they left off, but from the beginning. Thus backsliders must *repent, and do their first works*, Rev. 2. 5.

1. Moses must prepare for the renewing of the tables, v. 1. Before, God himself provided the tables, and wrote on them; now, Moses must *hew him out the tables*, and God would only write upon them. Thus, in the first writing of the law upon the heart of man in innocency, both the tables and the writing were the work of God; but when those were broken and defaced by sin, and the divine law was to be preserved in the scriptures, God therein made use of the ministry of man, and Moses first. But the prophets and apostles did only *hew the tables*, as it were; the writing was God's still; for *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*. Observe, When God was reconciled to them, he ordered the tables to be renewed, and wrote his law in them; which plainly intimates to us, (1.) That even under the gospel of peace and reconciliation by Christ, (of which the intercession of Moses was typical,) the moral law should continue to bind believers. Though Christ has redeemed us from the *curse* of the law, yet not from the *command* of it, but still we are *under the law to Christ*; when our Saviour, in his sermon on the mount, expounded the moral law, and vindicated it from the corrupt glosses with which the Scribes and Pharisees had broken it, (Matth. 5. 19.) he did, in effect, renew the tables, and make them like the first, that is, reduce the law to its primitive sense and intention. (2.) That the best evidence of the pardon of sin and peace with God, is, the writing of the law in the heart. The first token God gave of his reconciliation to Israel, was, the renewing of the tables of the law; thus the first article of the new covenant is, *I will write my law in their heart*; (Heb. 8. 10.) and it follows, (v. 12.) *for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness*.

3.) That if we would have God to *write the law in our hearts*, we must prepare our hearts for the reception of it. The heart of stone must be hewn by conviction and humiliation for sin, (Hos. 6. 5.) the *superfluity of naughtiness* must be taken off, (James. 1. 21.) the heart made smooth, and laboured with, that the word may have a place in it. Moses did, accordingly, hew out the *tables of stone*,

or slate, for they were so slight and thin, that Moses carried them both in his hand; and, for their dimensions, they must have been somewhat less, and perhaps not much, than the ark in which they were deposited, which was a yard and a quarter long, and three quarters broad. It should seem there was nothing particularly curious in the framing of them, for there was no great time taken, Moses had them ready presently, to take up with him, next morning. They were to receive their beauty, not from the art of man, but from the finger of God.

2. Moses must attend again on the top of mount Sinai, and present himself to God there, v. 2. Though the absence of Moses, and his continuing so long on the mount, had lately occasioned their making the golden calf; yet God did not therefore alter his measures, but he shall come up and tarry as long as he had done, to try whether they had learned to wait. To strike an awe upon the people, they are bid to keep their distance, none must come up with him, v. 3. They had said, (ch. 32. 1.) *We know not what is become of him*, and God did not let them know. Moses, accordingly, *rose up early*, (v. 4.) to go to the place appointed; to show how forward he was to present himself before God, and loth to lose time. It is good to be early at our devotions. The morning is, perhaps, as good a friend to the Graces as it is to the Muses.

5. And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third, and to the fourth *generation*. 8. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9. And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O LORD, let my LORD, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

No sooner was Moses got to the top of the mount, than God gave him the meeting; (v. 5.) *The Lord descended*, by some sensible token of his presence, and manifestation of his glory. His descending bespeaks his condescension, he humbles himself to take cognizance of those that humble themselves to walk with him, Ps. 113. 6. *Lord, what is man, that he should be thus visited?* He descended in the cloud, probably, that pillar of cloud which had hitherto gone before Israel, and had, the day before, met Moses at the door of the tabernacle. This cloud was to strike an awe upon Moses, that the familiarity he was admitted to might not breed contempt. The disciples *feared, when they entered into the cloud*. His making a *cloud his pavilion*, intimated, that though he made known much of himself, yet there was much more concealed.

Now observe,

1. How God *proclaimed his name*; (v. 6, 7.) he did it *in transitu*—as he passed by him. Fixed views of God are reserved for the future state; the

best we have in this world are transient. God now is performing what he had promised Moses the day before, that his glory should pass by, *ch.* 33. 22. He *proclaimed the name of the Lord*, by which he would make himself known. He had made himself known to Moses in the glory of his self-existence and self-sufficiency, when he proclaimed that name, *I am that I am*; now he makes himself known in the glory of his grace and goodness and all-sufficiency. Now that God is about to publish a second edition of the law, he prefaces it with this proclamation; for it is God's grace and goodness that gives the law, especially the remedial law. The pardon of Israel's sin, in worshipping the calf, was now to pass the seals; and God, by his declaration, would let them know that he pardoned, *ex mero motu*—merely out of his own good pleasure, not for their merit's sake, but from his own inclination to forgive. The proclaiming of it denotes the universal extent of God's mercy; he is not only good to Israel, but good to all; let all take notice of it. He that hath an ear, let him hear, and know, and believe.

1. That the God with whom we have to do is a great God. He is Jehovah, the Lord, who has his being of himself, and is the Fountain of all being. *Jehovah-el, the Lord, the strong God*, a God of almighty power himself, and the Original of all power. This is prefixed before the display of his mercy, to teach us to think and to speak, even of God's grace and goodness, with great seriousness and a holy awe, and to encourage us to depend upon these mercies; they are not the mercies of a man, that is frail and feeble, false and fickle, but the mercies of the Lord, the Lord God; therefore sure mercies, and sovereign mercies, mercies that may be trusted, but not tempted.

2. That he is a good God. His greatness and goodness illustrate and set off each other. That the terror of his greatness may not make us afraid, we are told how good he is; and that we may not presume upon his goodness, we are told how great he is. Many words are here heaped up, to acquaint us with, and convince us of, God's goodness, and to show how much his goodness is both his glory and his delight, yet without any tautology. (1.) He is *merciful*. This bespeaks his pity and tender compassion, like that of a father to his children. This is put first, because it is the first wheel in all the instances of God's good-will to fallen man, whose misery makes him an object of pity, *Judg.* 10. 16. *Isa.* 63. 9. Let us not then have either hard thoughts of God, or hard hearts towards our brethren. (2.) He is *gracious*. This bespeaks both freeness and kindness; it intimates not only that he has a compassion to his creatures, but a complacency in them, and in doing good to them; and this, of his own good-will, and not for the sake of any thing in them. His mercy is grace, free grace; this teaches us to be not only pitiful, but courteous, *1 Pet.* 3. 8. (3.) He is *long-suffering*. This is a branch of God's goodness which sinners' badness gives occasion for; Israel had done so; they had tried his patience, and experienced it. He is long-suffering, that is, he is slow to anger, and delays the execution of his justice; he waits to be gracious, and lengthens out the offers of his mercy. (4.) He is *abundant in goodness and truth*. This bespeaks plentiful goodness; it abounds above our deserts, above our conception and expression. The springs of mercy are always full, the streams of mercy always flowing; there is mercy enough in God, enough for all, enough for each, enough for ever. It bespeaks promised goodness, goodness and truth put together, goodness engaged by promise, and his faithfulness pawned for the security of it. He not only does good, but by his promise he raises our ex-

pectation of it, and even obliges himself to show mercy. (5.) He keepeth *mercy for thousands*. This denotes, [1.] Mercy extended to thousands of persons; when he gives to some, still he keeps for others, and is never exhausted; he has mercy enough for all the thousands of Israel, when they shall multiply as the sand. [2.] Mercy entailed upon thousands of generations, even those upon whom the ends of the world are come; nay, the line of it is drawn parallel with that of eternity itself. (6.) He forgiveth *iniquity, transgression, and sin*. Pardon- ing mercy is specified, because, in that, divine grace is most magnified, and because that is it which opens the door to all other gifts of his divine grace, and because of this he had lately given a very pregnant proof. He forgives offences of all sorts, *iniquity, transgression and sin*; multiplies his pardons, and with him is *plenteous redemption*.

3. That he is a just and holy God. For, (1.) *He will by no means clear the guilty*. Some read it so as to express a mitigation of wrath even when he does punish; *When he empties, he will not make quite desolate*, that is, "He does not proceed to the greatest extremity, till there be no remedy." As we read it, we must expound it, that he will by no means connive at the guilty, as if he took no notice of their sin. Or, he will not clear the impenitently guilty, that go on still in their trespasses; he will not clear the guilty, without some satisfaction to his justice, and necessary vindications of the honour of his government. (2.) *He visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children*. He may justly do it, for all souls are his, and there is a malignity in sin, that taints the blood. He sometimes will do it, especially for the punishment of idolaters. Thus he shows his hatred to sin, and displeasure against it; yet he *keepeth not his anger for ever*, but visits to the third and fourth generation only, while he *keepeth mercy for thousands*. Well, this is God's name for ever, and this is his memorial unto all generations.

II. How Moses received this declaration which God made of himself, and of his grace and mercy. It should seem as if Moses accepted this as a sufficient answer to his request, that God would *show him his glory*; for we read not that he went into the cleft of the rock, whence to gain a sight of God's back-parts; perhaps this satisfied him, and he desired no more; as we read not that Thomas did *thrust his hand into Christ's side*, though Christ invited him to do it. God having thus proclaimed his name, Moses says, "It is enough, I expect no more till I come to heaven;" at least, he did not think fit to relate what he saw. Now we are here told,

1. What impression it made upon him; (*v.* 8.) *Moses made haste, and bowed his head*. Thus he expressed, (1.) His humble reverence and adoration of God's glory, giving him *the honour due to that name* he had thus proclaimed. Even the goodness of God must be looked upon by us with a profound veneration and holy awe. (2.) His joy in this discovery which God had made of himself, and his thankfulness for it. We have reason gratefully to acknowledge God's goodness to us, not only in the real instances of it, but in the declarations he has made of it by his word; not only that he is, and will be, gracious to us, but that he is pleased to let us know it. (3.) His holy submission to the will of God, made known in this declaration, subscribing to his justice as well as his mercy, and putting himself and his people Israel under the government and conduct of such a God as Jehovah had now proclaimed himself to be. Let this God be our God for ever and ever.

2. What improvement he made of it. He immediately grounded a prayer upon it; (*v.* 9.) and a most earnest affectionate prayer it is, (1.) For the presence of God with his people Israel in the wil-

derness, "*I pray thee, go among us, for thy presence is all in all to our safety and success.*" (2.) For pardon of sin; "*O pardon our iniquity and our sin, else we cannot expect thee to go among us.*" And, (3.) For the privileges of a peculiar people: "*Take us for thine inheritance, which thou wilt have a particular eye to, and concern for, and delight in.*" These things God had already promised, and given Moses assurances of, and yet he prays for them, not as doubting the sincerity of God's grants, but as one solicitous for the ratification of them. God's promises are intended, not to supersede, but to direct and encourage, prayer. Those who have some good hopes, through grace, that their sins are pardoned, must yet continue to pray for pardon, for the renewing of their pardon, and the clearing of it more and more to their souls. The more we see of God's goodness, the more ashamed we should be of our own sins, and the more earnest for an interest in it. God had said, in the close of the proclamation, that he would *visit the iniquity upon the children*; and Moses here deprecates that; Lord, do not only pardon it to them, but to their children, and let our covenant-relation to thee be entailed upon our posterity, as an inheritance. Thus Moses, like a man of a truly public spirit, intercedes even for the children that should be born. But it is a strange plea he urges; *for it is a stiff-necked people*. God had given this as a reason why he would not go along with them; (*ch. 33. 3.*) "*Yea,*" says Moses, "*they rather go along with us; for the worse they are, the more need they have of thy presence and grace to make them better.*" Moses sees them so stiff-necked, that, for his part, he has neither patience nor power enough to deal with them; "*Therefore, Lord, do thou go among us, else they will never be kept in awe. Thou wilt spare, and bear with them, for thou art God, and not man.*" Hos. 11. 9.

10. And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. 11. Observe thou that which I command thee this day; Behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 12. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: 13. But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: 14. For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: 15. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of this sacrifice; 16. And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. 17. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

Reconciliation being made, a covenant of friend-

ship is here settled between God and Israel. The traitors are not only pardoned, but preferred, and made favourites again. Well may the assurances of this be ushered in with a *Behold*, a word commanding attention and admiration; *Behold, I make a covenant*. When the covenant was broken, it was Israel that brake it; now that it comes to be renewed, it is God that makes it. If there be quarrels, we must bear all the blame; if there be peace, God must have all the glory.

Here is,

1. God's part of this covenant, what he would do for them, *v. 10, 11.* (1.) In general, *Before all thy people, I will do miracles*. Note, Covenant-blessings are marvellous things, (*Ps. 98. 1.*) marvels in the kingdom of *grace*; these mentioned here were marvels in the kingdom of *nature*, the drying up of Jordan, the standing still of the sun, &c. Marvels indeed, for they were without precedent, *such as have not been done in all the earth*; they were the joy of Israel, and the confirmation of their faith; *Thy people shall see, and own the work of the Lord*; and they were the terror of their enemies; *It is a terrible thing that I will do*. Nay, even God's own people should see them with astonishment. (2.) In particular, *I drive out before thee the Amorite*. God, as king of nations, plucks up some, to plant others, as it pleases him; as King of saints, he made room for the vine he brought out of Egypt, *Ps. 80. 8, 9.* Kingdoms are sacrificed to Israel's interests, *Isa. 43. 3, 4.*

2. Their part of the covenant; *Observe that which I command thee*: we cannot expect the benefit of the promises, unless we make conscience of the precepts. The two great precepts are, (1.) *Thou shalt worship no other gods, (v. 14.)* not give divine honour to any creature, or any name whatsoever, the creature of fancy. A good reason is annexed; it is at thy peril, if thou do; *For the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God*, as tender in the matters of his worship, as the husband is of the honour of the marriage-bed. Jealousy is called the *rage of a man*, (*Prov. 6. 34.*) but it is *God's holy and just displeasure*. Those cannot worship God aright, who do not worship him alone. (2.) "*Thou shalt make thee no molten gods; (v. 17.)* thou shalt not worship the true God by images." This was the sin they had lately fallen into, which, therefore, they are particularly cautioned against.

Fences are here erected about these two precepts by two others; [1.] That they might not be tempted to worship other gods, they must not join in affinity or friendship with those that did; (*v. 12.*) "*Take heed to thyself, for thou art upon thy good behaviour; it is a sin that thou art prone to, and that will easily beset thee; and therefore be very cautious, and carefully abstain from all appearances of it, and advances towards it; make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land.*" If God, in kindness to them, drove out the Canaanites, they ought, in duty to God, not to harbour them. What could be insisted on more reasonable than this? If God make war with the Canaanites, let not Israel make peace with them. If God take care that the Canaanites be not their lords, let them take care that they be not their snares. It was for their civil interest to complete the conquest of the land; so much does God consult our benefit in the laws he gives us. They must particularly take heed of intermarrying with them, *v. 15, 16.* If they espoused their children, they would be in danger of espousing their gods; such is the corruption of nature, that the bad are much more likely to debauch the good, than the good to reform the bad. The way of sin is down hill: those that are in league with idolaters will come by degrees to be in love with idolatry; and these that are prevailed with to eat of the idolatrous sacrifice

will come at length to offer it. *Obsta principiis—Nisi the mischief in the bud.* [2.] That they might not be tempted to *make molten gods*, they must utterly destroy those they found, and all that belonged to them, the *altars and groves*, (v. 13.) lest, if they were left standing, they should be brought, in process of time, either to use them, or to take pattern by them, or to abate in their detestation and dread of idolatry. The relics of idolatry ought to be abolished, as affronts to the holy God, and a great reproach to the human nature. Let it never be said, that men, who pretend to reason, were ever guilty of such absurdities, as to make gods of their own, and worship them.

18. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. 19. All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, *whether ox or sheep, that is male.* 20. But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem *him* not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem: and none shall appear before me empty. 21. Six days thou shalt work; but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing-time and in harvest thou shalt rest. 22. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the first-fruits of wheat-harvest, and the feast of in-gathering at the year's end. 23. Thrice in the year shall all your men-children appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. 24. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year. 25. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. 26. The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. 27. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

Here is a repetition of several appointments made before, especially relating to their solemn feasts: when they had made the calf, they proclaimed a feast in honour of it; now, that they might never do so again, they are here charged with the observance of the feasts which God had instituted. Note, Men need not be drawn from their religion by the temptation of mirth, for we serve a Master that has abundantly provided for the joy of his servants: serious godliness is a continual feast, and joy in God always.

1. Once a week they must *rest*, (v. 21.) *even in earing time and in harvest*, the most busy times of the year. All worldly business must give way to that holy rest; harvest-work will prosper the better for the religious observation of the sabbath-day

in harvest-time. Hereby we must show that we prefer our communion with God, and our duty to him, before either the business or the joy of harvest.

2. Thrice a year they must *feast*; (v. 23.) they must then appear *before the Lord God, the God of Israel*. In all our religious approaches to God, we must eye him, (1.) As the Lord God, infinitely blessed, great and glorious, that we may worship him with reverence and godly fear. (2.) As the God of Israel, a God in covenant with us, that we may be encouraged to trust him, and to serve him cheerfully. We always are before God; but, in holy duties, we present ourselves before him, as servants to receive commands, as petitioners to sue for favours, and we have reason to do both with joy.

But it might be suggested, that when all the males from every part of the country were gone up to worship in the place that God should choose, the country would be left exposed to the insults of their neighbours; and what would become of the poor women and children, and sick and aged, that were left at home? "Trust God with them; (v. 24.) *neither shall any man desire thy land*, not only they shall not invade it, but they shall not so much as think of invading it." Note, [1] All hearts are in God's hands, and under his check; he can lay a restraint, not only upon men's actions, but upon their desires. Canaan was a desirable land, and the neighbouring nations were greedy enough; and yet God says, "They shall not desire it." Let us check all sinful desires in our own hearts against God and his glory, and then trust him to check all sinful desires in the hearts of others against us and our interest. [2.] The way of duty is the way of safety. If we serve God, he will preserve us; and those that venture for him shall never lose by him. While we are employed in God's work, and are attending upon him, we are taken under special protection; as noblemen and members of parliament are privileged from arrests.

The three feasts are here mentioned with their appendages. *First*, The passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt; and to this is annexed the law of the redemption of the first-born, v. 18. . 20. This feast was instituted, ch. 12. 13. and urged again, ch. 23. 15. *Secondly*, The feast of weeks, that is, that of pentecost, seven weeks after the passover; and to this is annexed the law of the first-fruits. *Thirdly*, The feast of in-gathering at the year's end, which was the feast of tabernacles; (v. 22.) of these also he had spoken before, ch. 23. 16. As to those laws repeated here, (v. 25, 26.) that against leaven relates to the passover, that of the first-fruits to the feast of pentecost, and therefore that against seething the kid in his mother's milk, in all probability, relates to the feast of in-gathering, at which God would not have them use that superstitious ceremony, which, probably, they had seen the Egyptians, or some other of the neighbouring nations, bless their harvests with.

With these laws here repeated, it is probable, all that was said to him, when he was before upon the mount, was repeated likewise, and the model of the tabernacle showed him again, lest the ruffle and discomposure which the golden calf had put him into should have bereaved him of the ideas he had in his mind of what he had seen and heard; also in token of a complete reconciliation, and to show that *not one jot or tittle of the law should pass away*, but that all should be carefully preserved by the great Mediator, who came, not to destroy, but to fulfil, Matth. 5. 17, 18. And in the close, 1. Moses is ordered to *write* these words, (v. 27.) that the people might be the better acquainted with them by a frequent perusal, and that they might be transmitted to the generations to come; we can never be enough

thankful to God for the written word. 1. He is told that, according to the tenor of these words, God would make a covenant with Moses and Israel, not with Israel immediately, but with them in Moses as mediator; thus the covenant of grace is made with believers through Christ, who is *given for a Covenant to the people*, Isa. 49. 8. And as here the covenant was made according to the tenor of the command, so it is still; for we are by baptism brought into covenant, that we may be *taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded us*, Matth. 28. 19, 20.

28. And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. 29. And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while He talked with him. 30. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone: and they were afraid to come nigh him. 31. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. 32. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. 33. And *till* Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. 34. But when Moses went in before the LORD, to speak with Him, he took the vail off until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel *that* which he was commanded. 35. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

Here is,

I. The continuance of Moses in the mount, where he was miraculously sustained, *v. 28*. He was there in very intimate communion with God, without interruption, forty days and forty nights; and did not think it long; when we are weary of an hour or two spent in attendance upon God, and adoration of him, we should think how many days and nights Moses spent with him, and of the eternal day we hope to spend in praising him. During all this time, Moses did neither eat nor drink. Though he had, before, been kept so long fasting, yet he did not, this second time, take up so many days' provision along with him, but believed that *man lives not by bread alone*, and encouraged himself with the experience he had of the truth of it. So long he continued without meat and drink, (and, probably, without sleep too,) for, 1. The power of God supported him, that he did not need it; he who made the body can nourish it without ordinary means, which he uses, but is not tied to; *The life is more than meat*. 2. His communion with God entertained him, so that he did not desire it. He had meat to eat, which the world knew not of, for it

was his meat and drink to hear the word of God and pray. The abundant satisfaction his soul had in the word of God, and the visions of the Almighty, made him forget the body and the pleasures of it. When God would treat his favourite Moses, it was not with meat and drink, but with his light, law, and love; with the knowledge of himself and his will; then *man did indeed eat angels' food*. See what we should value as the truest pleasure; *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink*, neither the plenty nor delicacy of that, but *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. As Moses, so Elijah and Christ, fasted forty days and forty nights: the more dead we are to the delights of sense, the better prepared we are for the pleasures of heaven.

II. The coming down of Moses from the mount, greatly enriched, and miraculously adorned.

1. He came down enriched with the best treasure, for he brought in his hands the two tables of the law, written with the finger of God, *v. 28, 29*. It is a great favour to have the law given us: this favour was showed to Israel, Ps. 147. 19, 20. It is a great honour to be employed in delivering God's law to others; this honour was done to Moses.

2. He came down adorned with the best beauty; *for the skin of his face shone, v. 29*. This time of his being in the mount, he heard only what he had heard before, but he saw more of the glory of God, which having with open face beheld, he was in some measure *changed into the same image, from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. The last time, he came down from the mount with the glory of a magistrate, to frown upon and chastise Israel's idlatry; now, with the glory of an angel, with tidings of peace and reconciliation. Then he came with a rod, now with the spirit of meekness. Now this may be looked upon, (1.) As a great honour done to Moses, that the people might never again question his mission, or think or speak slightly of him. He carried his credentials in his very countenance, which, some think, retained, as long as he lived, some remainders of this glory, which perhaps contributed to the vigour of his old age; that eye could not wax dim which had seen God, nor that face become wrinkled which had shone with his glory; the Israelites could not look him in the face, but they must there read his commission; *Thus it was done to the man whom the King of kings did delight to honour*; yet, after this, they murmured against him; for the most sensible proofs will not of themselves conquer an obstinate infidelity. The shining of Moses's face was a great honour to him, yet that was no glory, in comparison with the glory which excelled; we read of our Lord Jesus, not only that *his face shone as the sun*, but his whole body also, for his *raiment was white and glistening*, Luke 9. 29. But, when he came down from the mount, he quite laid aside that glory, it being his will that we should walk *by faith, not by sight*. (2.) It was also a great favour to the people, and an encouragement to them, that God put this glory upon him who was their intercessor, thereby giving them assurance that he was accepted, and they through him. Thus the advancement of Christ, our Advocate with the Father, is the great support of our faith. (3.) It was the effect of his sight of God. Communion with God, [1.] Makes the face to shine in true honour. Serious godliness puts a lustre upon a man's countenance, such as commands esteem and affection. [2.] It should make the face to shine in universal holiness; when we have been in the mount with God, we should let our *light shine before men*, in humility, meekness, and all the instances of a heavenly conversation; thus must the *beauty of the Lord our God be upon us*, even the *beauty of holiness*, that all we converse with may *take know-*

ledge of us, that we have been with Jesus, Acts 4. 13.

Now concerning the shining of Moses's face, observe here,

First, That Moses was not aware of it himself; (v. 29.) *He wist not that the skin of his face shone*. Thus, 1. It is the infelicity of some, that their faces shine in true grace, and yet they do not know it, to take the comfort of it. Their friends see much of God in them, but they themselves are ready to think they have no grace. 2. It is the humility of others, that their faces shine in eminent gifts and usefulness, and yet they do not know it, to be puffed up with it; whatever beauty God puts upon us, we should still be filled with such an humble sense of our own unworthiness and manifold infirmities, as will make us even overlook and forget that which makes our faces shine.

Secondly, That Aaron and the children of Israel saw it, and *were afraid*, v. 30. The truth of it was attested by a multitude of witnesses, who were also conscious of the terror of it. It not only dazzled their eyes, but struck such an awe upon them, as obliged them to retire: probably, they doubted whether it were a token of God's favour, or of his displeasure; and though it seemed most likely to be a good omen, yet, being conscious of guilt, they feared the worst, especially remembering the posture Moses found them in when he came last down from the mount. Holiness will command reverence: but the sense of sin makes men afraid of their friends, and even of that which really is a favour to them.

Thirdly, That Moses put a *vail upon his face*, when he perceived that it shone, v. 33, 35. 1. This teaches us all a lesson of modesty and humility. We must be content to have our excellencies obscured, and a vail drawn over them, not coveting to *make a fair show in the flesh*. They that are truly desirous to be owned and accepted of God, will likewise desire not to be taken notice of or applauded by men, *Qui bene latuit, bene vixit*—*There is a laudable concealment*. 2. It teaches ministers to accommodate themselves to the capacities of the people, and to preach to them as they are able to bear it. Let all that art, and all that learning, be veiled; which tend to amusement rather than edification; and let the strong condescend to the infirmities of the weak. 3. This vail signified the darkness of that dispensation; the ceremonial institutions had in them much of Christ and the grace of the gospel, but a vail was drawn over it, so that the children of Israel could not distinctly and *steadfastly see those good things to come, which the law had the shadow of*. It was beauty veiled; gold in the mine; a pearl in the shell: but, thanks be to God, by the gospel, life and immortality are brought to light, the vail is taken away from off the Old Testament; yet still it remains upon the hearts of those who shut their eyes against the light. Thus the apostle expounds this passage, 2 Cor. 3. 13. . 15.

Fourthly, That when he *went in before the Lord*, to speak with him in the tabernacle of meeting, he *put off the vail*, v. 34. Then there was no occasion for it, and, before God, every man does and must appear un veiled; for all things are *naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, and it is folly for us to think of concealing or disguising any thing. Every vail must be thrown aside, when we come to present ourselves unto the Lord. This signified also, as it is explained, (2 Cor. 3. 16.) that when a soul *turns to the Lord*, the *vail shall be taken away*, that with open face it may *behold his glory*. And when we shall come before the Lord in heaven, to be there for ever speaking with him, the vail shall not only be taken off from the

divine glory, but from our hearts and eyes, that we may see as we are seen, and know as we are known.

CHAP. XXXV.

What should have been said and done upon Moses' coming down the first time from the mount, if the golden calf had not broken the measures, and put all into disorder, now at last, when with great difficulty reconciliation was made, begins to be said and done; and that great affair of the setting up of God's worship, is put into its former channel again, and goes on now without interruption. I. Moses gives Israel those instructions, received from God, which required immediate observance. 1. Concerning the sabbath, v. 1. . 3. 2. Concerning the contribution that was to be made for the erecting of the tabernacle, v. 4. . 9. 3. Concerning the framing of the tabernacle and the utensils of it, v. 10. . 19. II. The people bring in their contributions, v. 20. . 29. III. The head-workmen are nominated, v. 30. . 35.

I. **AND** Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These *are* the words which the LORD hath commanded, that *ye* should do them. 2. Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. 3. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath-day. 4. And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, 5. Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever *is* of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, 6. And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, 7. And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim-wood, 8. And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, 9. And onyx-stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate. 10. And every wise-hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded; 11. The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets, 12. The ark and the staves thereof, *with* the mercy-seat, and the vail of the covering, 13. The table and his staves, and all his vessels, and the show-bread, 14. The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light, 15. And the incense-altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle, 16. The altar of burnt-offering, with his brazen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, 17. The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court, 18. The pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords, 19

The clothes of service, to do service in the holy *place*, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office.

It was said in general, (*ch. 34. 32.*) *Moses gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him.* But the erecting and furnishing of the tabernacle being the work to which they were now immediately to apply themselves, here is particular mention of the orders given concerning that.

1. All the congregation is summoned to attend, (*v. 1.*) that is, the heads and rulers of the congregation, the representatives of the several tribes, who must receive instructions from Moses, as he had received them from the Lord, and must communicate them to the people. Thus St. John, being commanded to write to the seven churches what had been revealed to him, writes it to the angels, or ministers, of the churches.

2. Moses gave them in charge all that (and that only) which God had commanded him; thus he approved himself faithful both to God and Israel, between whom he was a messenger or mediator. If he had added, altered, or diminished, he had been false to both. But both sides having reposed a trust in him, he was true to the trust; yet he was faithful as a servant only, but *Christ as a Son*, Heb. 3. 5, 6.

3. He begins with the law of the sabbath, because that was much insisted on in the instructions he had received; (*v. 2, 3.*) *Six days shall work be done*, work for the tabernacle, the work of the day that was now to be done in its day; and they had little else to do here in the wilderness, where they had neither husbandry nor merchandise, neither food to get, nor clothes to make; but on the seventh day you must not strike a stroke, no, not at the tabernacle-work; the honour of the sabbath was above that of the sanctuary, more ancient, and more lasting; that must be to you a holy day, devoted to God, and not to be spent in common business, it is a sabbath of rest. It is a *sabbath of sabbaths*, so some read it; more honourable and excellent than any of the other feasts, and should survive them all. A *sabbath of sabbatism*, so others read it, being typical of that sabbatism or rest, both spiritual and eternal, which *remains for the people of God*, Heb. 4. 9. It is a sabbath of rest, that is, in which a rest from all worldly labour must be very carefully and strictly observed. It is a sabbath, and a little sabbath, so some of the Jews would have it read; not only observing the whole day as a sabbath, but an hour before the beginning of it, and an hour after the ending of it, which they throw in over and above out of their own time, and call a *little sabbath*, to show how glad they are of the approach of the sabbath, and how loath to part with it. It is a sabbath of rest, but it is rest to the Lord, to whose honour it must be devoted. A penalty is here annexed to the breach of it, *Who-soever doeth work therein shall be put to death*; and a particular prohibition of kindling fires on the sabbath-day for any servile work, as smiths' work, or plumbers', &c.

4. He orders preparation to be made for the setting up of the tabernacle. Two things were to be done:

(1.) All that were able must contribute; *Take ye from among you an offering*, *v. 5.* The tabernacle was to be dedicated to the honour of God, and used in his service; and therefore what was brought for the setting up and furnishing of that, was an offering to the Lord. Our Goodness extends not to God, but what is laid out for the support of his kingdom and interest among men, he is pleased to accept as an offering to himself; and he requires

such acknowledgments of our receiving our all from him, and such instances of our dedicating our all to him. The rule is, *Who-soever is of a willing heart, let him bring.* It was not to be a tax imposed upon them, but a benevolence or voluntary contribution; to intimate to us, [1.] That God has not made our yoke heavy. He is a Prince that does not burthen his subjects with taxes, nor make them to serve with an offering, but draws with the cords of a man, and leaves it to ourselves to judge what is right; his is a government that there is no cause to complain of, for he does not rule with rigour. [2.] That God loves a cheerful giver, and is best pleased with the *free-will offerings*. Those services are acceptable to him, that come from the *willing heart of a willing people*, Ps. 110. 3.

(2.) All that are skilful must work; (*v. 10.*) *Every wise-hearted among you shall come, and make.* See how God dispenses his gifts variously; and, as every man hath received the gift, so he must minister, 1. Pet. 4. 10. Those that were rich must bring in materials to work on; those that were ingenious must serve the tabernacle with their ingenuity; as they needed one another, so the tabernacle needed them both, 1 Cor. 12. 7, 21. The work was likely to go on, when some helped with their purses, others with their hands, and both with a willing heart. Moses, as he had told them what must be given, (*v. 5-9.*) so he gives them the general heads of what must be made, (*v. 11. 19.*) that, seeing how much work was before them, they might apply themselves to it the more vigorously, and every hand might be busy; and it gave them such an idea of the fabric designed, that they could not but long to see it finished.

20. And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 21. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. 22. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. 23. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. 24. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD's offering: and every man with whom was found shittim-wood, for any work of the service, brought it. 25. And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. 26. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. 27. And the rulers brought onyx-stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate: 28. And spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense.

29. The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring, for all manner of work which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hands of Moses.

Moses having made known to them the will of God, they went home, and immediately put in practice what they had heard, v. 20. Oh that every congregation would thus depart from the hearing of the word of God, with a full resolution to be *doers of the same!* Observe here,

I. The offerings that were brought for the service of the tabernacle, v. 21, &c. Concerning which many things may be noted.

1. It is intimated that they brought their offerings immediately: they departed to their tents immediately to fetch their offering, and did not desire time to consider of it, lest their zeal should be cooled by delays. What duty God convinces us of, and calls us to, we should set about speedily. No season will be more convenient than the present season.

2. It is said that *their spirits made them willing*, (v. 21.) and *their hearts*, v. 29. What they did, they did cheerfully, and from a good principle. They were willing, and it was not any external inducement that made them so, but their spirits. It was from a principle of love to God and his service; a desire of his presence with them in his ordinances; gratitude for the great things he had done for them; faith in his promise of what he would further do; or, at least, from the present consideration of these things, that they were willing to offer. What we give and do for God, is then acceptable when it comes from a good principle in the heart and spirit.

3. When it is said that as many as were willing-hearted brought their offerings, (v. 22.) it should seem as if there were some who were not, who loved their gold better than their God, and would not part with it, no not for the service of the tabernacle; such there are, who will be called *Israelites*, and yet will not be moved by the equity of the thing, God's expectations from them, and the good examples of those about them, to part with any thing for the interests of God's kingdom: they are for the true religion, provided it be cheap, and will cost them nothing.

4. The offerings were of divers kinds, according as they had; those that had gold and precious stones, brought them, not thinking any thing too good and too rich to part with for the honour of God. Those that had not precious stones to bring, brought goats' hair, and rams' skins; if we cannot do as much as others for God, we must not therefore sit still and do nothing; if the meaner offerings, which are according to our ability, gain us not such a reputation among men, yet they shall not fail of acceptance with God, who requires *according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not*, 2 Cor. 8. 12. Two mites from a pauper were more pleasing than so many talents from a Dives. God has an eye to the heart of the giver, more than to the value of the gift.

5. Many of the things they offered were their ornaments, bracelets and rings, and tablets or lockets; (v. 22.) and even the women parted with these. *Can a maid forget her ornaments?* Thus far they forgot them, that they preferred the beautifying of the sanctuary before their own adorning. Let this teach us in general, to part with that for God when he calls for it, which is very dear to us, which we value, and value ourselves by; and particularly to lay aside our ornaments, and deny our-

selves in them, when either they occasion offence to others, or feed our own pride. If we think those gospel-rules concerning our clothing too strict, (1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4.) I fear we should scarcely have done as these Israelites did. If they thought their ornaments well-bestowed upon the tabernacle, shall not we think the want of ornaments well made up by the graces of the Spirit? Prov. 1. 9.

6. These rich things that they offered, we may suppose, were mostly the spoils of the Egyptians; for the Israelites in Egypt were kept poor, till they borrowed at parting. And we may suppose the rulers had better things, (v. 27.) because, having more influence among the Egyptians, they borrowed larger sums. Who would have thought that ever the wealth of Egypt should have been so well employed; but thus God has often made *the earth to help the woman*, Rev. 12. 16. It was by a special providence and promise of God, that the Israelites got all that spoil, and therefore it was highly fit that they should devote a part of it to the service of that God to whom they owed it all. Let every man give *according as God hath prospered him*, 1 Cor. 16. 2. Extraordinary successes should be acknowledged by extraordinary offerings. Apply it to human learning, arts and sciences, which are borrowed, as it were, from the Egyptians; those that are enriched with these must devote them to the service of God and his tabernacle: they may be used as helps to understand the scriptures, as ornaments or hand-maids to divinity. But then great care must be taken that Egypt's gods mingle not with Egypt's gold. Moses, though learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, did not therefore pretend, in the least instance, to correct the pattern showed him in the mount. The furnishing of the tabernacle with the riches of Egypt, was perhaps a good omen to the Gentiles, who, in the fulness of time, should be brought into the gospel-tabernacle, and their silver and their gold with them. (Isa. 60. 9.) and it should be said, *Blessed be Egypt my people*, Isa. 19. 25.

7. We may suppose that the remembrance of the offerings made for the golden calf made them the more forward in these offerings. Those that had then parted with their ear-rings, would now testify their repentance by giving the rest of their jewels to the service of God: godly sorrow worketh such a revenge, 2 Cor. 7. 11. And those that had kept themselves pure from that idolatry, yet argued with themselves, "Were they so forward in contributing to an idol, and shall we be backward or sneaking in our offerings to the Lord?" Thus some good was brought even out of that evil.

II. The work that was done for the service of the tabernacle; (v. 25.) *The women did spin with their hands*; some spun fine work, of blue and purple, others coarse work, of goats' hair, and yet their's also is said to be done in wisdom, v. 26. As it is not only rich gifts, so it is not only fine work, that God accepts. Notice is here taken of the good women's work for God, as well as of Bezaleel's and Aholiab's. The meanest hand employed, the meanest service performed, for the honour of God, shall have an honourable recompense; Mary's anointing of Christ's head shall be told for a memorial, (Matth. 26. 13.) and a record is kept of the women that laboured in the gospel tabernacle, (Phil. 4. 3.) and were helpers to Paul in Christ Jesus, Rom. 16. 3. It is part of the character of the virtuous woman, that she layeth *her hand to the spindle*, Prov. 31. 19. This employment was here turned to a pious use, as it may be still (though we have no hangings to make for the tabernacle) by the imitation of the charity of Dorcas, who made coats and garments for poor widows, Acts 9.

39. Even those that are not in a capacity to *give* in charity, may yet *work* in charity; and thus the poor may relieve the poor, and those that have nothing but their limbs and senses may be very charitable in the labour of love.

30. And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31. And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; 32. And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 33. And in the cutting of stones to set *them*, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. 34. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, *both* he and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. 35. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, *even* of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Here is the divine appointment of the master-workmen, that there might be no strife for the office, and that all who were employed in the work might take direction from, and give account to, these general inspectors; for God is the God of order, and not of confusion.

Observe, 1. Those whom God called by name to this service, he *filled with the Spirit of God*, to qualify them for it, *v. 30, 31*. Skill in secular employments is God's gift, and *comes from above*, Jam. 1. 17. Fr. in him the faculty is, and the improvement of it. To his honour therefore all knowledge must be devoted, and we must study how to serve him with it. The work was extraordinary which Bazaleel was designed for, and therefore he was qualified in an extraordinary manner for it; thus, when the apostles were appointed to be master-builders in setting up the gospel-tabernacle, they were *filled with the Spirit of God in wisdom and understanding*. 2. They were appointed, not only to *devise*, but to *work*, (*v. 32.*) *to work all manner of work*, *v. 35*. Those of eminent gifts, that are capable of directing others, must not think that that will excuse them in idleness: many are ingenious enough in cutting out work for other people, and can tell what this man and that man should do, but the burthens they bind on others they themselves *will not touch with one of their fingers*. These will fall under the character of slothful servants. 3. They were not only to devise the work themselves, but they were to teach others, *v. 34*. Not only had Bazaleel power to command, but he was to take pains to instruct. Those that rule should teach; and those to whom God has given knowledge should be willing to communicate it for the benefit of others, not coveting to monopolize it.

CHAP. XXXVI.

In this chapter, I. The work of the tabernacle is begun, *v. 1-4*. II. A stop put to the people's contributions, *v. 5-7*. III. A particular account is given of the making of the tabernacle itself: the fine curtains of it, *v. 8-13*. The coarse ones, *v. 14-19*. The boards, *v. 20-30*. The bars, *v. 31-34*. The partition veil, *v. 35, 36*. And the hanging for the door, *v. 37, 38*.

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1. **W**HEN wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. 2. And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, *even* every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it: 3. And they received of Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it *withal*. And they brought yet unto him free-offerings every morning. 4. And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; 5. And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded to make. 6. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. 7. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

We have here,

I. The workmen set in without delay. Then they wrought, *v. 1*. When God had qualified them for the work, then they applied themselves to it. Note, The talents we are intrusted with must not be laid up, but laid out; not hid in a napkin, but traded with. What have we all our gifts for, but to do good with them? They began when Moses called them, *v. 2*. Even those whom God has qualified for, and inclined to, the service of the tabernacle, yet must wait for a regular call to it, either extraordinary, as that of preachers and apostles, or ordinary, as that of pastors and teachers. And observe who they were that Moses called; those in whose heart God had put wisdom for this purpose, beyond their natural capacity, and whose heart stirred them up to come to the work in good earnest. Note, Those are to be called to the building of the gospel-tabernacle whom God has by his grace made in some measure fit for the work, and free to engage in it. Ability and willingness (with resolution) are the two things to be regarded in the call of ministers. Has God given them not only knowledge, but wisdom? (For they that would win souls must be wise, and have their hearts stirred up to come to the work, and not to the honour only; to do it, and not to talk of it only.) Let them come to it with full purpose of heart to go through with it.

The materials, which the people had contributed, were delivered by Moses to the workmen, *v. 3*. They could not *create* a tabernacle, that is, make it out of nothing, nor work, unless they had something to work upon; we find that the people brought the materials, and that Moses put them into their hands. Precious souls are the materials of the gospel tabernacle, they are *built up a spiritual house*; (1 Pet. 2. 5.) to this end they are to offer them

selves a free-will offering to the Lord, for his service, (Rom. 15. 16.) and they are then committed to the care of his ministers, as builders, to be framed and wrought upon for their edification and increase in holiness, till they all come, like the curtains of the tabernacle, *in the unity of the faith to be a holy temple*, Eph. 2. 21, 22.—4. 12, 13.

11. The contributions restrained. The people continued to bring *free offerings every morning*, v. 3. Note, We should always make it our morning's work to bring our offering unto the Lord; even the spiritual offerings of prayer and praise, and a broken heart surrendered entirely to God. This is that which the duty of every day requires. God's compassions are new every morning, and so should our offerings be, our free offerings: God's grace to us is free, and so must our duty to him be. Probably there were some that were backward at first to bring their offering, but their neighbours' forwardness stirred them up and shamed them. The zeal of some provoked many. There are those who will be content to follow, who yet do not care for leading, in a good work. It is best to be forward, but better late than never. Or, perhaps some who had offered at first, having pleasure in reflecting upon it, offered more; so far were they from grudging what they had contributed, that they doubled their contribution. Thus, in charity, *give a portion to seven, and also to eight*; having given much, give more. Now observe,

1. The honesty of the workmen. When they had cut out their work, and found how their stuff held out, and that the people were still forward to bring in more, they went in a body to Moses to tell him that there needed no more contributions, v. 4, 5. Had they sought their own things, they had now a fair opportunity of enriching themselves by the people's gifts: for they might have made up their work, and converted the overplus to their own use, as perquisites of their place. But they were men of integrity, that scorned to do so mean a thing as to sponge upon the people, and enrich themselves with that which was offered to the Lord. Those are the greatest cheats that cheat the public. If to murder many is worse than to murder one, by the same rule, to defraud communities, and to rob the church or state, is a much greater crime than to pick the pocket of a single person. But these workmen were not only ready to account for all they received, but were not willing to receive more than they had occasion for, lest they should come either into the temptation, or under the suspicion, of taking it to themselves. These were men that knew when they had enough.

2. The liberality of the people; though they saw what an abundance was contributed, yet they continued to offer, till they were forbidden by a proclamation, v. 6, 7. A rare instance! Most need a spur to quicken their charity, few need a bridle to check it; yet these did. Had Moses aimed to enrich himself, he might have suffered them still to bring in their offerings; and, when the work was finished, might have taken the remainder to himself: but he also preferred the public before his own private interest, and was therein a good example to all in public trusts. It is said, (v. 6.) *The people were restrained from bringing*; they looked upon it as a restraint upon them, not to be allowed to do more for the tabernacle; such was the zeal of those people, who gave to their power, yea, and beyond their power, praying the collectors with much entreaty to receive the gift, 2 Cor. 8. 3, 4. These were the fruits of a first love; in these last days charity is grown too cold for us to expect such things from it.

8. And every wise-hearted man among them that wrought the work of the taberna-

cle, made ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: *with cherubims of cunning work made he them*. 9. The length of one curtain *was* twenty and eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains *were* all of one size. 10. And he coupled the five curtains one unto another; and *the other* five curtains he coupled one unto another. 11. And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain, from the selvedge in the coupling: likewise he made in the uttermost side of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the second. 12. Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which *was* in the coupling of the second: the loops held one *curtain* to another. 13. And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches: so it became one tabernacle.

The first work they set about was the framing of the house; that must be done before the furniture of it was prepared. This house was not made of timber or stone, but of curtains curiously embroidered and coupled together. This serves to typify the state of the church in this world, the palace of God's kingdom among men. 1. Though it is upon the earth, yet its foundation is not in the earth, as that of a house is; no, Christ's kingdom is not of this world, nor founded in it. 2. It is mean and mutable, and in a militant state; shepherds dwell in tents, and God is the Shepherd of Israel; soldiers dwell in tents, and the Lord is a Man of war; and his church marches through an enemy's country, and must fight its way. The kings of the earth close themselves in cedar, (Jer. 22. 15.) but the ark of God was lodged in curtains only. 3. Yet there is a beauty in holiness; the curtains were embroidered, so is the church adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, that *raiment of needle work*, Ps. 45. 14. 4. The several societies of believers are united in one, and, as here, all *become one tabernacle*; for *there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism*.

14. And he made curtains of goats' hair for the tent over the tabernacle; eleven curtains he made them. 15. The length of one curtain *was* thirty cubits, and four cubits *was* the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains *were* of one size. 16. And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. 17. And he made fifty loops upon the uttermost edge of the curtain in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. 18. And he made fifty taches of brass to couple the tent together, that it might be one. 19. And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of badgers' skins above *that*. 20. And he made boards for the tabernacle of shittim-wood, standing up. 21. The length of a board *was* ten cubits, and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half. 22. One

board had two tenons, equally distant one from another: thus did he make for all the boards of the tabernacle. 23. And he made boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side, southward. 24. And forty sockets of silver he made under the twenty boards: two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. 25. And for the other side of the tabernacle, *which is toward the north corner*, he made twenty boards, 26. And their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 27. And for the sides of the tabernacle westward he made six boards. 28. And two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. 29. And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners. 30. And there were eight boards; and their sockets *were* sixteen sockets of silver, under every board two sockets. 31. And he made bars of shittim-wood: five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, 32. And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the sides westward. 33. And he made the middle bar to shoot through the boards from the one end to the other. 34. And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings of gold to be places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

Here, 1. The shelter and special protection that the church is under, are signified by the curtains of hair-cloth, which were spread over the tabernacle, and the covering of rams' skins and badgers' skins over them, v. 14. . 19. God has provided for his people a *shadow from the heat, and a covert from storm and rain*; (Isa. 4. 6.) they are armed against all weathers; the sun and moon shall not smite them; and they are protected from the storms of divine wrath, that hail which will *sweep away the refuge of lies*, Isa. 28. 17. Those that dwell in God's house shall find, be the tempest ever so violent, or the dropping ever so continual, it does not rain in. 2. The strength and stability of the church, though it is but a tabernacle, are signified by the boards and bars with which the curtains were borne up, v. 20. . 34. The boards were coupled together and joined by the bars that shot through them; for the union of the church, and the hearty agreement of those that are its stays and supporters, contribute abundantly to its strength and establishment.

35. And he made a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: *with* cherubims made he it of cunning work. 36. And he made thereunto four pillars of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks *were* of gold; and he cast for them four sockets of silver. 37. And he made a hang-

ing for the tabernacle-door, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of needle-work; 38. And the five pillars of it, with their hooks: and he overlaid their chapters and their fillets with gold; but their five sockets *were* of brass.

In the building of a house there is a great deal of work about the doors and partitions; in the tabernacle they were answerable to the rest of the fabric; there were curtains for doors, and vails for partitions. 1. There was a vail made for a partition between the holy place and the most holy, v. 35, 36. This signified the darkness and distance of that dispensation, compared with the New Testament, which shows us the glory of God more clearly, and invites us to draw near to it; and the darkness and distance of our present state, in comparison with heaven, where we shall be *ever with the Lord*, and *see him as he is*. 2. There was a vail made for the door of the tabernacle, v. 37, 38. At this door the people assembled, though forbidden to enter; for, while we are in this present state, we must get as near God as we can.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Bezaleel and his workmen are still busy, making, I. The ark with the mercy-seat and the cherubims, v. 1. . 9. II. The table with its vessels, v. 10. . 16. III. The candlestick with its appurtenances, v. 17. . 24. IV. The golden altar for incense, v. 25. . 28. V. The holy oil and incense, v. 29. The particular appointment concerning each of which we had before in the 25th and 30th chapters.

1. **A**ND Bezaleel made the ark of shittim-wood: two cubits and a half *was* the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it. 2. And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. 3. And he cast for it four rings of gold, *to be set* by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it and two rings upon the other side of it. 4. And he made staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold. 5. And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. 6. And he made the mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half *was* the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 7. And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy-seat; 8. One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the *other* end on that side: out of the mercy-seat made he the cherubims, on the two ends thereof. 9. And the cherubims spread out *their* wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy-seat, with their faces one to another; *even* to the mercy-seat-ward were the faces of the cherubims.

It may be thought strange that Moses, when he had recorded so fully the instructions given him upon the mount for the making of all these things, should here record as particularly the making of

them; when it might have sufficed only to have said, in a few words, that each of these things was made exactly according to the directions before recited. We are sure that Moses, when he wrote by divine inspiration, used no vain repetitions; there are no idle words in scripture. Why then are so many chapters taken up with this narrative, which we are tempted to think needless and tedious? But we must consider, 1. That Moses wrote primarily for the people of Israel, to whom it would be of great use to read and hear often of these divine and sacred treasures with which they were intrusted. These several ornaments wherewith the tabernacle was furnished, they were not admitted to see, but the priests only, and therefore it was requisite that they should be thus largely described particularly to them. That which they ought to read again and again, (lest they should fail of doing it,) is written again and again: thus many of the same passages of the history of Christ are in the New Testament related by two or three, and some by four, of the evangelists, for the same reason. The great things of God's law and gospel we need to have inculcated upon us again and again. To write the same, (says St. Paul,) to me *is not grievous, but for you it is safe*, Phil. 3. 1. 2. Moses would thus show the great care which he and his workmen took, to make every thing exactly according to the pattern showed him in the mount. Having before given us the original, he here gives us the copy, that we may compare them, and observe how exactly they agree. Thus he appeals to every reader concerning his fidelity to him that appointed him, in all his house, and in all the particulars of it, Heb. 3. 5. And thus he teaches us to have respect to all God's commandments, even to every iota and tittle of them. 3. It is intimated hereby, that God takes delight in the sincere obedience of his people, and keeps an exact account of it, which shall be produced to their honour in the resurrection of the just. None can be so punctual in their duty, but God will be as punctual in his notices of it. He is *not unrighteous to forget the work and labour of love*, in any instance of it, Heb. 6. 10. 4. The spiritual riches and beauties of the gospel-tabernacle are hereby recommended to our frequent and serious consideration. Go walk about this Zion, view it and review it: the more you contemplate the glories of the church, the more you will admire them and be in love with them. The charter of its privileges, and the account of its constitution, will very well bear a second reading.

In these verses we have an account of the making of the ark, with its glorious and most significant appurtenances, the mercy-seat and the cherubims. Consider these three together, and they represent the glory of a holy God, the sincerity of a holy heart, and the communion that is between them, in and by a Mediator. 1. It is the glory of a holy God, that dwells between the cherubims, that is, is continually attended and adorned by the blessed angels, whose swiftness was signified by the wings of the cherubims, while their unanimity and joint concurrence in their services were signified by their faces being one towards another. 2. It is the character of an upright heart, that, like the ark of the testimony, it is the law of God hid and kept in it. 3. By Jesus Christ, the great Propitiation, there is reconciliation made, and a communion settled, between us and God: he interposes between us and God's displeasure; and not only so, but through him we become entitled to God's favour. If he write his law in our heart, he will be to us a God, and we shall be to him a people; from the mercy-seat he will teach us, there he will accept us, and show himself merciful to our unrighteousness; and under the shadow of his wings we shall be safe and easy.

10. And he made the table of shittim-wood: two cubits *was* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11. And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about. 12. Also he made thereunto a border of a hand-breadth round about; and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about. 13. And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that *were* in the four feet thereof. 14. Over against the border *were* the rings, the places for the staves, to bear the table. 15. And he made the staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. 16. And he made the vessels which *were* upon the table, his dishes, and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers, to cover withal, of pure gold. 17. And he made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, were of the same: 18. And six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: 19. Three bowls made he after the fashion of almonds in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds in another branch a knop and a flower; so throughout the six branches going out of the candlestick. 20. And in the candlestick *were* four bowls made like almonds, his knops, and his flowers: 21. And a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it. 22. Their knops and their branches were of the same: all of it *was* one beaten work of pure gold. 23. And he made his seven lamps, and his snuffers, and his snuff-dishes of pure gold. 24. Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.

Here is, 1. The making of the table on which the show-bread was to be continually placed. God is a good Householder, that always keeps a plentiful table. Is the world his tabernacle? His providence in it spreads a table for all the creatures: he *provides food for all flesh*. Is the church his tabernacle? His grace in it spreads a table for all believers, furnished with the bread of life. But observe how much the dispensation of the gospel exceeds that of the law. Though here was a table furnished, it was only with *show-bread*, bread to be looked upon, not to be fed upon, while it was on this table, and afterward only by the priests; but to the table which Christ has spread in the new covenant all real Christians are invited guests; and to them it is said, *Eat, O friends, come eat of my bread*; what the law gave but a sight of at a distance, the gospel

gives the enjoyment of, and a hearty welcome to. 2. The making of the candlestick, which was not of wood overlaid with gold, but all beaten work of pure gold only, v. 17, 22. This signified that light of divine revelation with which God's church upon earth (which is his tabernacle among men) has always been enlightened, being always supplied with fresh oil from Christ the good Olive, Zech. 4. 2, 3. God's manifestations of himself in this world are but candle-light, compared with the day-light of the future state. The Bible is a golden candlestick, it is of pure gold; (Ps. 19. 10.) from it light is diffused to every part of God's tabernacle, that by it his spiritual priests may see to minister unto the Lord, and to do the service of his sanctuary. This candlestick has not only its bowls for necessary use, but its knobs and flowers for ornament; there are many things which God saw fit to beautify his word with, which we can no more give a reason for than for these knobs and flowers, and yet we are sure that they were added for good purpose. Let us bless God for this candlestick, have an eye to it continually, and dread the removal of it out of its place.

25. And he made the incense altar of shittim-wood: the length of it *was* a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit, (*it was* four-square,) and two cubits *was* the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same. 26. And he overlaid it with pure gold, *both* the top of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: also he made unto it a crown of gold round about. 27. And he made two rings of gold for it under the crown thereof, by the two corners of it, upon the two sides thereof, to be places for the staves, to bear it withal. 28. And he made the staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold. 29. And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices according to the work of the apothecary.

Here is, 1. The making of the golden altar, on which incense was to be burnt daily; which signified both the prayers of saints, and the intercession of Christ, to which are owing the acceptableness and success of those prayers. The rings and staves, and all the appurtenances of this altar, were overlaid with gold, as all the vessels of the table and candlestick were of gold, for these were used in the holy place. God is the Best, and we must serve him with the best we have; but the best we can serve him with, in his courts on earth, is but as brass, compared with the gold, the sinless and spotless perfection, with which his saints shall serve him in his holy place above. 2. The preparing of the incense, which was to be burnt upon this altar, and with it the holy anointing oil, (v. 29.) according to that dispensatory, ch. 30. 22, &c. God taught Bezaleel this art also; so that though he was not before acquainted with it, yet he made up these things according to the work of the apothecary, as dexterously and exactly as if he had been bred up to the trade. Where God gives wisdom and grace, it will make the man of God *perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work.*

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Here is an account, I. Of the making of the brazen altar, (v. 1-7.) and the laver, v. 8. II. The preparing of the

hangings for the enclosing of the court in which the tabernacle was to stand, v. 9.-20. III. A summary account of the gold, silver, and brass, that was contributed to, and used in, the preparing of the tabernacle, v. 21.-31.

1. **A**ND he made the altar of burnt-offering of shittim-wood: five cubits *was* the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof, (*it was* four square,) and three cubits the height thereof. 2. And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it: the horns thereof were of the same: and he overlaid it with brass. 3. And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basons, *and* the flesh-hooks, and the fire-pans; all the vessels thereof made he *of* brass. 4. And he made for the altar a brazen grate of network, under the compass thereof, beneath unto the midst of it. 5. And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grate of brass, *to be* places for the staves. 6. And he made the staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with brass. 7. And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal: he made the altar hollow with boards. 8. And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it *of* brass, of the looking-glasses of *the women* assembling, which assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Bezaleel, having finished the gold-work, which, though the richest, yet was ordered to lie most out of sight, in the tabernacle itself, here goes on to prepare the court, which lay open to the view of all. Two things the court was furnished with, and both made of brass.

1. An altar of burnt-offering, v. 1.-7. On this all their sacrifices were offered, and this was it which, being sanctified itself for this purpose by the divine appointment, sanctified the gift that was in faith offered on it. Christ was himself the Altar to his own sacrifice of atonement, and so he is to all our sacrifices of acknowledgment. We must have an eye to him in offering them, as God has in accepting them.

2. A laver, to hold water for the priests to wash in, when they went into minister, v. 8. This signified the provision that is made in the gospel or Christ, for the cleansing of our souls from the mortal pollution of sin by the merit and grace of Christ, that we may be fit to serve the holy God in holy duties. This is here said to be made of the *looking-glasses* (or mirrors) of the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle. (1.) It should seem these women were eminent and exemplary for devotion, attending more frequently and seriously at the place of public worship than others did; and notice is here taken of it to their honour, Anna was such a one, long afterward, who *departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day*, Luke, 2. 37. In every age of the church there appear to have been some who have thus distinguished themselves by their serious zealous piety, and they have hereby dignified themselves; for devout women are really honourable women, (Acts 13. 50.) and not the less so, for their being called, by the scoffers of the latter days, *stilly women*. Probably, these women were such as

showed their zeal upon this occasion, by assisting in the work that was now going on for the service of the tabernacle. They assembled by *troops*, so the word is; a blessed sight! to see so many, and those so zealous, and so unanimous, in this good work. (2.) These women parted with their looking-glasses (which were of the finest brass, burnished for that purpose) for the use of the tabernacle. Those women that admire their own beauty, are in love with their own shadow, and make the putting on of apparel their chief adorning, by which they value and recommend themselves, can but ill spare their *looking-glasses*; yet these women offered *them* to God: Either, [1.] In token of their repentance for the former abuse of them, to the support of their pride and vanity; now that they were convinced of their folly, and had devoted themselves to the service of God at the door of the tabernacle, they thus threw away that which, though lawful and useful in itself, yet had been an occasion of sin to them. Thus Mary Magdalen, who had been a sinner, when she became a penitent, wiped Christ's feet with her hair. Or, [2.] In token of their great zeal for the work of the tabernacle; rather than the workmen should want brass, or not have of the best, they would part with their looking-glasses, though they could not well be without them. God's service and glory must always be preferred by us before any satisfactions or accommodations of our own. Let us never complain of the want of that which we may honour God by parting with. (3.) These looking-glasses were used for the making of the laver. Either they were artfully joined together, or else molten down and cast anew; but it is probable that the laver was so brightly burnished, that the sides of it still served for looking-glasses, that the priests, when they came to wash, might there see their faces, and so discover the spots and wash them clean. Note, In the washing of repentance, there is need of the looking-glass of self-examination. The word of God is a glass, in which we may see our faces; (see Jam. 1. 23.) and with it we must compare our own hearts and lives, that, finding out our blemishes, we may wash with particular sorrow, and application of the blood of Christ to our souls. Usually, the more particular we are in the confession of sin, the more comfort we have in the sense of the pardon.

9. And he made the court: on the south side southward, the hangings of the court *were of fine twined linen*, a hundred cubits: 10. Their pillars *were* twenty, and their brazen sockets twenty: the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *were of silver*. 11. And for the north side *the hangings were* a hundred cubits, their pillars *were* twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty: the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *of silver*. 12. And for the west side *were* hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *of silver*. 13. And for the east side eastward, fifty cubits. 14. The hangings of the one side *of the gate were* fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15. And for the other side of the court-gate, on this hand and that hand, *were* hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16. All the hangings of the court round about

were of fine twined linen. 17. And the sockets for the pillars *were of brass*; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *of silver*; and the overlaying of their chapters *of silver*: and all the pillars of the court *were* filleted with silver. 18. And the hanging for the gate of the court *was* needle-work, *of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen*; and twenty cubits *was* the length, and the height in the breadth *was* five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court. 19. And their pillars *were* four, and their sockets *of brass* four; their hooks *of silver*, and the overlaying of their chapters and their fillets of silver. 20. And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, *were of brass*.

The walls of the court, or church-yard, were like the rest, curtains or hangings, made according to the appointment, *ch. 27. 9, &c.* This represented the state of the Old-Testament church; it was a garden enclosed: the worshippers were then confined to a little compass. But the enclosure being of curtains only, intimated that the confinement of the church to one particular nation was not to be perpetual. The dispensation itself was a tabernacle-dispensation, moveable and mutable, and in due time to be taken down and folded up, when the place of the tent should be enlarged and its cords lengthened, to make room for the Gentile world, as is foretold, Isa. 54. 2, 3. The church here on earth is but the court of God's house, and happy they who tread these courts, and flourish in them; but through these courts we are passing to the holy place above; *Blessed are they that dwell in that house of God, they will be still praising him*. The enclosing of a court before the tabernacle, teaches us a gradual approach to God. The priests that ministered must pass through the holy court, before they entered the holy house. Thus, before solemn ordinances, there ought to be the separated and enclosed court of a solemn preparation, in which we must wash our hands, and so draw near with a true heart.

21. This is the sum of the tabernacle, *even of the tabernacle of testimony*, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses, *for the service of the Levites*, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest. 22. And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the Lord commanded Moses. 23. And with him *was* Aholiab, son of Abisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen. 24. All the gold that was occupied for the work, in all the work of the holy place, *even the gold of the offering*, was twenty and nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 25. And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation *was* a hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fif-

teen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: 26. A bekah for every man, *that is*, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty *men*. 27. And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; a hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. 28. And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five *shekels* he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them. 29. And the brass of the offering *was* seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. 30. And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar, 31. And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court-gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

Here we have a brief of the account, which, by Moses's appointment, the Levites took and kept of the gold, silver, and brass, that was brought in for the tabernacle's use, and how it was employed. Ithamar the son of Aaron was appointed to draw up this account, who was thus by lesser services trained up and fitted for greater, *v.* 21. Bezaleel and Aholiab must bring in the account, (*v.* 22, 23.) and Ithamar must audit it, and give it in to Moses. And it was thus:

1. All the gold was a free-will offering; every man brought as he could and would, and it amounted to twenty-nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels over, which some compute to be about one hundred and fifty thousand pounds worth of gold, according to the present value of it. Of this were made all the golden furniture and vessels.

2. The silver was levied by way of tax; every man was assessed half a shekel, a kind of poll-money, which amounted in the whole to a hundred talents, and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels over, *v.* 25, 26. Of this they made the sockets, into which the boards of the tabernacle were let, and on which they rested; so that they were as the foundation of the tabernacle, *v.* 27. The silver amounted to about thirty-four thousand pounds of our money. The raising of the gold by voluntary contribution, and of the silver by way of tribute, shows that either way may be taken for the defraying of public expenses; provided that nothing be done with partiality.

3. The brass, though less valuable, was of use not only for the brazen altar, but for the sockets of the court, which, probably, in other tents were of wood; but it is promised, (*Isa.* 60. 17.) *For wood I will bring brass.* See how liberal the people were, and how faithful the workmen were; their good examples ought to be followed.

CHAP. XXXIX.

This chapter gives us an account of the finishing of the work of the tabernacle. I. The last things prepared were the holy garments. The ephod and its curious girdle, *v.* 1..5. The onyx stones for the shoulders, *v.* 6, 7. The breast-plate with the precious stones in it, *v.* 8..21. The robe of the ephod, *v.* 22..26. The coats,

bonnets, and breeches, for the inferior priests, *v.* 27..29. And the plate of the holy crown, *v.* 30, 31. II. A summary account of the whole work, as it was presented to Moses, when it was all finished, *v.* 32..43.

1. **A**ND of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made clothes of service, to do service in the holy *place*, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses. 2. And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 3. And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, *with cunning work*. 4. They made shoulder-pieces for it, to couple it together: by the two edges was it coupled together. 5. And the curious girdle of his ephod, that *was* upon it, *was* of the same, according to the work thereof; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses. 6. And they wrought onyx-stones inclosed in ouches of gold, graven, as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel. 7. And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, *that they should be* stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses. 8. And he made the breastplate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9. It was foursquare: they made the breast-plate double: a span *was* the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, *being* doubled. 10. And they sat in it four rows of stones: *the first row was* a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this *was* the first row. 11. And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 12. And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. 13. And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: *they were* inclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings. 14. And the stones *were* according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes. 15. And they made upon the breastplate chains at the ends, of wreathen work of pure gold. 16. And they made two ouches of gold, and two gold rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breastplate. 17. And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate. 18. And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod before it. 19. And they made two rings of gold, and put *them*

on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which *was* on the side of the ephod inward. 20. And they made two *other* golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart of it, over against the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. 21. And they did bind the breastplate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod: as the LORD commanded Moses. 22. And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. 23. And *there was* a hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of a habergeon, *with* a band round about the hole, that it should not rend. 24. And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen. 25. And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates, upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates: 26. A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister in; as the LORD commanded Moses. 27. And they made coats of fine linen, of woven work, for Aaron and for his sons; 28. And a mitre of fine linen, and goodly bonnets of fine linen, and linen breeches of fine twined linen; 29. And a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needle-work; as the LORD commanded Moses. 30. And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, *like* to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 31. And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses.

In this account of the making the priests' garments, according to the instructions given, (*ch.* 28.) we may observe, 1. That the priests' garments are called here *clothes of service*, *v.* 1. Note, Those that wear robes of honour must look upon them as clothes of service; for those upon whom honour is put, from them service is expected. It is said of those that are arrayed in white robes, that they are *before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple*, *Rev.* 7. 13, 15. Holy garments were not made for men to sleep in, or to strut in, but to do service in; and then they are indeed for glory and beauty. The Son of Man himself *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*. 2. That all the six paragraphs here, which give a distinct account of the making of these holy garments, conclude with those words, *as the Lord commanded Moses, v.* 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31. The like is not in any of the foregoing accounts, as if in these, more than any other of the appurtenances of the tabernacle, they had a particular regard to the divine appointment, both for warrant and for direction. It is an intimation to all the Lord's ministers, to make the word of God

their rule in all their ministrations, and to act in observance of, and obedience to, the command of God. 3. That these garments, in conformity to the rest of the furniture of the tabernacle, were very rich and splendid; the church in its infancy was thus taught, thus pleased, with the rudiments of this world; but now under the gospel, which is the ministration of the spirit, to affect and impose such pompous habits as the church of Rome does, under pretence of decency and instruction, is to betray *the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free*, and to entangle the church again in the bondage of those carnal ordinances, which were imposed only till the time of reformation. 4. That they were all shadows of good things to come, but the substance is Christ, and the grace of the gospel; when therefore the substance is come, it is a jest to be fond of the shadow. (1.) Christ is our great high priest; when he undertook the work of our redemption, he put on the clothes of service—he arrayed himself with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which he received not by measure—girded himself with the curious girdle of resolution, to go through with his undertaking—charged himself with all God's spiritual Israel, bare them on his shoulders, carried them in his bosom, laid them near his heart, engraved them on the palms of his hands, and presented them in the breast-plate of judgment unto his Father. And (lastly) he crowned himself with *holiness to the Lord*, consecrating his whole undertaking to the honour of his Father's holiness; now consider how great this man is. (2.) True believers are spiritual priests. The clean linen with which all their clothes of service must be made, is *the righteousness of saints*; (*Rev.* 19. 8.) and *Holiness to the Lord* must be so written upon their foreheads, that all who converse with them may see, and say, that they bear the image of God's holiness, and are devoted to the praise of it.

32. Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they. 33. And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets, 34. And the covering of rams' skins, dyed red, and the covering of badgers' skins, and the vail of the covering, 35. The ark of the testimony, the staves thereof, and the mercy-seat, 36. The table and all the vessels thereof, and the show-bread, 37. The pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, *even with the* lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light, 38. And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle-door, 39. The brazen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, 40. The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court-gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation, 41. The clothes of service to do service in the holy *place*, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and

his sons' garments, to minister in the priest's office. 42. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. 43. And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.

Observe here,

I. That the builders of the tabernacle made very good despatch. It was not much more than five months from the beginning to the finishing of it. Though there was a great deal of fine work about it, such as is usually the work of time, embroidering and engraving, not only in gold, but in precious stones, yet they went through with it in a little time. Church-work is usually slow work, but they made quick work of this, and yet did it with the greatest exactness imaginable. For, 1. Many hands were employed, all unanimous, and not striving with each other. This expedited the business, and made it easy. 2. The workmen were taught of God, and so were kept from making blunders, which would have retarded them. 3. The people were hearty and zealous in the work, and impatient till it was finished. God had *prepared their hearts*, and then *the thing was done suddenly*, 2 Chron. 29. 36. Resolution and industry, and a cheerful application of mind, will, by the grace of God, bring a great deal of good work to pass in a little time; less than one would expect.

II. That they punctually observe their orders, and did not in the least vary from them. They did it *according to all that the Lord commanded Moses*, v. 32, 42. Note. God's work must be done, in every thing, according to his own will. His institutions neither need nor admit men's inventions to make them either more beautiful, or more likely to answer the intention of them. *Add thou not unto his words*; God is pleased with willing worship, but not with will-worship.

III. That they brought all their work to Moses, and submitted it to his inspection and censure, v. 38. He knew what he had ordered them to make; and now, the particulars were called over, and all produced, that Moses might see both that they had made all, omitting nothing, that they had made all according to the instructions given them, and that, if they had made a mistake in any thing, it might be forthwith rectified. Thus they showed respect to Moses, who was set over them in the Lord; not objecting that Moses did not understand such work, and therefore that there was no reason for submitting it to his judgment; No, that God, who gave them so much knowledge as to do the work, gave them also so much humility as to be willing to have it examined, and compared with the model. Moses was in authority, and they would pay a deference to his place; *The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets*. And besides, though they knew how to do the work better than Moses, Moses had a better and more exact idea of the model than they had, and therefore they could not be well-pleased with their own work, unless they had his approbation. Thus, in all the services of religion, we should *labour to be accepted of the Lord*.

IV. That Moses, upon search, found all done according to the rule, v. 43. Moses, both for their satisfaction and for his own, did look upon all the work, piece by piece, and, behold, they had done it according to the pattern showed him, for the same Being that showed him the pattern guided their hand in the work. All the copies of God's grace exactly agree with the original of his counsels: what

God works in us, and by us, is the fulfilling of the good pleasure of his own goodness; and when the mystery of God shall be finished, and all his performances come to be compared with his purposes, it will appear, that, behold, all is done according to the counsel of his own will, not one iota or tittle of which shall fall to the ground, or be varied from.

V. That Moses blessed them. 1. He commended them, and signified his approbation of all they had do: e. He did not find fault where there was none, as some do, who think they disparage their own judgment, if they do not find something amiss in the best and most accomplished performance. In all this work it is probable there might have been found here and there a stitch amiss, and a stroke awry, which would have served for an over-curious and censorious critic to animadvert upon; but Moses was too candid to notice small faults, where there were no great ones. Note, All governors must be a praise to them that do well, as well as a terror to evil-doers. Why should any take a pride in being hard to be pleased? 2. He not only praised them, but prayed for them. He blessed them as one having authority, for the less is blessed of the better. We read not of any wages that Moses paid them for their work, but this blessing gave them. For though, ordinarily, the labourer be worthy of his hire, yet, in this case, 1. They wrought for themselves. The honour and comfort of God's tabernacle among them would be recompense enough, *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself*. 2. They had their meat from heaven on free cost, for themselves and their families, and their raiment waxed not old upon them, so that they neither needed wages, nor had reason to expect any. *Freely ye have received, freely give*. The obligations we lie under, both in duty and interest, to serve God, are sufficient to quicken us to our work, though we had not a reward in prospect. But, 3. This blessing, in the name of the Lord, was wages enough for all their work. Those whom God employs, he will bless, and those whom he blesses, they are blessed indeed. The blessing he commands is *life forever more*.

CHAP. XL.

In this chapter, I. Orders are given for the setting-up of the tabernacle, and the fixing of all the appurtenances of it in their proper places, (v. 1..8.) and the consecrating of it, (v. 9..11.) and of the priests, v. 12..15. II. Care is taken to do all this, and as it was appointed to be done, v. 16..33. III. God takes possession of it by the cloud, v. 34..38.

1. **AND** the LORD spake unto Moses, **A** saying, 2. On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. 3. And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the veil. 4. And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. 5. And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle. 6. And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt-offering before the door to the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. 7. And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein. 8. And thou shalt

set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court-gate. 9. And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. 10. And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt-offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. 11. And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it. 12. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. 13. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 14. And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: 15. And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood, throughout their generations.

The materials and furniture of the tabernacle had been viewed severally, and approved, and now they must be put together.

1. God here directs Moses to set up the tabernacle, and the utensils of it in their places. Though the work of the tabernacle was finished, and every thing ready for rearing, and the people, no doubt, very desirous to set it up, yet Moses will not do it till he has express orders for the doing of it. It is good to see God going before us in every step, Ps. 37. 23. The time for doing this is fixed to *the first day of the first month*, (v. 2.) which wanted but fourteen days of a year since they came out of Egypt; and a good year's work there was done in it. Probably the work was made ready but just at the end of the year, so that the appointing of this day gave no delay, or next to none, to this good work. We must not put off any necessary duty, under pretence of waiting for some remarkable day, the present season is the most convenient; but the tabernacle happening to be set up *on the first day of the first month*, intimates that it is good to begin the year with some good work. Let him that is the first have the first; and let the things of his kingdom be first sought. In Hezekiah's time we find they began to sanctify the temple *on the first day of the first month*, 2 Chron. 29. 17. The new moon (which by their computation, was the first day of every month) was observed by them with some solemnity; and therefore this first new moon of the year was thus made remarkable. Note, When a new year begins, we should think of serving God more and better than we did the year before.

Moses is particularly ordered to set up the tabernacle itself first, in which God would dwell, and would be served, v. 2. Then to put the ark in its place, and draw the vail before it, v. 3. Then to fix the table, and the candlestick, and the altar of incense, without the vail, (v. 4, 5.) and to fix the hanging of the door before the door. Then in the court he must place the altar of burnt-offering, and the laver, v. 6, 7. And, lastly, He must set up the curtains of the court, and a hanging from the court-gate. And all this would be easily done in one day, many hands, no doubt, being employed in it, under the direction of Moses.

2. He directs Moses, when he had set up the ta-

bernacle and all the furniture of it, to consecrate it and them, by anointing them with the oil which was prepared for the purpose, *ch. 30. 26, &c.* It was there ordered that this should be done, here it was ordered that it should be done *now*, (v. 9. . 11.) Observe, Every thing was sanctified when it was put in its proper place, and not till then, for till then it was not fit for the use to which it was to be sanctified. As every thing is beautiful in its season, so is every thing in its place.

3. He directs him to consecrate Aaron and his sons; when the goods were brought into God's house, they were marked first, and then servants were hired to bear the vessels of the Lord; and they must be clean who were put into that office, v. 12. . 15. The law which was now ordered to be put in execution, we had before, *ch. 29.* Thus, in the visible church, which is God's tabernacle among men, it is requisite that there be ministers to keep the charge of the sanctuary, and that they receive the anointing.

16. Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he. 17. And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up. 18. And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars. 19. And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses. 20. And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark. 21. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses. 22. And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail. 23. And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. 24. And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. 25. And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses. 26. And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation, before the vail: 27. And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses. 28. And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle. 29. And he put the altar of burnt-offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt-offering and the meat-offering; as the LORD commanded Moses. 30. And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash *withal*. 31. And Moses, and Aaron, and his sons, washed their

hands and their feet thereat: 32. When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. 33. And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court-gate. So Moses finished the work.

When the tabernacle and the furniture of it were prepared, they did not put off the rearing of it till they came to Canaan, though they now hoped to be there very shortly; but, in obedience to the will of God, they set it up in the midst of their camp, while they were in the wilderness. Those that are unsettled in the world must not think that that will excuse them in their continued irreligion; as if it were enough to begin to serve God when they begin to be settled in the world: No; a tabernacle for God is a very needful and profitable companion even in a wilderness, especially considering that our carcasses may fall in that wilderness, and we may be fixed in another world before we come to fix in this.

The rearing of the tabernacle was a good day's work; the consecrating of it, and of the priests, was attended to some days after. Here we have an account only of that new-year's day's work. 1. Moses not only did all that God directed him to do, but in the order that God appointed; for God will be sought in the due order. 2. To each particular there is added an express reference to the divine appointment, which Moses governed himself by as carefully and conscientiously as the workmen did; and therefore, as before, so here it is repeated, *as the Lord commanded Moses*, seven times in less than fourteen verses. Moses himself, as great a man as he was, would not pretend to vary from the institution, neither to add to it, nor diminish from it, in the least punctilio. They that command others must remember that their Master also is in heaven, and they must do as they are commanded. 3. That which was to be veiled, he veiled, (v. 21.) and that which was to be used, he used immediately, for the instruction of the priests, that, by seeing him do the several offices, they might learn to do them the more dexterously. Though Moses was not properly a priest, yet he is numbered among the priests, (Ps. 99. 6.) and the Jewish writers call him *the priest of the priests*; what he did he did by special warrant and direction from God, rather as a prophet, or lawgiver, than as a priest. He set the wheels a going, and then left the work in the hands of the appointed ministry. (1.) When he had placed the table, he set the show-bread in order upon it; (v. 23.) for God will never have his table unfurnished. (2.) As soon as he had fixed the candlestick, he *lighted the lamps before the Lord*, v. 25. Even that dark dispensation would not admit of unlighted candles. (3.) The golden altar being put in its place, immediately he *burnt sweet incense thereon*; (v. 27.) for God's altar must be a smoking altar. (4.) The altar of burnt-offering was no sooner set up in the court of the tabernacle, than he had a *burnt-offering, and a meat-offering, ready to offer upon it*, v. 29. Some think, though this is mentioned here, it was not done till some time after; but it seems to me that he immediately began the ceremony of its consecration, though it was not completed for seven days. (5.) At the laver likewise, when he had fixed that, Moses himself washed his hands and feet. Thus, in all these instances, he not only showed the priests how to do their duty, but has taught us that God's gifts are intended for use, and not barely for show. Though the altars, and table, and candle-

stick, were fresh and new, he did not say it was a pity to sully them; no, he handselled them immediately. Talents were given to be occupied, not to be buried.

34. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: 37. But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. 38. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

As when, in the creation, God had finished this earth, which he designed for man's habitation, he made man, and put him in possession of it; so, when Moses had finished the tabernacle, which was designed for God's dwelling-place among men, God came and took possession of it. The *Shechinah*, the divine eternal Word, though not yet made flesh, yet, as a prelude to that event, came and dwelt among them, John 1. 14. This was henceforward the *place of his throne*, and the *place of the soles of his feet*; (Ezek. 43. 7.) here he resided, here he ruled. By the visible tokens of God's coming among them to take possession of the tabernacle, he testified both the return of his favour to them, which they had forfeited by the golden calf, (ch. 32. 7.) and his gracious acceptance of all the expense they had been at, and all the care and pains they had taken about the tabernacle. Thus God owned them, showing himself well-pleased with what they had done, and abundantly rewarded them. Note, God will dwell with those that prepare him a habitation. The broken and contrite heart, the clean and holy heart, that is furnished for his service, and devoted to his honour, shall be his *rest for ever*, here will Christ dwell by faith, Eph. 3. 17. Where God has a throne and an altar in the soul, there is a living temple. And God will be sure to own and crown the operations of his own grace, and the observance of his own appointments.

As God had manifested himself upon mount Sinai, so he did now in this newly-erected tabernacle. We read (ch. 24. 16.) that *the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai*, which is said to be like *devouring fire*, (v. 17.) and that *the cloud covered that glory*. Accordingly, when God descended to take possession of his house, *the cloud covered it on the outside, and the glory of the Lord filled it within*; to which probably there is an allusion, Zech. 2. 5. where God promises to be a *wall of fire round about Jerusalem*, (and the pillar of cloud was by night a pillar of fire,) *and the glory in the midst of her*.

1. *The cloud covered the tent*; that same cloud, which, as the chariot or pavilion of the *Shechinah*, had come up before them out of Egypt, and led them hither, now settled upon the tabernacle, and hovered over it, even in the hottest and clearest day; for it was none of those clouds which the sun scatters. This cloud was intended to be, 1. A token of God's presence, constantly visible day and night (v. 38.) to all Israel, even to those that lay in the

remotest corners of the camp, that they might never again make a question of it, *Is the Lord among us, or is he not?* That very cloud, which had already been so pregnant with wonders in the Red-sea, and on mount Sinai, sufficient to prove God in it of a truth, was continually *in sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys*; so that they were inexcusable if they believed not their own eyes. 2. A concealment of the tabernacle, and the glory of God in it. God did indeed dwell among them, but he dwelt in a cloud; *Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself*. Blessed be God for the gospel of Christ, in which *we all with open face behold, as in a glass, not in a cloud, the glory of the Lord*. 3. A protection of the tabernacle. They had sheltered it with one covering upon another, but, after all, the cloud that covered it was its best guard. Those that dwell in the house of the Lord are hidden there, and are safe under the divine protection, Ps. 27. 4, 5. Yet this, which was then a peculiar favour to the tabernacle, is promised to every dwelling place of mount Zion; (Isa. 4. 5.) *for upon all the glory shall be a defence*. 4. A guide to the camp of Israel in their march through the wilderness, v. 36, 37. While the cloud continued on the tabernacle, they rested; when it removed, they removed and followed it, as being purely under a divine conduct. This is spoken of more fully, Numb. 9. 15, &c. and mentioned with thankfulness, to the glory of God, long afterward, Neh. 9. 19. Ps. 78. 14.—105. 39. As, before the tabernacle was set up, the Israelites had the cloud for their guide, which appeared sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, but from henceforward rested on the tabernacle, and was to be found there only; so the church had divine revelation for its guide from the first, before the scriptures were written; but since the making up of that canon, it rests in that as its tabernacle, and there only it is to be found;

as, in the creation, the light which was made the first day centered in the sun the fourth day. Blessed be God for the law and the testimony!

II. *The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle*, v. 34, 35. The *Shechinah* now made an awful and pompous entry into the tabernacle, through the outer part of which it passed into the most holy place, as the presence-chamber, and there seated itself between the cherubims. It was in light and fire, and (for aught we know) no otherwise, that the *Shechinah* made itself visible; for *God is Light: our God is a consuming Fire*; with these the tabernacle was now filled, yet, as before, the bush was not consumed, so, now, the curtains were not so much as singed by this fire; for to those that have received the anointing, the terrible majesty of God is not destroying. Yet so dazzling was the light, and so dreadful was the fire, that Moses was *not able to enter into the tent of the congregation*, at the door of which he attended, till the splendour was a little abated, and the glory of the Lord retired within the veil, v. 35. This shows how terrible the glory and majesty of God are, and how unable the greatest and best of men are to stand before him. The divine light and fire, let forth in their full strength, will overpower the strongest heads and the purest hearts. But what Moses could not do, in that *he was weak through the flesh*, our Lord Jesus has done, whom God caused to draw near and approach, and who, as the Forerunner, *is for us entered*, and has invited us to come boldly even to the mercy-seat. He was *able to enter into the holy place not made with hands*, (Heb. 9. 24.) nay, he is himself the true Tabernacle, filled with the glory of God, (John 1. 14.) even with the divine grace and truth prefigured by this fire and light. In him the *Shechinah* took up its rest for ever, for in him *dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. Bless ed be God for Jesus Christ.

AN

EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

OF THE THIRD BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED

LEVITICUS.

There is nothing historical in all this book of Leviticus, except the account which it gives us, *ch.* 8, 9. of the consecration of the priesthood; *ch.* 10. of the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, by the hand of God, for offering strange fire; and *ch.* 24. of Shelomith's son, by the hand of the magistrate, for blasphemy. All the rest of the book is taken up with the laws, chiefly the ecclesiastical laws, which God gave to Israel by Moses, concerning their sacrifices and offerings, their meats and drinks, and divers washings, and the other peculiarities, by which God set that people apart for himself, and distinguished them from other nations; all which were shadows of good things to come, which are realized and superseded by the gospel of Christ.—We call the book *Leviticus*, from the Septuagint, because it contains the laws and ordinances of the *Levitical priesthood*, (as it is called, Heb. 7. 11.) and the ministrations of it. The Levites were principally charged with these institutions, both to do *their* part, and to teach the people *theirs*.—We read, in the close of the foregoing book, of the setting up of the tabernacle, which was to be the place of worship; and as that was framed according to the pattern, so must the ordinances of worship be, which were there to be administered