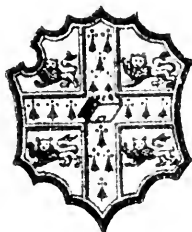


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THE FIRST BOOK

OF

SAMUEL

WITH MAP INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY THE

REV. A. F. KIRKPATRICK, B.D.

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE AND REGIUS  
PROFESSOR OF HEBREW.

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of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, and other records preserved in the Schools of the Prophets, it rests upon the best possible authority. Samuel is the historian of his own life-time, which included the greater part of Saul's reign: Nathan and Gad together give the history of David's reign. The events of David's life must have been familiarly known in the Schools of the Prophets at Ramah. It is expressly mentioned that when he fled from Saul he "came and told Samuel all that Saul had done to him, and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth" (1 Sam. xix. 18), the college of prophets which Samuel had established at Ramah. The vivid account of David's friendship with Jonathan may be preserved almost in the very words in which he related his story to the prophets.

Gad was in communication with David during his outlaw life (1 Sam. xxii. 5); both Gad and Nathan appear to have occupied official positions in David's court (2 Sam. vii. 2 ff., xii. 25, xxiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 8 ff.; 2 Chron. xxix. 25), and both appear as his monitors in important crises of his life (2 Sam. xii. 1 ff., xxiv. 11 ff.).

(b) *The chronicles of king David* (1 Chron. xxvii. 24) may have supplied the formal summaries of wars in 2 Sam. viii. 1—15, and the lists of officials in 2 Sam. viii. 16—18, xx. 23—26, xxiii. 8—39.

(c) It is mentioned in 1 Sam. x. 25 that Samuel committed *the charter of the kingdom* to writing, and "laid it up before the LORD."

(d) From *the national poetic literature* were taken Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 1—10); David's lament for Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 17—27) preserved in the 'Book of Jashar'; David's lament for Abner (2 Sam. iii. 33, 34); David's thanksgiving (2 Sam. xxii. = Ps. xviii.); the last words of David (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7). Whether these were preserved in writing or by oral tradition is uncertain.

(e) *Oral tradition* may have supplied some information.

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

The language points to an early date. Some time however had elapsed since the events narrated in the book occurred. The explanation of archaic terms (1 Sam. ix. 9) and reference to obsolete customs (2 Sam. xiii. 18), as well as the use of the formula "unto this day" (1 Sam. v. 5, vi. 18, xxvii. 6, xxx. 25; 2 Sam. iv. 3, vi. 8, xviii. 18) indicate this.

Probably the book was compiled soon after the Division of the Kingdoms.

6. *The Canonicity of the book* has never been questioned. Its acceptance in the Christian Church rests upon the fact that it formed a part of those Jewish Scriptures, which were received by our Lord and His Apostles. Our Lord appealed to one of the

narratives contained in it as teaching the great principle that the ceremonial law must give way to the law of mercy (Matt. xii. 3, 4; Mk. ii. 25, 26; Lk. vi. 3, 4): the Magnificat shews evident familiarity with the Song of Hannah: St Peter, St Stephen, and St Paul refer to the history contained in it (Acts iii. 24, vii. 46, xiii. 20—22).

7. *The historical accuracy* of the book is remarkably borne out by the internal evidence. The forcible simplicity and grace of the narrative; the vividness with which the actors in the various events stand out before us; the minuteness of detail with regard to time and circumstance; the accurate descriptions of places (remarkably illustrated by the recent surveys of Palestine); all agree to confirm the conclusion arrived at in § 4, that much of the work is derived from the testimony of eyewitnesses and contemporaries.

8. *The text of the book.* None of our manuscripts of the *original Hebrew text* are older than the 10th or possibly the 9th century A.D. But beside these manuscripts we have the ancient *Versions*, or translations into various languages. The most important of these are the Greek Version, called the *Septuagint* (abbreviated as Sept. or LXX); the 'Chaldee' or Aramaic Version, called the *Targum* (Targ.); the Latin Version, called the *Vulgate* (Vulg.). The Sept. frequently represents readings which remove difficulties in the Hebrew text, and have every appearance of being the correct readings. This is also the case, though to a much less extent, with the other Versions. Accordingly the variations of the Sept. and other Versions are noticed in the margin of the Revised Version, when they throw light upon obscure passages.

To some readers it may seem rash to doubt the integrity of the Hebrew text. But the Sept. is really the oldest evidence we possess for the text of the O.T.; and the fact that it was used by the Evangelists and Apostles gives it a special interest.

The Septuagint Version was made at Alexandria during the third and second centuries B.C. It is called the Septuagint, or Version of the *Seventy*, because it was long supposed to have been made by 70 or 72 elders sent from Jerusalem for the purpose. But this story rests on no good authority.

The Targum (i.e. *interpretation* or *translation*) of Jonathan ben Uzziel is a translation into the Aramaic language, which superseded Hebrew in Palestine after the return from the Captivity. It was probably not reduced to writing before the middle of the fourth century A.D., though based on much earlier oral translations.

The Vulgate Latin Version was made by St Jerome (Hieronymus) directly from the Hebrew (A.D. 389—404). The Books of Samuel and Kings were the part first issued.

## II. CONTENTS OF THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

**PART I. THE CLOSE OF THE THEOCRACY: I—VII.**DIVISION I. **The early life of Samuel: i—iv. 1 a.**

§ 1. *Samuel's birth and infancy.* His parents (i. 1—8): Hannah's prayer (i. 9—20): his dedication (i. 21—28): Hannah's thanksgiving (ii. 1—11).

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

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

DIVISION II. **The period of national disaster: iv. 1 b—vii. 1.**

§ 1. *Judgment on the nation and the house of Eli.* Defeat of the army and loss of the ark (iv. 1 b—11): the doom of Eli's house fulfilled in the death of Eli's sons (iv. 11), death of Eli (iv. 12—18), death of Eli's daughter-in-law (iv. 19—22).

§ 2. *The Ark of God.* Chastisement of the Philistines (v. 1—12): their resolution to restore the Ark (vi. 1—9): return of the Ark (vi. 10—18): the penalty of irreverence (vi. 19, 20): settlement of the Ark at Kirjath-Jearim (vi. 21—vii. 1).

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

DIVISION III. **Samuel's official life as Judge: vii. 2—17.**

National repentance and reformation (vii. 2—6): rout of the Philistines at Ebenezer (vii. 7—12): summary account of Samuel's judicial activity (vii. 13—17).

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

**PART II. THE FOUNDATION OF THE MONARCHY: VIII—XXXI.**DIVISION I. **The appointment of the first King: viii—x.**

§ 1. *The demand for a king.* Misgovernment of Samuel's sons, and consequent request of the people (viii. 1—5): Jehovah's answer (viii. 6—9): description of an Oriental Despot (viii. 10—18): persistence of the people in their request (viii. 19—22).

§ 2. *The private choice of Saul by Samuel.* Saul's genealogy (ix. 1, 2): his search for the asses (ix. 3—10): he inquires for Samuel (ix. 11—14): is entertained by Samuel (ix. 15—24): is anointed by Samuel, and promised three signs in confirmation of his call (ix. 25—x. 8): fulfilment of the signs (x. 9—16).



§ 3. *The election of Saul by lot at Mizpah.* The assembly at Mizpah (x. 17—19): Saul chosen by lot (x. 20—23): installed as king (x. 24—27).

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

#### DIVISION II. **Saul's reign till his rejection: xi—xv.**

§ 1. *The establishment of Saul's kingdom.* Defeat of the Ammonites under the leadership of Saul (xi. 1—11): confirmation of Saul as king at Gilgal (xi. 12—15): Samuel's farewell conference with the people in which he asserts his official integrity (xii. 1—5), rebukes the people for their faithlessness (xii. 6—12), offers warning and encouragement for the future (xii. 13—25).

§ 2. *The war of independence.* The revolt from the Philistines (xiii. 1—7): Saul's disobedience and its penalty (xiii. 8—14): the Philistine invasion (xiii. 15—18): the disarmament of the Israelites (xiii. 19—23): Jonathan's exploit at Michmash (xiv. 1—15): rout of the Philistines (xiv. 16—23): Saul's rash oath and its consequences (xiv. 24—46).

§ 3. *Summary account of Saul's reign.* His wars (xiv. 47, 48): his family (xiv. 49—52).

§ 4. *The rejection of Saul.* The commission to destroy Amalek (xv. 1—9): the penalty of disobedience (xv. 10—23): the kingdom rent from Saul (xv. 24—31): the execution of Agag (xv. 32, 33): Samuel's parting from Saul (xv. 34, 35).

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

#### DIVISION III. **Saul's decline and David's rise: xvi—xxxii.**

§ 1. *David chosen as Saul's successor.* Samuel's mission to Bethlehem (xvi. 1—5): the family of Jesse (xvi. 6—11): David anointed by Samuel (xvi. 12, 13).

§ 2. *David's introduction to the court.* Saul troubled by an evil spirit (xvi. 14—18): David summoned to soothe him with music (xvi. 19—23).

§ 3. *David's advancement.* The Philistine invasion (xvii. 1—3): the challenge of Goliath (xvii. 4—11): David's errand to the camp (xvii. 12—31): he volunteers to fight the giant (xvii. 32—37): the victory of Faith (xvii. 38—51): the flight of the Philistines (xvii. 52—54): Saul's inquiry about David (xvii. 55—58): Jonathan's friendship for David (xviii. 1—5): the celebration of the victory (xviii. 6—9).

§ 4. *Saul's growing jealousy of David.* Saul's attempt on David's life (xviii. 10, 11): David's promotion and popularity (xviii. 12—16): Saul offers his daughter Merab to David (xviii. 17—19): Saul's treacherous design against David's life; David's marriage with Michal (xviii. 20—30): Saul's purpose to kill David (xix. 1—3): Jonathan's intercession (xix. 4—7): Saul's attempt on David's life (xix. 8—11): David's escape by the aid of Michal (xix. 12—17): David's flight to Ramah; Saul's pursuit (xix. 18—24): David's consultation with Jonathan (xx. 1—10): renewal of the covenant

between David and Jonathan (xx. 11—23): Saul's intention tested by Jonathan (xx. 24—34): the parting between Jonathan and David (xx. 35—42).

§ 5. *David's outlaw life.* David's flight to Nob (xxi. 1—9), to Gath (xxi. 10—15): David with his followers in the cave of Adullam (xxii. 1, 2), in Moab (xxii. 3, 4), in the land of Judah (xxii. 5): Saul's vengeance on the priests of Nob (xxii. 6—19): Abiathar's flight to David (xxii. 20—23): David's rescue of Keilah (xxiii. 1—6): treachery of the Keilites (xxiii. 7—15): David's last meeting with Jonathan (xxiii. 16—18): David in the wilderness of Ziph betrayed by the Ziphites (xxiii. 19—24), providentially escapes from Saul (xxiii. 25—28): David at Engedi (xxiii. 29), spares Saul's life in the cave (xxiv. 1—8), protests his innocence (xxiv. 9—15): Saul's remorse (xxiv. 16—22): Samuel's death and burial (xxv. 1).

Nabal and Abigail. Nabal's folly (xxv. 2—13): Abigail's prudence (xxv. 14—35): the death of Nabal (xxv. 36—38): Abigail's marriage to David (xxv. 39—44).

Saul's fresh pursuit of David. Treachery of the Ziphites (xxvi. 1—4): Saul's life again spared (xxvi. 5—12): David's final expostulation with Saul (xxvi. 13—25).

David as a Philistine vassal. His flight to Achish (xxvii. 1—4): residence at Ziklag (xxvii. 5—7): raids on the neighbouring tribes (xxvii. 8—12).

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

§ 6. *Last scenes of Saul's life.* The Philistine muster (xxviii. 1, 2): Saul's resort to the witch of Endor (xxviii. 3—25). David dismissed from the Philistine army (xxix. 1—11): finds Ziklag plundered (xxx. 1—6): the pursuit (xxx. 7—15): the rescue (xxx. 16—20): the distribution of the spoil (xxx. 21—31). Death of Saul and his sons in the battle of Gilboa (xxxi. 1—6): exposure of their bodies (xxxi. 7—10): their rescue and burial by the men of Jabesh (xxxi. 11—13).

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

### III. CHRONOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

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

There is however no systematic chronology, and the dates cannot be fixed with any certainty. The following is suggested as a conjectural arrangement, reckoning back from 1055 as the date of David's accession.

Birth of Samuel, 1149 B.C.; death of Eli, 1127; Philistine oppression (1 Sam. vii. 1), 1127—1107; Samuel's judgeship, 1107—1087; rule of his sons, 1087—1077; Saul's election, 1077; David's anointing, 1065; Samuel's death, at the age of 90, (?) 1059; Saul's death and David's accession, 1055.

Only 22 years are here assigned to Saul's reign. If the 40 years named in Acts xiii. 21 is to be accepted as a trustworthy Jewish tradition of the length of Saul's reign (or that of his dynasty, Saul  $32\frac{1}{2}$  + Ishbosheth  $7\frac{1}{2}$ ), the judgeship of Samuel and his sons must be curtailed, or Samuel's birth placed earlier.

#### IV. THE LIFE AND WORK OF SAMUEL.

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

2. Samuel's childhood saw the period of Jewish history which Josephus calls the Theocracy (i.e. the direct government of the nation by God without a permanent earthly ruler) closed with the overthrow of the Sanctuary at Shiloh. The age of the Judges, with which that period ended, had demonstrated that the people were as yet unfit for so lofty a form of government. If the national life was to continue, a change must be effected. Samuel was the divinely appointed instrument of that change.

3. His life may be divided into four periods. (i) *The Preparation*. The son given in answer to Hannah's prayers was dedicated to Jehovah before his birth. The training for his life-work began from his infancy. As soon as he could leave his mother, he was placed in Eli's charge at the Tabernacle in Shiloh. At the age of twelve (according to tradition) he received his first revelation from Jehovah, the stern message of doom against his foster-father's guilty house. The blow fell. The disastrous battle of Aphek brought Israel once more under the Philistine yoke. The Ark was captured, and though sent back after a brief interval, remained unnoticed in a private house. The twenty years which followed are a blank in the history of the nation. The people appear to have abandoned themselves to despair, and sought a vain refuge in the worship of Baalim and Ashtaroth.

4. (ii) *The Reformation*. At length Samuel broke the lethargy of despair, and summoned the nation to repent. He assembled them at Mizpah, and besought the LORD to pardon them. The Philistines, suspecting rebellion, marched against

them. God once more fought for Israel, and the Stone of Help between Mizpah and Shen attested to posterity that the LORD's Presence was once more among His people.

Now commenced Samuel's Judgeship. He established law, order, and religious worship in the land. No breath of slander could impeach the integrity of his administration.

5. (iii) *The Foundation of the Kingdom.* But his sons brought disgrace upon their father's age. Alleging their misconduct as the ostensible motive, the people came to Samuel and demanded a king. He felt that it was an act of ingratitude to himself: still more keenly did he feel that it was an act of unfaithfulness to Jehovah. In this strait he prayed for counsel. The answer came, "Make them a king." Without murmuring he acquiesced in being the instrument of his own deposition, and prepared to guide the nation through this crisis of its history. So quietly was the change effected, that we scarcely realise the importance of the movement which developed the tribal confederacy of Israel into a regularly constituted monarchy.

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

7. The establishment of the kingdom was but half the legacy which Samuel left to Israel. The age of the Monarchy was to be also the age of the Prophets. From the time of Samuel onwards (Acts iii. 24) till the voice of prophecy ceased with Malachi there was a regular succession of prophets, maintained by the institutions commonly known as the Schools of the Prophets.

8. Samuel, although only a Levite and not a Priest, performed priestly functions. He constantly offered sacrifice, and that in various places, though the Law prescribed that sacrifice should be offered by the priests and in one place only. This double anomaly is to be explained by the exceptional character of Samuel's commission, and by the exceptional circumstances of the age. (a) The sins of Eli's sons had so degraded the priesthood, that Samuel received an extraordinary commission to supersede the priesthood for a time. From the

battle of Aphek till the middle of Saul's reign we do not so much as hear of a priest. The prerogative of Aaron's family was in abeyance, and the high-priest's place was practically taken by Samuel. (b) The existence of numerous places for religious worship was a result of the abandonment of Shiloh. The old centre ceased to exist with the fall of the old order of things; the choice of a new one would have been premature before the new kingdom was firmly established.

9. Samuel passed to his rest in a good old age, followed by the universal reverence of the nation. "All the Israelites," says the narrative with peculiar emphasis, "were gathered together and lamented him" (1 Sam. xxv. 1).

The last representative of the old Judges, the first of the regular succession of Prophets, the inaugurator of the new monarchy, he occupied the most trying of all positions, to stand between the Old and the New, and to mediate successfully between them.

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

## V. SAUL.

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

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

2. It is probable that we have no record of the first part of Saul's reign, and that it was not until ten or fifteen years had elapsed, that the war of independence against the Philistines began. In it there appear all too plainly the signs of that rashness and self-will which proved his ruin. At the outset in defiance of an express command he failed to wait for Samuel's arrival at Gilgal to sanction the commencement of the war.

Later on his rash vow on the battle-field nearly cost Jonathan his life, hindered the effectual pursuit of the Philistines, and tempted the people into sin.

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

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

4. At this juncture David was brought to court to soothe Saul's madness by his minstrelsy. But the madness grew worse. In his ungovernable fury he slew the priests of God (1 Sam. xxii. 6 ff.), and massacred the Gibeonites, to whom the faith of Israel had been plighted (2 Sam. xxi. 1). David was driven from his home to range as an outlaw in the mountains, and finally compelled to take refuge in the court of a heathen prince.

5. At length the end came. Deserted by God, Saul became the prey of dark superstition, and sought counsel from one of those necromancers whom in his early zeal he had striven to extirpate. The last scene on Gilboa, when the once brave hero's heart fails him, and he seeks death by his own hand, is a sad conclusion to a life which opened with such brilliant promise.

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

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

## VI. DAVID.

1. The life and character of David are presented to us with a completeness which has no parallel in the Old Testament. Not only have we a full biography of his outward life, written in all probability by the companions who shared his perils and his exaltation (see § i. 4), but the secrets of his inner life with its hopes and fears, its struggles and triumphs, are re-

vealed to us in the outpourings of his heart preserved in the Book of Psalms.

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

2. (i) *Home life at Bethlehem.* The solitary hours spent by the shepherd lad on the hills of Bethlehem left a deep impress on his character. Even in that simple duty he was conscious of a divine call. He kept his flock as a charge from God. In conscious dependence upon God he knew no fear in the path of duty. This was the secret of the courage which emboldened him to face Goliath.

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

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

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

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

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

6. David is a striking contrast to Saul. With all his native generosity and courage, Saul had a hard and narrow heart. He was incapable of wide sympathy or deep contrition. David's heart was thoroughly human. The endless variety of his Psalms reaches through all the range of the emotions, has some affinity for every type of character. David fell into sin, but sincere penitence ever restored him to communion with God: Saul's regret for his sin was prompted by a fear lest he should be degraded in the eyes of his people (1 Sam. xv. 30 contrasted with 2 Sam. xii. 13).

Saul's religion was a slavish formalism, leading to a superstitious fear. He never loved God. David "thoroughly believed in God as a living and righteous Being." "In all his works he praised the Holy One most high with words of glory; with his whole heart he sung songs and loved Him that made him" (Ecclus. xlvii. 8).

7. A sketch of this period of David's life would be incomplete indeed without mention of his friendship with Jonathan. This deep love was based on a common faith. Jonathan like David found his strength in God. Their covenant was a "covenant of Jehovah" (1 Sam. xiv. 6, 12, xx. 8). Jonathan rejoiced in the prospect of David's advancement without a shadow of jealousy, because he saw it was God's will. No suspicion of selfishness tainted that noble friendship. The tenderness of the son in some measure effaced the hard treatment of the father: and when they fell together on the fatal field of Mount Gilboa, David could enshrine their memories together in the most touching requiem of the whole Bible.



# THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED,

## THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

**N**OW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of 1  
mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of  
Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph,  
an Ephrathite: and he had two wives; the name of the one 2  
was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and  
Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. And 3  
this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to

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**1—8.** The book begins with an account of Samuel's parents and their home at Ramah. Notice their piety; Hannah's trial in having no children; Peninnah's mean and cruel behaviour.

**1.** *Ramathaim-zophim*] *Ramathaim* (= 'two heights,') is another name for *Ramah* (= 'a height'), the birthplace (*v.* 19), residence (*vii.* 17), and burial-place (*xxv.* 1) of the prophet Samuel. It is also called *Ramathaim in Zuph* (*ix.* 5). It probably lay five or six miles N. or N.W. of Jerusalem, in the territory of Benjamin.

*mount Ephraim*] **The hill country of Ephraim** (R.V.) was the central mountainous district of Palestine, in which the tribe of Ephraim settled (*Josh.* xvii. 15). The limestone hills are intersected by fertile valleys, watered by innumerable fountains, and still remarkable for their fertility. The name extended southward to the territory of Benjamin in which Ramah lay. Cp. *Judg.* iv. 5. *an Ephrathite*] R.V. **an Ephraimite**. The Levite Elkanah is so called because his family had settled in Ephraim (*Josh.* xxi. 20).

**2.** *two wives*] Polygamy, though at variance with the original institution of marriage (*Gen.* ii. 24), was tolerated by the Mosaic law as an existing custom (*Deut.* xxi. 15—17). *Hannah*] i.e. 'Grace.' The same name is borne in the N.T. by "Anna, a prophetess" (*Luke* ii. 36). *Peninnah*] i.e. 'Coral,' or 'Pearl.' Compare *Margaret*, which means *pearl*.

**3.** *yearly*] R.V. **from year to year**. The Law required every male to appear "before Jehovah" at each of the three great Feasts (*Ex.* xxxiv. 23; *Deut.* xvi. 16); but there is no evidence that this command was ever strictly observed, and Elkanah's practice was probably that of a pious Israelite of the time. "All his household" (*v.* 21) went with him, in obedience to the injunctions of *Deut.* xii. 10—12. Our Lord's parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover (*Luke* ii. 41).

sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, <sup>4</sup> were there. And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her <sup>5</sup> daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a worthy por-

*LORD*] Whenever LORD and GOD are printed in capital letters in the O.T., they represent the Sacred Name JEHOVAH, by which God revealed Himself to the Israelites at the Exodus (Ex. iii. 14 ff.). Owing to a mistaken interpretation of Lev. xxiv. 16, the Jews avoided pronouncing this Name, and substituted for it *Adonai* ('Lord'), or in certain cases *Elohim* ('God'). This practice was followed by the ancient versions, and in general by the A.V. The true pronunciation of the Name is probably not *Jehovah*, but *Yahveh*; but it is less important to know the correct pronunciation, than to remember that LORD and GOD in the A.V. represent the great Name of God as the Covenant-God of Israel. *the*

*LORD of hosts*] The title *Jehovah Tsebâôth* translated "LORD of hosts" meets us here for the first time in the O.T. The Sept. sometimes left the word for *hosts* untranslated; and hence the form "Lord of Sabaoth" with which we are familiar from Rom. ix. 29; James v. 4; and the Te Deum. What then is the meaning of the title? The word *hosts* denotes (1) *earthly hosts* or *armies*, as in Ex. vii. 4; Ps. xlv. 9; (2) *heavenly hosts*: either (a) *celestial bodies*, sun, moon and stars, as in Gen. ii. 1; Deut. iv. 19; Is. xl. 26; or (b) *celestial beings*, angels, as in Josh. v. 14; 1 Kings xxii. 19; Ps. cxlviii. 2. Taking 'hosts' in its widest sense, as including both earthly and heavenly hosts, we may see in the title a proclamation of the universal sovereignty of Jehovah. It includes the thought that this sovereign power was specially exercised on behalf of His own people, and that the LORD of Hosts was the "God of the armies of Israel" (1 Sam. xvii. 45). For us its lesson is that "heaven and earth are full of the majesty of God's glory." Cp. Is. vi. 3; Rev. iv. 6—11. *in Shiloh*] Shiloh (now *Seilûn*) was

in the land of Ephraim, between Bethel and Shechem (Judg. xxi. 19). Here in the territory of the most powerful tribe, in the heart of the promised land, the whole congregation of Israel met and set up the Tabernacle, the last relic of their wanderings in the desert (Josh. xviii. 1). The name was appropriate. Shiloh means *Rest*. After the battle of Ebenezer it ceased to be the national sanctuary. The tabernacle was removed to Nob (1 Sam. xxi.), and the once holy place was utterly desecrated. See Jer. vii. 12.

**4. R.V. And when the day came that Elkanah sacrificed.** His sacrifice was a thank-offering, or peace-offering (Lev. vii. 11—18). *he gave*] The Heb. in *vv.* 4—7 expresses *repeated* action: "**he used to give: her adversary used to provoke her.**" *portions*] of the victims sacrificed. Comp. ix. 23.

**5. a worthy portion**] R.V. **a double portion.** Joseph distinguished Benjamin by sending him a fivefold portion (Gen. xliii. 34). But the meaning of the Heb. is doubtful, and accordingly the R.V. gives in the margin the reading of the Sept.: "a single portion,

tion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I better to thee than ten sons?

So Hannah rose up after *they* had eaten in Shiloh, and after *they* had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his

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because she had no child: howbeit Elkanah loved &c." *had shut up her womb*] Childlessness was regarded as a severe trial in ancient times. See Gen. xvi. 1, xxx. 1; Judg. xiii. 2.

**6. R.V. And her rival provoked her sore.** Peninnah was jealous of Hannah, and took her revenge by taunting her with her childlessness. Ridiculing another person's misfortunes is one of the most detestable forms of meanness. **7. *did not eat***] She refused to take any part in the rejoicings of the sacrificial feast. **8. *better &c.***] Comp. Ruth iv. 15.

**9—11.** Hannah takes the wisest course, and carries her trouble to God. She left the feast for which she had no heart, and went to pray. **9. *Eli the priest***] Eli belonged to the house of Ithamar, Aaron's fourth son. He united the offices of Priest and Judge.

*upon a seat &c.*] **R.V. upon his seat by the door post of the temple.** "The sanctuary itself was so encased with buildings, as to give it the name and appearance of 'a house' or 'temple.' There was a gateway with a seat inside the doorposts or pillars which supported it....Here Eli sat on days of religious or political solemnity, and surveyed the worshippers as they came up the eminence on which the sanctuary was placed." *Stanley.*

**11. *vowed a vow***] Vows, or voluntary promises to make some special offering to God as a token of thankfulness for an answer to prayer, or for some particular mercy, are a natural expression of earnest devotion. For the law of vows see Num. xxx., and comp. Deut. xxiii. 21—23; Eccl. v. 4, 5.

*look on the affliction of thine handmaid*] The words of the Virgin Mary, "he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaiden" (Luke i. 48), are taken from the Sept. rendering of this passage. *I will give him*]

The vow is twofold. (1) The child is to be consecrated to a *life-long* service of Jehovah. (2) He is to be a *Nazirite*, and as such must (a) abstain from intoxicating drinks, as an act of self-denial, and a protest against sensual indulgence; (b) let his hair grow long, in token that he was specially dedicated to God; (c) avoid

12 life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. And it  
 came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that  
 13 Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart;  
 only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore  
 14 Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her,  
 How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from  
 15 thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a  
 woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor  
 strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.  
 16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of  
 the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken  
 17 hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the  
 God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of  
 18 him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy  
 sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her  
 19 countenance was no more *sad*. And they rose up in the  
 morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned,  
 and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew  
 20 Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. Wherefore  
 it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah  
 had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name  
 Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD.  
 21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer  
 22 unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah

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defilement by a dead body, as a token of absolute purity of life. See Num. vi. This vow was usually taken for a limited time only, but Samson, Samuel, and St John the Baptist were dedicated to a perpetual Nazirate from their birth.

**12—18.** Eli's hasty judgment. A warning against entertaining uncharitable suspicions of other people's conduct.

**12.** *continued praying*] Lit. "multiplied to pray," i.e. "prayed long and earnestly." Comp. Lk. xviii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 17.

**13.** *Eli thought &c.*] Silent prayer was not usual.

**15.** *of a sorrowful spirit*] Lit. "heavy of spirit." Though unjustly accused, Hannah answers the high-priest reverently.

*poured out my soul*] Given vent to my inmost feelings, my sorrow, and my desires. Comp. Ps. lxii. 8. **16.** *a daughter of Belial*]

i.e. as R.V. marg. **a wicked woman.** "Belial" means *worthlessness*, and a son or daughter of *worthlessness* signifies "a worthless man or woman," and with positively bad sense, a lawless, ungodly, wicked person. *grief*] R.V. **provocation:** comp. v. 6.

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

**19—23.** Prayer answered. **19.** *to Ramah*] See on v. 1.

*remembered her*] Cp. Gen. xxx. 22. **20.** *Wherefore*] Simply,

as R.V., **And.** *Samuel*] The Latin form of the Hebrew *Shemuel*. (Num. xxxiv. 20; 1 Chr. vii. 2.) It means 'Name of God' or 'Heard of God.' Comp. *Ishmael* = 'God heareth.' Hannah gives the child a name which will be a continual memorial of God's answer

went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. And 23 Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, 24 she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him *unto* the house of the LORD *in* Shiloh: and the child *was* young. And they 25 slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O 26 my lord, *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, *I am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I 27 prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I

to her prayer. 22. *until the child be weaned*] According to Eastern practice not till he was two or three years old. Samuel was to be dedicated at the earliest possible age. The house of God was to be the only home he knew. *for ever*] i.e. "as long as he liveth" (v. 28).

23. *his word*] Samuel's birth shewed that Hannah's prayer was heard, and Elkanah prays that it may receive a complete fulfilment. *abode*] R.V. **tarried**; waited at home.

24—28. The vow performed. 24. *three bullocks*] One for a burnt-offering, one for the "sacrifice in performing a vow," and one for a peace-offering. See Num. xv. 8. But Sept. and Syr. read, *a bullock of three years old.*

*one ephah of flour*] R.V. **meal**. The ephah probably contained about 4½ gallons. Three tenth parts of an ephah of flour were to be offered with each bullock (Num. xv. 9).

*a bottle of wine*] i.e. a skin-bottle, holding a considerable quantity. The drink-offering with each bullock was half an hin (Num. xv. 10), i.e. about three pints.

25. *they slew a bullock*] R.V. **the bullock**; viz. the one brought as a dedicatory offering with the child. We may try to picture the scene. Elkanah leads the bullock to the north side of the altar of burnt-offering, which stood in the court before the door of the tabernacle, and binds it to the horns of the altar (Ps. cxviii. 27). Hannah brings her child, and lays his hand on the head of the victim in token that it is his representative; at that moment Elkanah or one of the priests slays it (Lev. i. 5). Its blood is sprinkled and its limbs burnt upon the altar, as an emblem of the complete dedication of the child to Jehovah.

26. *as thy soul liveth*] An oath peculiar to the books of Samuel and Kings. *that stood by thee*] Prayer was offered either (a) *standing*, as by Hannah, and Abraham (Gen. xviii. 22), comp. Mt. vi. 5; Mk. xi. 25; Lk. xviii. 11: (b) *kneeling*, as by Solomon (1 Kings viii. 54), and by Daniel (Dan. vi. 10); comp. Acts ix. 40; xx. 36; xxi. 5: (c) *prostrate*, as by Moses and Aaron (Num. xvi. 22), and by our Lord (Matt. xxvi. 39).

28 asked of him: therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he *shall be* lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

- 2 And Hannah prayed, and said,  
 My heart rejoiceth in the LORD,  
 Mine horn is exalted in the LORD:  
 My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;  
 Because I rejoice in thy salvation.
- 2 *There is none* holy as the LORD:  
 For *there is none* beside thee:  
 Neither *is there* any rock like our God.

**28. R.V. therefore I also have granted him to the LORD: as long as he liveth he is granted to the LORD:** i.e. 'Jehovah gave me the child, and I restore him in accordance with my vow.' The word translated *lend* in the A.V. means *give* rather than *lend*, as in Ex. xii. 36. *he worshipped*] Elkanah, as head of the household, worshipped. But several ancient authorities read **they**.

II. 1—11. The Song of Hannah. Hannah's song is a true prophecy. Her deliverance from her adversary was an illustration of the great principles of Jehovah's government of the world. Hence her own circumstances are soon lost sight of in a wider view of the dealings of God's Providence. A brief analysis will help to explain the connexion of thought: "JEHOVAH is the author of my deliverance; He shall be the theme of my song (*v.* 1). There is none to be compared with Him: be silent before Him, all ye proud boasters! He knows your thoughts and weighs your actions (*vv.* 2, 3). Observe the vicissitudes of human fortune: this is JEHOVAH's doing: for He is the Almighty Governor of the world. He guards His saints, and destroys the wicked (*vv.* 4—10). May He finally discomfit His adversaries, judge the world, and establish the kingdom of His Anointed One!" (*v.* 10). The Magnificat (Luke i. 46—55) should be compared with Hannah's song. Ps. cxliii. forms a connecting link between the two.

1. *And Hannah prayed*] Prayer includes thanksgiving and praise. Comp. Hab. iii. 1; Ps. lxxii. 20. *rejoiceth*] R.V. **exulteth.** *mine horn &c.*] = 'I am brought to great honour, and the author of that honour is Jehovah.' The *horn* is used as a symbol (*a*) of *strength* (Deut. xxxiii. 17): (*b*) of *honour* (Job xvi. 15). "To exalt the horn" signifies "to raise to a position of power or dignity." Comp. Ps. lxxxix. 17, cxlviii. 14. The figure is derived from horned animals, tossing their heads in the air. There is no allusion to the horns worn by women in the East at the present day.

*my mouth &c.*] Lit. "My mouth is **opened wide against** mine enemies;" I am no longer put to silence in their presence. Comp. Ps. xxxviii. 13, 14. *thy salvation*] Cp. Luke i. 47. "Salvation" in the O.T. means (*a*) *deliverance* from dangers or adversities (ch. xiv. 45); (*b*) *help*, the power by which the deliverance is effected, whether divine or human (Ps. xxxv. 3). 2. *rock*] A frequent metaphor to describe the strength, faithfulness, and unchangeableness of Jehovah. See Deut. xxxii. 4; 2 Sam. xxii. 32.

Talk no more *so* exceeding proudly; 3  
 Let *not* arrogancy come out of your mouth:  
 For the LORD *is* a God of knowledge,  
 And by him actions are weighed.  
 The bows of the mighty *men* are broken, 4  
 And they that stumbled are girt with strength.  
*They that were full* have hired out themselves for bread; 5  
 And *they that were hungry* ceased:  
 So that the barren hath born seven;  
 And she that hath many children is waxed feeble.  
 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: 6  
 He bringeth down *to the grave*, and bringeth up.  
 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: 7  
 He bringeth low, and lifteth up.  
 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, 8  
 And lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill,  
 To set *them* among princes,  
 And to make them inherit the throne of glory:

3. *arrogancy*] An old form of *arrogance* (comp. *innocency* for *innocence*). It signifies "claiming more than one's due," "assumption," "pride." *knowledge*] The Heb. word is plural, denoting *varied and extensive knowledge*. *by him actions are weighed*] Jehovah knows the hearts of men and estimates men's actions at their true value. See Prov. xvi. 2, xxiv. 12. Another reading is *though actions be not weighed* (R.V. marg.), i.e. though men do not consider what they are doing. But the text is preferable.

4, 5. This knowledge and justice apportion to all their due, and reverse conditions of life contrary to all expectation.

4. *The bows &c.*] The bow was one of the chief weapons of war (2 Sam. i. 22). Its being broken is a natural symbol of defeat. *girt with strength* (Ps. xviii. 39) a figure derived from the practice of "girding up the loins" for active exertion. 5. *ceased*] R.V. **have ceased**, i.e. to be hungry; or (R.V. marg.) *have rest*. *so that*] R.V. **yea**. *seven*] A perfect family. Comp. Ruth iv. 15. *is waxed feeble*]. R. V. **languisheth**. By the loss of her children. Comp. Jer. xv. 9.

6—8. In Jehovah's hand are the issues of life and death, prosperity and adversity. 6. *the grave*] The Heb. word *Sheol*, variously rendered in the E.V. *grave, hell, pit*, denotes the mysterious unseen world, the abode of all departed spirits, righteous and wicked alike. There is no direct allusion here to the resurrection: death and Sheol are figuratively used for the depths of adversity and peril: life for deliverance and prosperity. See Ps. lxxi. 20, lxxxvi. 13.

8. *to set them &c.*] R.V. **To make them sit with princes, and inherit &c.** "To sit in the dust" (Is. xlvi. 1) or "on the dunghill" (Lam. iv. 5) are Oriental figures for extreme degradation and misery, derived from the practice of mourners (Job ii. 8): to share the company of princes and occupy a throne of honour (Job xxxvi. 7) are metaphors for advancement

- For the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD's,  
 And he hath set the world upon them.  
 9 He will keep the feet of his saints,  
 And the wicked shall be silent in darkness;  
 For by strength shall no man prevail.  
 10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces;  
 Out of heaven shall he thunder upon them:  
 The LORD shall judge the ends of the earth;  
 And he shall give strength unto his king,  
 And exalt the horn of his anointed.  
 11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did  
 minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.  
 12 Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the  
 13 LORD. And the priests' custom with the people *was, that*

and prosperity. Ps. cxiii. 7—9 is copied almost verbatim from these verses. Comp. too Ps. lxxv. 6, 7. *for the pillars &c.*] The creation and maintenance of the natural framework of the earth by Jehovah are a guarantee for His moral government among men. Comp. Ps. lxxv. 3. "Pillars of the earth" (comp. Job ix. 6) is a poetical metaphor derived from the construction of a house (Jud. xvi. 26).

9. It is JEHOVAH who guards His chosen ones from stumbling in their walk through life (Ps. lvi. 13, xci. 12); it is He who leaves the wicked to languish in adversity (Job v. 14) or perish miserably (Ps. xxxi. 17, lv. 23); for apart from Him or in opposition to Him human strength is impotence (Zech. iv. 6). *his saints*] R.V. **his holy ones:** marg. *godly ones.* *shall be silent*] R.V. **shall be put to silence.**

10. R.V. **They that strive with the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them shall he thunder in heaven.** *his anointed*] Here first in connexion with the kingly office do we meet the word which was to become the characteristic title of the expected deliverer, the "Messiah" or "Anointed One," "the Christ." The mention of Jehovah's judgments leads up to the thought of those who are His instruments for executing them. Hannah's prophetic prayer was but partially fulfilled in the king soon to be anointed by her son as the deliverer of Israel: it reaches forward to Him whom the Jewish kings foreshadowed, the King Messiah, in whom alone the lofty anticipations of the prophetess are to be completely realised.

12—17. The faithless priests of Shiloh. 12. *sons of Belial*] **wicked men.** See note on i. 16. *they knew not the LORD*] Were ignorant of His character and so despised His laws. Comp. Judg. ii. 10; Job xviii. 21; Hos. iv. 1. R.V. marg. *they knew not the LORD, nor the due of the priests from the people.* *When any man &c.*

13. *the priests' custom &c.*] The law directed the worshipper to present to the priest the fat of the victim along with the breast and shoulder (Lev. vii. 29—34). The fat was to be burned on the altar to Jehovah (Lev. iii. 3—5); the breast and shoulder, after being 'waved' and 'heaved,' a ceremony of dedication to Jehovah, became the priest's portion. Hophni and Phinehas



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

But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded 18 *with* a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little 19 coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli 20

robbed the people, by seizing a further portion; and insulted Jehovah by demanding their share before the parts consecrated to Him had been duly burned upon the altar (*v.* 15). *seething*] i.e. *boiling*.

14. *strooke*] An old form of *struck*. *for himself*] So the Sept. and Vulg. The Heb. has **therewith** (R.V.). 15. *Also*] R.V. **Yea**. The climax of their transgression was the offence against Jehovah. *sodden*] *Boiled*: the perf. of 'seethe' is 'sod' (Gen. xxv. 29), and the past partic. 'sodden.'

16. *presently*] i.e. immediately: the usual meaning of the word in the A.V., e.g. Matt. xxvi. 53. R.V. marg. **first**. *then &c.*] R.V. **then he would say, Nay**. Or, according to another reading (R.V. marg.), *he would say unto him, Thou &c.* 17. *Wherefore*] R.V. **And**. *the young men*] Hophni and Phinehas. *men abhorred*] Or, as R.V. marg., **the men despised**. Corruption in the priesthood begets profanity in the people. Comp. Mal. ii. 8, 9.

18—21. Samuel's ministry in the tabernacle. Observe the contrast between Samuel and the sons of Eli. We see the child attending upon Eli in the sanctuary, growing before the LORD, in favour both with the LORD and with men, chosen to be God's messenger to Eli, and finally re-establishing the broken intercourse between Jehovah and His people. On the other hand we see Hophni and Phinehas abusing their sacred office, sinking from rapacity and profanity to open profligacy, unchecked by warning, and at last perishing by the hands of the Philistines. 18. *a linen ephod*] The ephod was a garment covering the shoulders, and secured round the waist by a girdle. It was the distinctive dress of priests (*v.* 28, ch. xxii. 18), but was occasionally worn by others engaged in religious ceremonies, e.g. David (2 Sam. vi. 14). The high-priest wore a special ephod (Ex. xxviii. 6 ff.).

19. *a little coat*] R.V. **a little robe**: a kind of long upper tunic, worn by kings (1 Chr. xv. 27), prophets (1 Sam. xv. 27), men of position (Job ii. 12), women of rank (2 Sam.

- blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD.
- 21 And they went unto their own home. And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.
- 22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled
- 23 at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil
- 24 dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: *ye* make the LORD's people to transgress.
- 25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their
- 26 father, because the LORD would slay them. And the child

xiii. 18). **20.** *for the loan &c.*] Or, as R.V. marg., **for the petition which was asked for the LORD:** i.e. in place of Samuel, for whom she prayed in order to dedicate him to God. Comp. i. 11, 27, 28, and note on v. 28. **21.** *grew before the LORD*] Three stages of physical, moral (v. 26), and spiritual (iii. 19—21) growth are marked.

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

**22.** *heard*] Lit. "**used to hear** all that his sons **were doing**," constantly and habitually. *that assembled*] R.V. **that did service.** It is probable that the women mentioned here and in Ex. xxxviii. 8, where the same words are used, had regular duties in connexion with the tabernacle service. *the tabernacle of the congregation*] R.V. **the tent of meeting**, where Jehovah met and held communication with the priests and the people. See Ex. xxix. 42, 43.

**23.** *by all this people*] I.e. as R.V. **from all this people.**

**24.** *that I hear—transgress*] Or, as R.V. marg., *which I hear the Lord's people do spread abroad.*

**25.** *the judge*] R.V. **God**, with marg. alternative, *the judge.* The Heb. *Elohim* (= *God*) may denote *judges*, as the representatives of God, pronouncing the judgment which proceeds from Him. See Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 8, 9; Deut. i. 17. But it seems best not to limit the present passage to human judgments. The sense is that when man offends against man, there is a third superior authority, namely God, who can intervene to arbitrate between them, either by Himself, or by His authorised representatives, the judges: but when Jehovah is the offended party, there is no one with authority to mediate. The words may be an ancient proverb. *because the LORD would slay them*] Lit. **was pleased to slay them.** "The LORD delighteth in mercy" (Mic. vii. 18), and "hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth" (Ez. xviii. 32). But Eli's sons had forfeited their lives by their defiance of God's laws. Obstinate impotence may be judicially punished by the withdrawal of the grace which leads to repentance. Comp. Ex. iv. 21; Josh. xi. 20.

**26.** Samuel's childhood was like that of Jesus (Luke ii. 52). Again his progress is contrasted with the declension of Hophni and Phinehas.

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

And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, 27  
Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of  
thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? And 28  
did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest,  
to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod  
before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the  
offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore 29  
kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have com-  
manded *in my habitation*; and honourest thy sons above me,  
to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of  
Israel my people? Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, 30  
I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father,  
should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be  
it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and  
they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the 31  
days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy

27—36. The doom of Eli's house. 27. *a man of God*] i.e. a prophet commissioned by God; a title applied to Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and others, and specially frequent in the Books of Kings. Even in the general decay of religion (iii. 1) God still had His messengers. *Did I plainly appear*] R.V. **Did I**

**reveal myself.** See Ex. iv. 14 ff., 27, xii. 1, 43 for revelations made to Aaron. *in Pharaoh's house*] Or, as R.V. *in bondage to Pharaoh's house.* 28. The priestly functions are mentioned

in ascending order: (a) the common sacrificial duties, (b) offering incense in the Holy Place (Ex. xxx. 7, 8), (c) wearing an ephod, i.e. serving as high-priest, for probably the high-priest's ephod (the only one mentioned in the Pentateuch) is meant here, and not the ordinary linen ephod worn at this time by all priests. See note on v. 18. *to offer &c.*] Or, as R.V. **to go up unto mine altar**, i.e. to minister at it. *all the offerings &c.*] R.V. **all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire.** See Lev. x. 12—15.

29. *Wherefore kick ye*] Or, as R.V. marg. **Wherefore trample ye upon**, i.e. treat with contempt. *at my sacrifice and at mine offering*] *Sacrifice* refers specially to offerings of slain animals: *offering* to the *meal-offerings* (A.V. *meat-offerings*); but *offering* is often used for sacrifices of all kinds, as e.g., in v. 17.

*in my habitation*] A word is used in v. 32, and in Ps. xxvi. 8, of the tabernacle. *with the chiefest of all the offerings*] "With the **first**," or, "**best** part of every offering," which should have been God's. See note on v. 13. 30. R.V. **Wherefore the LORD, the God of Israel, saith.** The Heb. word for *saith* denotes a solemn divine utterance. *I said indeed &c.*] God had promised that the family of Aaron in all its branches should serve perpetually as priests in His presence (Ex. xxix. 9; Num. xxv. 13): but now the decree must be reversed, for the faithlessness of Eli's sons had broken the covenant. 31. *I will cut*

father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine  
 32 house. And thou shalt see an enemy *in my habitation*, in all  
*the wealth* which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be  
 33 an old man in thine house for ever. And the man of thine,  
*whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume*  
 thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of  
 34 thine house shall die in the flower of their age. And this *shall*  
*be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on*  
 Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.  
 35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that shall do according*  
*to that which is in my heart and in my mind: and I will build*  
 him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for

*off thine arm*] I will destroy thy strength. "The arm" is a common expression for "might," "strength." Comp. Ps. x. 15; Zech. xi. 17.

32. R.V. **And thou shalt behold the affliction of my habitation.** *Thou* includes Eli's descendants as well as himself. The sanctuary at Shiloh was destroyed and the tabernacle deprived of its glory by the loss of the Ark, even while the nation prospered under Samuel and Saul. Or (R.V. marg.), *an adversary in my habitation*; thy descendant will see another take his place as priest in my house at the time when the nation shall be most prosperous and the office most honourable; the reference being to Abiathar's deposition by Solomon (1 Kings ii. 27). *wealth*] Here="weal," "well-being," as in the Litany 'In all time of our *wealth*.'

33. *And the man &c.*] Or, as R.V. marg., **Yet will I not cut off every man of thine from mine altar, to consume &c.:** i.e. some will still survive to mourn over the ruin of their family. "*thine eyes*," "*thy soul*," because Eli is identified with his posterity. *increase*] = offspring, Lat. incrementum.

*in the flower of their age*] Heb. *men*: i.e. when they come to manhood. But the Sept. has, *by the sword of men*.

34. *a sign*] R.V. **the sign.** The fulfilment of one prediction will serve as an assurance that the rest will come to pass. Comp. ch. x. 7—9; 1 Kings xiii. 3; 2 Kings xx. 8, 9; Luke i. 18, 20. *in one day &c.*] See ch. iv. 11.

35. This verse forms no part of the sign, but is to be connected with v. 33. *a faithful priest*] Not Zadok, who took the place of Abiathar (1 Kings ii. 35), but Samuel, who was God's instrument in establishing the kingdom, and the authorised adviser of Saul. Comp. iii. 20. Samuel was not a priest by descent, and is nowhere expressly so called. But he filled the place of high-priest. The prerogative of the line of Aaron was in abeyance for a time, as a punishment for the corruption of Eli's sons. Samuel exercised priestly functions by intercession (vii. 9), by offering sacrifice (vii. 9, 10), by benediction (ix. 12, 13), by anointing Saul and David (x. 1, xvi. 13, comp. 1 Kings i. 34). He may be compared with Moses, who though not strictly a priest was sometimes regarded as such (Ps. xcix. 6). *mine anointed*] i.e. the king. See notes on ii. 10, x. 1. *for ever*] Lit. *all*

ever. And it shall come to pass, *that every one that is left* 36  
*in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of*  
*silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee,*  
*into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.*

And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. 3  
 And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there*  
*was no open vision.* And it came to pass at that time, when 2  
*Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim,*  
*that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in* 3  
*the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel*  
*was laid down to sleep; that the LORD called Samuel: and he* 4  
 answered, *Here am I.* And he ran unto Eli, and said, *Here* 5

*the days*, i.e. of his life. Cp. i. 22. 36. *crouch*] R.V. **bow**  
**down.** *a piece of silver*] The Heb. word means *such a coin*  
*as beggars would receive.* *a morsel*] R.V. **a loaf.** The same  
 word is used in x. 3 (A.V. *loaves*), and denotes a round flat cake  
 or loaf. *a piece*] R.V. **a morsel.**

III. 1—10. The Call of Samuel. According to Josephus,  
 Samuel had just completed his twelfth year. In later times this  
 age was a critical point in the life of a Jewish boy. He then  
 became 'a son of the Law,' and was regarded as personally  
 responsible for obedience to it. It was at the age of twelve that  
 "the child Jesus" first went up to Jerusalem along with His  
 parents (Luke ii. 42). 1. *was precious*] i.e. as R.V. marg.,

**was rare.** Prophetic communications from God had almost entirely  
 ceased. Comp. Amos viii. 11; Ps. lxxiv. 9. We read of two prophets  
 only in the days of the Judges (Judg. iv. 4, vi. 8). *open vision*]

R.V. marg. *frequent*, Heb. *widely spread*. There was no publicly ac-  
 knowledged prophet, whose 'word came to all Israel.' 2, 3. R.V.

**And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down**  
**in his place, (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, that he**  
**could not see,) and the lamp of God was not yet gone out,**  
**and Samuel was laid down to sleep, in the temple of the**  
**LORD, where the ark of God was; that the LORD &c.**

(1) The clauses *when Eli—see* explain why Samuel ran to Eli when  
 he heard the Voice. He would suppose that the infirm old man  
 required some assistance. (2) *The lamp &c.* marks the time as  
 shortly before daybreak, when the sacred light in the Sanctuary  
 would burn dim or be put out. (3) *Samuel was laid down in the*  
*temple &c.*, i.e. in one of the chambers connected with the Taber-  
 nacle (i. 9, note). The *Ark* is mentioned as the symbol of the  
 Presence of Him from whom the Voice proceeded. *to wax*]

i.e. to grow, from A.-S. *weaxan*, Germ. *wachsen*. Comp. Wiclif:  
 'Biholde ye the lilies of the feeld hou thei *wexen*.' *the lamp of*

*God*] The seven-branched golden candlestick stood on the south  
 side of the Holy Place, opposite the table of shewbread (Ex. xxv.  
 31—37). It was lighted every evening (Ex. xxvii. 20, 21, xxx. 7,  
 8), and was extinguished in the morning. 4. *Here am I*] Heb.

*Behold me*, the regular formula for expressing attention to a call  
 and readiness to obey. Comp. Gen. xxii. 1; Is. vi. 8. 5. *And*

am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie  
 6 down again. And he went and lay down. And the LORD  
 called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli,  
 and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered,  
 7 I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not  
 yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet  
 8 revealed unto him. And the LORD called Samuel again the  
 third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am  
 I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD  
 9 had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go,  
 lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say,  
 Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and  
 10 lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and  
 called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel  
 11 answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. And the LORD  
 said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which  
 12 both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In  
 that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have  
 spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make  
 13 an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house  
 for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons  
 14 made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And there-  
 fore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of

*he ran*] Note Samuel's alacrity to serve the aged priest, his spiritual father. 6. *thou didst call me*] R.V. **thou calledst**, and so again in v. 8. There is no additional emphasis in the Heb.

7. This verse explains why Samuel did not recognise the Voice. No revelation had as yet been made to him. 10. *stood*] The Heb. is emphatic: **presented himself**. The Voice became a Vision (v. 15). Comp. Gen. xv. 1; Num. xii. 6—8. The visible manifestations of Jehovah or the Angel of Jehovah in the O.T. were foreshadowings of the Incarnation.

11—14. The Doom of Eli's House. 11. *I will do*] Lit. **I am doing**. The catastrophe is certain. With God the future is as the present. Comp. Gen. vi. 17. *the ears &c.*] Comp. 2 Kings xxi. 12; Jer. xix. 3. The catastrophe thus predicted was the defeat of Israel by the Philistines, the death of Eli's sons and Eli himself, the capture of the Ark, and the desolation of the Sanctuary. 12. *all things which*] R.V. **all that**. See ch. ii. 27—36. *when I begin &c.*] R.V. **from the beginning even unto the end**, i.e. fully and completely. 13. *judge*] i.e. punish, as in Ezek. vii. 3, &c. *for the iniquity &c.*] R.V. **for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves**. Eli had neglected his duty as father (Deut. xxi. 18), high-priest (Deut. xvii. 12), and judge. The Sept. (see R.V. marg.) has, *did speak evil of God*. *he restrained them not*] and thus he became partaker of their sins.

Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

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

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel *was* established to be a

14. *purged*] Or, as R.V. marg., *expiated*. The sons of Eli had sinned 'with a high hand,' and for such presumptuous offenders the Law had no atonement. See Num. xv. 27—31. Observe that it is to *the temporal punishment of Eli's family* that the words refer in the first instance. Comp. Is. xxii. 14.

15—18. The Message delivered to Eli. 15. *the doors &c.*] The doors of the enclosure in which the tabernacle stood. See note on i. 9. Samuel acted as a subordinate Levite. Cp. 1 Chr. xv. 23; Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

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

18. *every whit*] = every thing. *Whit* is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *wiht*, thing. *It is the LORD*] Eli, with all his faults, was still at heart faithful to God. He submits without a murmur to the divine sentence, leaving himself and his house in the hands of God. Comp. Lev. x. 3; Job i. 21, ii. 10; Is. xxxix. 8. But though he *submits* to the will of God, he would not rouse himself to *do* it.

III. 19—IV. 1. Samuel established as a prophet in Israel.

19. *The LORD was with him*] This was the source of strength for all the "heroes of Hebrew history;" for Abraham, Gen. xxi. 22; Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 15; Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 2; Moses, Ex. iii. 12; Joshua, Josh. i. 5; Gideon, Jud. vi. 16; David, 1 Sam. xvi. 18, xviii. 14. *fall to the ground*] i.e. remain unfulfilled. The fulfilment of his prophetic utterances was the attestation of his divine mission. Comp. Deut. xviii. 21, 22. 20. *from Dan even to Beer-sheba*] The regular formula to denote the whole extent of the land of Israel. *Dan*—originally Leshem or Laish, a Sidonian colony—was captured, colonized, and renamed by a band of Danites (Josh. xix. 47; Jud. xviii.). It was the northernmost town of the Holy Land, and stood upon a hill from the base of which springs one of the main sources of the Jordan. *Dan* = *judge*, and the hill is still called *Tell-el-Kady* = "mound of the judge," while the stream bears the name *el-Leddin*. *Beer-sheba* = "well of the oath" (Gen. xxi. 31; comp. Gen. xxvi. 31—33): or "well of

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

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

*seven*" (Gen. xxi. 29, 30). It was situated at the southernmost extremity of the land, on the confines of the desert. The name still survives as *Bir es-Sebâ* = "*well of seven*," or "*well of the lion*." *was established*] Or, "*found faithful*," "*approved*." The Heb. word is the same as that which, in ch. ii. 35, is rendered 'a faithful priest,' 'a sure house.' 21. *appeared again*] Manifested himself in visions. Comp. *vv.* 10, 15; and the ancient prophetic title of *Seer* (ix. 9). *by the word of the LORD*] By the communication of prophetic messages to Samuel.

IV. 1. *And the word of Samuel came to all Israel*] This clause is rightly placed in R.V. as the conclusion of ch. iii. It means that Samuel communicated to all Israel the divine revelation which he had received.

IV. 1—11. Defeat of Israel by the Philistines and loss of the Ark. The historian proceeds at once to relate the fulfilment of the prophecy against Eli's house. Some time may have elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter. 1. The Philistines occupied the southern portion of the *Shephelah* or *Low Country*, the maritime plain stretching along the coast of Canaan. Their five great cities of Gaza, Gath, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron, each governed by its 'lord,' were at this time united in a formidable confederacy. About the middle of the period of the Judges their power seems to have increased considerably, and they became a constant source of annoyance to the Israelites (Judg. iii. 31, v. 6, x. 7, xiii. 1), whom they at length reduced to the condition of tributary vassals (*v.* 9). Samuel defeated them at Eben-ezer (ch. vii. 12), but their power was not broken. Saul was constantly at war with them, and met his death fighting against them. They were included in Solomon's empire (1 Kings iv. 21, 24), but regained their independence, and continued bitter enemies of Judah and Israel. *Eben-ezer*] = "*the stone of help*." The name is used by anticipation. It was not given till twenty years afterwards (ch. vii. 12). *Aphek*] = "*stronghold*," the name of several places in Palestine. This Aphek was close to Eben-ezer (*v.* 6), near the western entrance of the pass of Bethoron, and distinct from the Aphek of ch. xxix. 1. 3. The use of the term *people* for *army* is characteristic of the time when there was no standing army, but a levy of all the men capable of bearing arms in time of war.

*Wherefore &c.*] The Israelites assume that their defeat came



to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring 4 from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth *between* the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came 5 into the camp, all Israel shouted *with* a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the 6 noise of the shout, they said, What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. And 7 the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us: for there hath not been such a *thing* heretofore. Woe unto us: who shall deliver us 8 out of the hand of these mighty Gods? *these are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that 9 ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. And the Philistines fought, 10 and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent:

from Jehovah. Comp. Joshua vii. 7, 8. But instead of inquiring the cause of His displeasure, they fancy that His aid can be secured by the presence of the Ark (Num. x. 35; Josh. vi. 6). 4. *that they might bring*]

R.V. **and they brought.** *which dwelleth between the cherubims*] R.V. **which sitteth upon the cherubim.**

The Ark is described by its full title, (a) as the symbol of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, in virtue of which they expected His help unconditionally; (b) as the seat of the presence of the Lord of Hosts, which they thought would infallibly accompany it, and ensure victory to the armies of Israel. Comp. note on v. 21. *rang again*]

Comp. 1 Kings i. 45. 6. *the Hebrews*] This name is used (a) by foreigners, as here (comp. ch. xxix. 3): (b) by the Israelites in speaking of themselves to foreigners (Ex. ii. 7): (c) when the Israelites are contrasted with foreigners (1 Sam. xiii. 7).

8. *these mighty Gods*] The heathen naturally suppose that Israel like themselves had 'gods many.' *with all the plagues*]

R.V. **with all manner of plagues** (Heb. *smiting*). The word is the same as that rendered *slaughter* in v. 10, and the allusion is to the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the shores of which are called *wilderness* in Ex. xiii. 20, not to the ten plagues, for which a different word is used in Exodus. The effect of the news of the destruction of Pharaoh upon the Philistines is alluded to in Ex. xv. 14 (R.V.): and Rahab speaks of it as inspiring the Canaanites with terror (Josh. ii. 9—11). 9. *quit yourselves*] = acquit yourselves; behave. Cp. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. *servants*] Tributary vassals. See Jud. xiii. 1. 10. *into his tent*]

R.V. **to his tent**, i.e. to his own home. The use of the word *tent* is a relic of the nomad life in the

and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel  
 11 thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and  
 the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.  
 12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and  
 came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and *with*  
 13 earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon  
 a seat *by* the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the  
 ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told  
 14 it, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the  
 crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And  
 15 the man came in hastily, and told Eli. Now Eli *was* ninety  
 and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not  
 16 see. And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of  
 the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said,  
 17 What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered  
 and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath  
 been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two  
 sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God  
 18 is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the  
 ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side

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wilderness. Comp. 2 Sam. xx. 1. **11.** *Hophni and Phinehas were slain*] The "sign" given by the man of God that the whole doom pronounced against Eli's house would be executed (ch. ii. 34). Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 56—64.

**12—18.** The death of Eli.

**12.** Comp. 2 Sam. xviii. 19. The distance from Eben-ezer to Shiloh was probably not more than twenty miles, so that a swift runner could arrive the same evening. Comp. *to-day* in v. 16.

*with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head*] Signs of the deepest mourning. Comp. Josh. vii. 6; 2 Sam. i. 2; Homer, *Il.* xviii. 23; Virg. *Aen.* xii. 609—611. **13.** *upon a seat*] R.V.

**upon his seat.** We must imagine him sitting upon his official seat by the outer gate of the tabernacle enclosure (v. 18, comp. i. 9, note), not by the town gate on the road by which the messenger entered, for the news does not reach Eli until after it has been published in the town (v. 14). *by the wayside watching*] The Sept. has, "*beside the gate, watching the way.*" **14.** *came in hastily*] R.V. **hasted and came**, through the town to the tabernacle enclosure, which stood on an eminence.

**15.** *were dim*] R.V. **were set**, a different word from that of ch. iii. 2. Comp. 1 Kings xiv. 4. Eli was now totally blind.

**16.** The blind old man cannot see the dust-soiled, blood-stained garments of the man, which tell their tale only too plainly to the people. *What is there done*] R.V. **How went the matter?** Comp. 2 Sam. i. 4. **17, 18.** Each blow is heavier than the preceding one. The rout of the army, the slaughter of the people, Eli's personal bereavement, the loss of the most precious treasure of Israel. The last blow is more than the aged high-priest can bear. National defeat and family bereavement were but trifles compared

of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, 19  
*near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the  
 ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her  
 husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her  
 pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the 20  
*women* that stood by her said *unto her*, Fear not; for thou hast  
 born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*.  
 And she named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is de- 21  
 parted from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and  
 because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, 22  
 The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it 5  
 from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. When the Philistines took the 2  
 ark of God, they brought it *into* the house of Dagon, and set

to the loss of the Ark, which seemed to prove that Jehovah had forsaken His people.

19—22. The death of Eli's daughter-in-law; a further fulfilment of the doom of Eli's house. 20. *Fear not*] Comp. Gen. xxxv.

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

21. *I-chabod*] i.e. There is *no glory*. Comp. Rachel's name for Benjamin, *Ben-oni*—"Son of my sorrow" (Gen. xxxv. 18). *The glory* &c.] In Ex. xvi. 10, xl.

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

V. 1—12. Chastisement of the Philistines for the removal of the Ark.

1. R.V. **Now the Philistines had taken the ark of God, and they brought it &c.** *Ashdod*] Ashdod

(in Greek *Azotus*, Acts viii. 40), one of the five cities of the Philistine league, was situated on an eminence near the sea, about 35 miles W. of Jerusalem. See Josh. xv. 47; 2 Chr. xxvi. 6; Is. xx. 1. The village of *Es-dūd* still preserves the name and site.

2. *When* &c.] R.V. **And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it.** The repetition is characteristic of the Hebrew historical style. *Dagon*] Dagon (a diminutive of

endearment from *dâg*=fish) was the national god of the Philistines, worshipped also at Gaza (Jud. xvi. 21—30), and elsewhere, as the name Beth-dagon (Josh. xv. 41, xix. 27) indicates. The statue of Dagon had the head and hands of a man and the body of a fish. The fish was an emblem of fruitfulness. The ark was placed in

3 it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the  
 morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth  
 before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set  
 4 him in his place again. And when they arose early on the  
 morrow morning, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to  
 the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon  
 and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off upon the threshold;  
 5 only *the stump of* Dagon was left to him. Therefore neither  
 the priests of Dagon, nor any that come *into* Dagon's house,  
 6 tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day. But  
 the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and  
 he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, *even* Ashdod  
 7 and the coasts thereof. And when the men of Ashdod saw that  
*it was* so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide  
 with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our  
 8 god. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the  
 Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the  
 ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark  
 of the God of Israel be carried about *unto* Gath. And they

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Dagon's temple as a votive offering (comp. 1 Chr. x. 10), and to mark the supposed victory of Dagon over Jehovah.

3. *Dagon was fallen &c.*] In the attitude of homage to the ark. Jehovah does not leave the Philistines to fancy that their god has conquered Him. He will shew that He is "the living God." Comp. Is. xix. 1.

4. *were cut off &c.*] R.V. **lay cut off**, upon the door-sill of the chapel in which the statue stood, where they would be liable to be trampled upon by the priests and worshippers who entered the shrine.

5. *Therefore &c.*] As a mark of reverence for the spot where their idol had lain.

6. *But &c.*] Rather, **And**. "The hand of the LORD" = the putting forth of His might. Chastisement now overtook the people as well as the god. A double calamity fell upon them. (1) Their land was ravaged by a plague of mice. The Heb. text leaves this to be inferred from ch. vi. 5, but the Sept. inserts here, in place of *even Ashdod and the borders thereof*, "and in the midst of the land thereof mice were brought forth, and there was a great and deadly destruction in the city." (2) They were attacked with **tumours** (R.V. throughout), or, *plague boils* (R.V. marg.), a characteristic symptom of the infectious and fatal oriental plague.

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

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

8. *all the lords of the Philistines*] A peculiar term *Seren* is used exclusively to denote the five 'lords' who ruled in the five cities of the Philistine confederacy. In all probability it preserves their native title.

*unto Gath*] Gath probably stood on the conspicuous hill now called *Tell-es-Sâfi*, 12 miles E. of Ashdod, at the foot of the mountains of Judah. The position is one of immense strength, guarding the mouth of the valley of Elah. Hence

carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*. And it was 9  
*so*, that after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD  
 was against the city *with a very great destruction*: and he  
 smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had  
 emerods in their secret parts. Therefore they sent the ark of 10  
 God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came  
 to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have  
 brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us  
 and our people. So they sent and gathered together all the 11  
 lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the  
 God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay  
 us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction  
 throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy  
 there. And the men that died not were smitten with the 12  
 emerods: and the cry of the city went up *to heaven*.

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

its importance as a border fortress, commanding one of the main  
 approaches from Philistia to Judæa. See 1 Chr. xviii. 1; 2 Chr.  
 xi. 8; 2 Kings xii. 17; 2 Chr. xxvi. 6. Gath was the native place  
 of Goliath (ch. xvii. 4): and the refuge of David from the perse-  
 cutions of Saul (ch. xxi. 10, xxvii. 3).

9. *with a very great destruction*] R.V. **with a very great discomfiture**; causing  
 utter consternation. *both small and great*] All the inhabitants,  
 both young and old. *and they had &c.*] R.V. **and tumours**  
**brake out upon them.**

10. R.V. **So they sent &c.** Ekron was the most northerly of the five confederate cities, about  
 12 miles N.E. of Ashdod. See Josh. xv. 45, 46; Jud. i. 18; 2 Kings  
 i. 2. The site is marked by the modern village of *Akir*.

11. A second council of state was held, but the protest of the  
 Ekronites was not listened to. The league was unwilling to part  
 with the trophy of its victory. *destruction*] R.V. **discomfiture**,  
 as in *v. 9*: dismay caused by the fatal character of the disease.

12. *emerods*] R.V. **tumours.** *the cry &c.*] Comp. Ex. ii. 23.  
 The word used denotes a *supplication*, a *cry for help*. Each city  
 was visited with a heavier judgment than the preceding one.

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

1. The Sept. adds at the end of the verse, "and their land  
 swarmed with mice." 2. *diviners*] Men who professed to  
 predict future events or interpret the will of heaven by the obser-  
 vation of omens. (Ex. vii. 11; Dan. ii. 2.) Philistine diviners were  
 celebrated (Is. ii. 6). *What &c.*] R.V. **What shall we do**

**with the ark of the LORD? Shew us wherewith we shall**  
**send it to its place.** 3. *send it not empty*] Comp. Ex.  
 xxiii. 15. All religions regard *offering* as a necessary part of worship.

empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand  
 4 is not removed from you. Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague*  
 5 *was on you all, and on your lords.* Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off  
 6 your gods, and from off your land. Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them,  
 7 did they not let the people go, and they departed? Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring  
 8 their calves home from them: and take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him *for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof;*  
 9 and send it away, that it may go. And see, if it goeth up by

*in any wise*] i.e. "at all events," "certainly." *Wise* means "way of acting," "manner," "mode." *a trespass offering*] R.V. **a guilt offering**, and so in *vv.* 4, 8, 17: as compensation for the injury done by the removal of the Ark. *it shall be known to you*] If the

removal of the plague followed the restoration of the Ark with due propitiation, they would know for certain that the plague was due to its detention. They were not yet convinced that it was more than "a chance" (*v.* 9). **4. emerods**] R.V. **tumours**. See note on ch. v. 6. *five*] The number of the confederate cities was naturally chosen to represent the whole people. **5. images of your mice**] The Heb. text now first definitely speaks of the plague of mice, which was alluded to in ch. v. 6. The Sept. as we have seen mentions it in v. 6 and vi. 1. The extraordinary voracity of field-mice, and the incredible rate at which they multiply, are noticed by many ancient writers on natural history. The Philistines offered "representations of the instruments of their chastisements" as an acknowledgment that the plagues of boils and mice were inflicted by the God of Israel, and were not "a chance," thereby "giving glory to the God of Israel." Comp. Rev. xvi. 9. **6. as the Egyptians &c.**] A second allusion (comp. ch. iv. 8) to the events of the Exodus. See Ex. viii. 15, 32, ix. 34. *wrought wonderfully among them*] Or, as R.V. marg., *made a mock of them*. Comp. Ex. x. 2 (R.V. marg.), and 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. **7. R.V. Now therefore take and prepare you.** The use of a *new cart* (2 Sam. vi. 3) and *unyoked kine* (Num. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3, 4) was a natural mark of reverence. **8. jewels of gold**] *Jewel* here = "any precious or costly object." *coffer*] A box for keeping valuables.

**9. his own coast**] R.V. **its own border**; cp. *v.* 12. See ch.

the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us; *it was* a chance *that* happened to us.

And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied <sup>10</sup> them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: and they <sup>11</sup> laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. And the kine <sup>12</sup> took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh. And *they* <sup>13</sup> *of* Beth-shemesh *were* reaping *their* wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth- <sup>14</sup> shemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt

v. 6, note. "*His*" refers to the Ark. The neuter possessive pronoun "*its*" is not found in the original edition of the A.V.

*Beth-shemesh*] = "*House of the Sun*," or *Ir-Shemesh* = "*City of the Sun*" (Josh. xix. 41), was a priestly city (Josh. xxi. 16) on the border of the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 10), about 12 miles S.E. of Ekron. The name points to an ancient sun-worship in the country. Its position is identified by the modern village of *Ain Shems* (= Fountain of the Sun") in the *Wady es Sūrār*, and is described as "a noble site for a city, a low plateau at the junction of two fine plains," the "valley" in which the people were reaping their wheat (v. 13). See 2 Kings xiv. 11, 12; 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.

*then he* &c.] *He* is emphatic; Jehovah and no other. Observe the completeness of the test. If cows unaccustomed to the yoke drew the cart quietly; if in spite of their natural instincts they deserted their calves; if without human guidance they went straight to the nearest Israelite town; the obvious conclusion must be that they were controlled by a supernatural power, and that that power was the God of Israel. Compare Gideon's 'signs,' (Jud. vi. 37 ff.).

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

12. R.V. **And the kine took the straight way by the way to Beth-shemesh; they went** &c. *lowing*] For their lost calves.

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

14. *they clave* &c.] Comp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 22; 1 Kings xix. 21. R.V. **and offered up the kine for a burnt offering** &c.

- 15 offering unto the LORD. And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices
- 16 the same day unto the LORD. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned *to* Ekron the same day.
- 17 And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned *for* a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;
- 18 and the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords, *both of* fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.
- 19 And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people

15. *And the Levites &c.*] Rather, in accordance with *v.* 14, **Now the Levites had taken down.** As Beth-shemesh was a *priestly* city, "Levites" is used here in a general sense to mean "members of the tribe of Levi," not in its technical sense of "Levites" as distinguished from "priests." Comp. Ex. iv. 14; Josh. iii. 3. *the men of Beth-shemesh &c.*] In addition to the offering of the kine, the inhabitants of the town brought other offerings of their own. **17, 18.** The priests proposed to send five golden tumours and five golden mice; but a much larger number of mice was actually sent, to represent the whole country which had suffered from the plague of mice, while the pestilence had chiefly attacked the great cities. *fenced cities*] Fortified or walled cities, contrasted with the "country villages" or unwalled towns. Comp. Deut. iii. 5. *the great stone of Abel*] R.V. follows the Sept. and Targum in reading **the great stone.** Cp. *vv.* 14, 15. The Heb. text has *Abel*, i.e. a meadow, probably a scribe's mistake for *eben*, a stone.

**19—VII. 1.** The penalty of irreverence. Removal of the Ark to Kirjath-jearim. **19.** R.V. *And he smote of the men of B.*

*because &c.*] Or, **because they had gazed upon the ark,** with profane curiosity. Even the Levites were forbidden to look upon the furniture of the Holy of Holies upon pain of death (Num. iv. 19, 20). This judgment was intended to vindicate the *holiness* of Jehovah. Certainly they were not punished for the unavoidable sight of the Ark as it approached them, at which they justly rejoiced (*v.* 13). The Sept. however has an entirely different reading: "And the sons of Jechoniah rejoiced not among the men of Beth-shemesh, because they saw the ark of the LORD; and he smote among them &c." Either from indifference or irreligion they took no part in the general rejoicing, and were punished for their impiety. *fifty thousand and threescore and ten men*] R.V. **seventy men, and fifty thousand men.** It is generally agreed



lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people *with a great slaughter*. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, <sup>20</sup> Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the <sup>21</sup> inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you. And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and <sup>7</sup> fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, <sup>2</sup> that the time was long: for it was twenty years: and all the

that there is some mistake in the text. The village of Beth-shemesh cannot have contained so many inhabitants. It seems best with Josephus and some Heb. MSS. to omit *fifty thousand men* altogether. Possibly the number was originally expressed by a letter used as a numerical sign, and explained once rightly and once wrongly in marginal notes, both of which eventually crept into the text. Such errors as this, to which the text of any ancient book is liable in the process of transmission, do not affect the general historical trustworthiness of the narrative, and the acknowledgment of them is consistent with the fullest belief in the Inspiration of Scripture.

<sup>20.</sup> *before this holy Lord God*] R.V. **before the LORD, this holy God.** Jehovah's holiness demands holiness in the people among whom He dwells (Ex. xxix. 45, 46; Lev. xi. 44, 45). Chastisement was necessary to teach the men of Beth-shemesh this lesson (comp. Mal. iii. 2; Lk. v. 8): but instead of fitting themselves for His Presence, they desired to free themselves from the burden of It (Matt. viii. 34). Comp. the judgment upon Uzzah (2 Sam. vi. 7—9). *to whom shall he go up from us?*] They regard the Presence of Jehovah as inseparable from the Ark.

<sup>21.</sup> *Kirjath-jearim*] R.V. **Kiriath-jearim**: "*city of forests*;" probably to be identified with *Khurbet Erma*, four miles E. of *Ain Shems* (Beth-shemesh). See Josh. ix. 17, xv. 9. The Beth-shemites sent for their nearest neighbours to fetch the Ark. That no proposal was made to take it to Shiloh seems to shew that the old sanctuary had been destroyed or occupied by the Philistines. See Jer. vii. 12—14, xxvi. 6.

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

VII. 1. *in the hill*] **On** the hill, some eminence in or near the town. Or (as R.V. marg.) *in Gibeah*, the name of some place in the neighbourhood. Cp. 2 Sam. vi. 4, 5. *sanctified*

*Eleazar*] Consecrated him for the special duty. Ps. cxxxii. 6 refers to this sojourn of the Ark at Kiriath-jearim.

2—6. The National Reformation under Samuel.

2. R.V. **And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode** &c. Twenty years elapsed before the reformation now to be recorded. It was a dark page in Israel's history. They were vassals of the Philistines. The public worship of Jehovah

3 house of Israel lamented after the LORD. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out  
4 of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.  
5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray  
6 for you unto the LORD. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

was suspended. The people sank into gross idolatry. But meanwhile Samuel was growing in strength and influence, and when the right moment came, he was ready to take his place as the leader of the nation.

*lamented after the LORD*] As a child follows the father it has offended, and with sighs and tears entreats for reconciliation. But the meaning may be, *was drawn together* (R.V. marg.).

**3. The strange gods and the Ashtaroth** (R.V.) = **the Baalim and the Ashtaroth** (R.V.) of v. 4. *Baalim* is the plural of *Baal*, *Ashtaroth* of *Ashtoreth*, and the plural denotes either the numerous images of these deities, or the different forms under which they were worshipped, as Baal-Peor, Baal-Berith, Baal-Zebub. Baal (=lord) was the supreme male deity of the Phœnician and Canaanite nations; Ashtoreth the corresponding female deity. The Baal-worship which began in the wilderness (Num. xxv. 3), was never thoroughly eradicated during the period of the judges. See Josh. xxiv. 23; Jud. ii. 11—13, iii. 7, viii. 33, x. 6.

*prepare &c.*] **Set** your hearts **steadfastly** towards Jehovah: or (R.V. marg.) *direct*. *serve him only*] For He is a jealous God, who cannot endure a rival (Ex. xxxiv. 13, 14).

**5. Mizpah** (R.V.) = "the watch-tower," lay a short distance N. of Jerusalem in the land of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 26), though its exact site is not certain. It was the meeting-place of the national assembly on two other important occasions in this period (Jud. xx; 1 Sam. x. 17); and in later times, on an occasion not unlike the present, when Judas Maccabæus mustered Israel to revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc. iii. 42—46).

*I will pray &c.*] Cp. v. 8 ff. For other instances of Samuel's prayers see viii. 6, xii. 17—19, 23, xv. 11. He is named as the type of successful intercessors in Ps. xcix. 6; Jer. xv. 1.

**6. drew water &c.**] A symbolical act significant of the outpouring of their hearts before Jehovah in penitence and supplication. Cp. ch. i. 15; Ps. lxii. 8; Lam. ii. 19. *fasted*] As on the day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 29), in token of humiliation and contrition for their sin. *We have sinned*] They made a public confession. Comp. Judg. x. 10.

*Samuel judged &c.*] As *prophet* he effected the religious reformation, and then taking his place as the chief *magistrate* of the state he provided for the civil and political reorganization of the people.

And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel 7 were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it *for a burnt offering* wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried 9 unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of 11 Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Beth-car. Then Samuel 12 took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no 13 more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was

7—12. Defeat of the Philistines at Eben-ezer. 7. The lords regarded this assembly of their vassals as a step towards revolt, and mustering the army of the confederation, marched up towards Mizpah. 9. *a sucking lamb*] See Lev. xxii. 27. It was offered **for a whole burnt offering** to symbolize the entire devotion of the worshippers to Jehovah. *heard him*] R.V. **answered him**. Cp. Ps. xcix. 6.

10. *a great thunder*] Lit., **a great voice**. Thunder is the "voice of God" (Ps. xxix. 3, 4). Cp. ch. ii. 10; 2 Sam. xxii. 14, 15. *discomfited them*] The Heb. word expresses *the confusion of a sudden panic*, and is especially used of *supernatural* defeats. Comp. Ex. xiv. 24; Josh. x. 10; Jud. iv. 15; 2 Sam. xxii. 15. *were smitten*] R.V. **were smitten down**, a different word from *smote* in v. 11, and specially spoken of God, e.g. ch. iv. 3. The thunder which dismayed the Philistines encouraged the Israelites. 11. *Beth-car*] = "house of a lamb," or "house of pasture," some place on high ground overhanging the road back to Philistia. 12. *Eben-ezer*] "*The Stone of Help*," a memorial set up between Mizpah and *Shen* = "*The Tooth*," some conspicuous "tooth" or spire of rock (xiv. 4). At the spot where twenty years before they had obtained their great victory, the Philistines were totally routed. *Hitherto &c.*] *Up to this time*. The deliverances of the past are a pledge for the future.

13—17. Summary account of Samuel's Judgeship. The Philistine oppression was brought to an end by the victory of Eben-ezer. For a time their inroads ceased, and the Israelites were enabled to hold their own against them. But the subsequent history shews that the language of these verses must be understood with some qualification. "All the days of Samuel" may refer to the period of his active judgeship only. Certainly the Philistines had regained their

14 against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was  
 15 peace between Israel and the Amorites. And Samuel judged  
 16 Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel  
 17 in all those places. And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

8 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his

ascendancy before his death. See ix. 16, x. 5, xiii. 3, 5, 19, xiv. 21, xvii. 1, xxiii. 27.

14. *from Ekron even unto Gath*] The towns which lay on the Danite frontier between these places were restored to Israel, not however including Ekron and Gath themselves. *the coasts thereof*]

R.V. **the border thereof:** i.e. the territory belonging to them. *the Amorites*] “Amorite” means “highlander,” contrasted with “Canaanite,” which means “lowlander.” On the W. of Jordan they lived chiefly in the mountainous country of Judah and Ephraim (Num. xiii. 29; Josh. x. 5); E. of Jordan they occupied the high plateau of rich pasture-land between the Jabbok and the Arnon, from which they had expelled the Moabites (Num. xxi. 13, 26), and were in their turn dispossessed by the Israelites. Here the name appears to be used generally of the original inhabitants of the country.

15. Samuel retained a position of authority to the end of his life, though in his old age he made his sons judges (viii. 1), and Saul was anointed king before his death.

16. *Beth-el*] About 8 miles N. of Jerusalem the ruins of *Beitân* mark the site of *Beth-el*, i.e. *the house of God* (Gen. xxviii. 11 ff., xxxv. 10); originally called *Luz* (Gen. xxviii. 19). See Gen. xii. 8; Jud. xx. 18, 26—28 (R.V.); 1 Kings xii. 32, 33. There was now a sanctuary there (ch. x. 3).

*Gilgal*] Gilgal (=“*the Rolling*,” Josh. v. 9) lay between Jericho and the Jordan. It now appears as the chief religious and political centre of the nation, where (1) sacrifices are offered (ch. x. 8); (2) assizes held; (3) the national assembly convened (xi. 14, 15); (4) the army mustered (xiii. 4, 7). Its importance was due to its historical associations (Josh. v. 2, 10), and its remoteness from the Philistines. *Mizpeh*] See note on v. 5.

17. *Ramah*] See note on ch. i. 1. Samuel chose his native place for his usual residence, and made it a centre of religious worship by building an altar to Jehovah. The sanctuary at Shiloh had ceased to exist. Here ends the first division of the book, which records Samuel's life and work as the last of the judges. The next division opens by relating the steps which led to the establishment of a monarchy, and shews us Samuel effecting this great political change without the shock of revolution.

VIII. 1—5. Request of the people for a king. A considerable time, probably not much less than 20 years, must have elapsed since the victory of Eben-ezer, before Samuel required the help of

sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was 2 Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were* judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned 3 aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, 4 and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, 5 Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But 6 the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And 7 the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done 8 since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto 9

his sons on the ground of old age, and some years more before their misgovernment became so flagrant as to give occasion for the request of the elders. On the chronology see Introd. p. 8.

2. The names *Joel* = "Jehovah is God;" *Abiah* = "Jah is my father:" were a protest against the prevalent idolatry.

*Beer-sheba*] See note on ch. iii. 20. Beer-sheba was the most convenient centre for the southern district, which Samuel assigned to his sons, retaining the northern himself. 3. *turned aside*]

From the *straightforward* path of their father's example. *Lucre* = *ill-gotten gain* (Ex. xviii. 21). *took bribes, and perverted judgment*] Comp. Deut. xvi. 19; Ex. xxiii. 6, 8.

4. *the elders*] As representatives of the people, *vv.* 7, 10, 19, 22. In a patriarchal system of government the Elders or heads of families are the natural authorities. *The Elders of Israel*, or united body of the Elders of the tribes, formed the *senate* or executive council of the "congregation" or national assembly, (1) in war (ch. iv. 3), (2) in great political matters, as on the present occasion, (3) in matters of general importance to the nation (Jud. xxi. 16).

6—9. Jehovah's answer to the request. 6. Samuel's displeasure arose from a feeling of the ingratitude of the Israelites toward himself (*v.* 7). God's answer, "Not thee (their judge) have they rejected, but me (their true king) have they rejected that I should not be king over them" at once consoles him and points out the real sinfulness of the request. This consisted not in the mere desire for a king, which would not necessarily have been wrong, but in the spirit of distrust of the invisible sovereignty of Jehovah and desire for the splendour of a visible monarch which really prompted the request. *Samuel prayed*] He does not let his own personal feelings decide, but asks what is the Will of God.

8. *wherewith*] R.V. **in that.** *unto thee*] Cp. John xv. 20.

their voice : howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

- 10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people  
 11 that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the  
 manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take  
 your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and  
 to be his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots.  
 12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and cap-  
 tains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and  
 to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and  
 13 instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters  
 14 to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And  
 he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-  
 yards, *even the best of them*, and give *them* to his servants.  
 15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards,  
 16 and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take  
 your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest  
 17 young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work. He  
 will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.  
 18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye  
 shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in  
 that day.

9. *howbeit &c.*] R.V. **howbeit thou shalt protest...and shalt shew them &c.**

10—18. The rights of a king. A vivid picture of the tyranny of an Oriental despot whose subjects, with their property, are at his absolute disposal.

10. *unto the people*] Through their representatives the elders. Comp. note on v. 4. *some shall run*]

R.V. **they shall run.** A body of runners was a mark of regal state (2 Sam. xv. 1; 1 Kings i. 5).

12. R.V. **and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands and captains of fifties.** Comp. xxii. 7; 2 Kings i. 9 ff.; and see ch. xiv. 52.

*and will set them to ear his ground*] R.V. **and he will set some to plow his ground.** “*To ear,*” = “*to plough,*” from the Anglo-Saxon *erian*. The verb occurs again in Dent. xxi. 4; Is. xxx. 24; the subst. *earing* in Gen. xlv. 6; Ex. xxxiv. 21. Shakespeare uses the word,

“And let them go

To ear the land that hath some hope to grow.”

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

13. *confectionaries*] The original form of “*confectioner,*” meaning “*one who makes confections*” (Ex. xxx. 35), i.e. compounds of spices and perfumes, a **perfumer**.

14. Comp. 1 Kings xxi. 7; Ezek. xlvi. 18.

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

16. *young men*] The Sept. has *herds*. Men-servants and maid-servants, cattle and asses, are then coupled together naturally. Comp. Ex. xx. 17.

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

18. *will not hear*] R.V. **will not answer.** Cp. Prov. i. 28 ff.

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

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, 9 the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he 2 had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish 3 said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. And he passed through mount 4

19—22. Reply of the people. 19. *Nevertheless*] R.V. **But.**

20. The king was to unite the duties of (1) government of the nation in time of peace, and (2) leadership of the army in time of war.

21. *he rehearsed them*] i.e. repeated them. Samuel once more laid the matter before Jehovah in prayer, and again received the same answer. This narrative is in close connexion with ch. x. 17—27. The intervening section gives an account of Samuel's preliminary interview with Saul, preparatory to his formal election as king.

IX. 1, 2. Saul's genealogy. "The sacred historian now tracks as it were another stream of events which were to concur in working out God's providential purpose of giving a king to Israel."

*Kish, the son of Abiel*] See note on xiv. 50. *a Benjamite*] R.V. **the son of a Benjamite.** *a mighty man of power*] R.V. **valour, marg., wealth.** Perhaps the ideas of personal valour and family importance are both included. 2. *Saul*] Heb. Shâul = "asked."

As the name of SAUL OF TARSUS, "who is also called PAUL" (Acts vii. 58, &c.) it became the most distinguished name in the genealogies of the tribe of Benjamin, in the N.T. as well as in the O.T. (Phil. iii. 5). *a choice young man*] R.V. **a young man, marg. choice.** Comp. x. 24. Physical qualifications of stature, strength, and beauty, are a natural commendation for the dignity of a king, especially in warlike ages.

3—10. Saul's search for his father's asses. 3. *the asses*] In the East asses are valuable property, indispensable for farm work and travelling. The possession of a drove of asses and several servants indicates that Kish was a man of some substance.

4, 5. Saul's route cannot be traced with any certainty. He started from his home at Gibeah apparently in a N.W. direction (1) through **the hill country of Ephraim** (see i. 1, note); (2) through "the land of Shalisha," perhaps the district round

Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not. And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *6 caring* for the asses, and take thought for us. And he said unto him, Behold now: *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our *7 way* that we should go. Then said Saul to his servant, But behold, *if* we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and *there is* not a present to bring to *8 the man of God*: what have we? And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: *that will I give* to the man of God, *9 to tell us our way.* (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went

Baal-shalisha (2 Kings iv. 42), which lay about 12 miles N. of Lydda; (3) then turning S. he traversed "the land of **Shaalim**" (=foxes), perhaps in the neighbourhood of Shaalabbin (Josh. xix. 42) in Dan; (4) then striking E. he searched the western part of the "land of Benjamin," till he reached (5) "the land of Zuph," in which lay Samuel's city Ramah. The search occupied parts of three days (v. 20). The unnamed city of v. 6 ff. was probably Ramah. **5.** *take thought*] i.e. "*be anxious*," as in Matt. vi. 25.

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

*a man of God*] A prophet (ii. 27). *an honourable man*]

R.V. **a man that is held in honour.** *all that he saith &c.*]

Comp. iii. 19. *peradventure*] = "perchance," "perhaps," derived from *per* "by," and *adventura*, late Latin for "that which is about to happen," "chance." *he can shew us &c.*]

R.V. **he can tell us concerning our journey whereon we go:** direct us how to attain our object. Comp. Gen. xxiv. 42. It seems strange that Saul apparently knows nothing about Samuel. But the days of Samuel's greatest activity were long past, and he had for some time been living in comparative retirement: while "up to this point Saul had been only the shy and retiring youth of the family, employed in the common work of the farm," and knowing little of the political or religious movements of the time. **7.** *a present*]

Comp. 1 Kings xiv. 3; 2 Kings v. 15 ff., viii. 8, 9; Ezek. xiii. 19.

**8.** *I have here at hand*] R.V. **I have in my hand.**

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

**9.** This verse is an *addition* to the original narrative to explain the term "seer," which had become obsolete when the book was compiled in its present form. The primitive term seer referred to *the method of communication by dream and vision* (Num. xii. 6): *prophet* designated one who was *the inspired interpreter of the will of God.*



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

And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, *he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place: as soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him. And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.*

Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, To morrow about *this time* I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that *he may save my*

**11—14.** Inquiry for the seer. **11.** And as &c.] R.V. **As they went up the ascent to the city.** *young maidens &c.]* Comp. Gen. xxiv. 15, xxix. 9 ff.; Ex. ii. 16; John iv. 7. The well was in the lower ground outside the city wall. **12.** *before you]* R.V. **before thee;** addressing the speaker. It is a direction to go straight forward. *he came &c.]* R.V. **he is come to-day into the city.** Samuel had returned from one of his official circuits (vii. 17). *for there is &c.]* R.V. **for the people have a sacrifice &c.** Possibly at the New Moon (Num. xxviii. 11—15) or upon some special occasion of thanksgiving.

*in the high place]* Here probably was the altar which Samuel had built (vii. 17). **13.** *he doth bless the sacrifice]* Pronounces a blessing or thanksgiving over the sacrificial feast. Comp. Luke ix. 16 with John vi. 11; Matt. xxvi. 26. *about this time]* R.V. **at this time.** **14.** R.V. **And they went up to the city; and as they came within the city, behold &c.** Saul and his servant ascend the hill. As they enter the city they meet Samuel

“in the gate” (v. 18). The “high place” was either on the top of the hill on the slope of which the city stood, or on the adjacent hill from which the city had its name Ramathaim (“the two heights”). See note on i. 1. *against them]* i.e. *opposite to*, as in Gen. xv. 10.

**15—24.** Saul entertained by Samuel. **15.** *had told Samuel in his ear]* R.V. **had revealed unto Samuel**, Heb. *had uncovered the ear of Samuel*, a figure of speech said to be derived from the practice of removing the hair or a corner of the turban from a man’s ear in order to whisper a secret into it.

**16.** *captain]* R.V. **prince**, marg. *leader*; and so in x. 1, xiii. 14, xxv. 30 *that he may save]* R.V. **and he shall**

people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked  
 17 upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. And  
 when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the  
 man whom I spake to thee of: this *same* shall reign over my  
 18 people. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said,  
 19 Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house *is*. And Samuel  
 answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer: go up before me *unto*  
 the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow  
 I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart.  
 20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not  
 thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *is* all  
 the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's  
 21 house? And Saul answered and said, *Am* not I a Benjamite,  
 of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least  
 of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then  
 22 speakest thou so to me? And Samuel took Saul and his  
 servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them  
 sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which

**save.** *out of the hand of the Philistines]* See note on  
 vii. 13. *I have looked &c.]* Comp. Ex. iii. 7, 9.

**17.** *the Lord said unto him]* Lit. **answered him;** answered  
 his mental question, Is this the man? *v.* 17 is in close connexion  
 with *v.* 14, *vv.* 15 and 16 forming a parenthesis. *Behold &c.]*

R.V. **Behold the man of whom I spake to thee!** or (marg.)  
**of whom I said unto thee, This same &c.** *shall reign]*

R.V. **shall have authority.** The restraints of a settled govern-  
 ment are contrasted with the licence of the time in which "every  
 man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. xxi. 25).

**18.** *in the gate]* i.e. the gateway, where they would naturally  
 halt to inquire for the seer's house. **19.** *go up before me]*

Addressed to Saul only. The verb is in the singular. Saul is to  
 precede Samuel as a mark of honour. *to morrow]*

R.V. **in the morning.** *all that is in thine heart]* May  
 we not suppose that Saul at his plough like Joan of Arc  
 with her flock had been brooding over the oppression of his  
 country, and cherishing a vague desire to liberate it?

**20.** *three days ago]* = the day before yesterday, according to  
 the *inclusive* Hebrew reckoning. *set not thy mind on them]*

Be not anxious for them. *on whom &c.]* R.V. **For whom is  
 all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for  
 all thy father's house?** i.e. 'Care not for these asses for they are  
 found: and even if they were lost, what matter? is not the best  
 that Israel has to give at thy service?' **21.** *the smallest &c.]*

See Num. i. 37; Jud. xx. 46. *of the tribe of Benjamin]* Heb.  
**the tribes** = *clans* or subdivisions of a tribe, as in Num. iv. 18;  
 Jud. xx. 12. **22.** *the parlour]* R.V. **the guest-chamber,** a  
 room at the high place specially used for sacrificial feasts.

*chiefest]* An instance of the double superlatives common in the

were about thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, 23  
Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto  
thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the shoulder, and 24  
that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel  
said, Behold that which is left; set it before thee, and eat: for  
unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have  
invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

And when they were come down from the high place into 25  
the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the  
house. And they arose early: and it came to pass about the 26  
spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the  
house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul  
arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.  
And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel 27  
said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed  
on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the  
word of God. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured 10  
it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because  
the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

A.V. Cp. "most highest." *about thirty persons*] Only the  
more distinguished citizens would be invited to the chamber. The  
rest would feast in the open air. 24. *the shoulder*] Or (R.V.)  
**the thigh.** The right leg was the priest's portion (Lev. vii. 32),  
which Samuel had received. It was assigned to Saul as a mark of  
honour. Josephus calls it a "royal portion." *Behold &c.*] R.V.  
**Behold that which hath been reserved!... because unto**  
**the appointed time hath it been kept for thee, for I said**  
&c. Saul's arrival was expected, and provision made for it before-  
hand.

25—X. 8. Saul anointed by Samuel and promised three signs  
in confirmation of his call. 25, 26. On the housetop they  
would be open to the public view so that all could see the  
honour Samuel shewed his guest, while they would have oppor-  
tunity for undisturbed conversation. The Sept. however has (for  
*he communed &c.*) *they spread a couch for Saul on the housetop,*  
*and he lay down.* *And it came to pass &c.* The flat roof of an  
oriental house is still resorted to for business, relaxation, or sleeping.

26. *the spring of the day*] i.e. the dawn. Comp. "dayspring,"  
Luke i. 78. *called Saul &c.*] R.V. **called to Saul on the**  
**housetop.** Samuel had slept in the house, Saul on the roof.  
*abroad*] i.e. out of the house. 27. *a while*] R.V. **at this**  
**time.**

X. 1. *a vial*] R.V. **the vial,** i.e. phial or flask: 2 Kings ix. 1, 3  
(R.V.). The definite article may perhaps indicate the holy anoint-  
ing oil used for the consecration of priests (Ex. xxx. 23—33).

*kissed him*] As a mark of homage. *Is it not because &c.*] R.V. **Is it not that** &c. = Surely the LORD &c. *hath anointed*  
*thee*] The rite of *anointing* (a) signified the consecration of the  
king to the service of God; (b) was the outward sign of the gift of

- 2 When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son? Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, 3 and another carrying a bottle of wine: and they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt 4 receive of their hands. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall 5 come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high

the Spirit to qualify him for his office (*vv.* 9, 10, xvi. 13; *cp.* Acts x. 38); (*c*) marked his person as sacred and inviolable (*ch.* xxvi. 9; 2 Sam. i. 14). *Priests* (*Ex.* xl. 15; *Lev.* viii. 12), *prophets* in some cases (1 Kings xix. 16), and *kings*, were consecrated by anointing, and formed partial types of the MESSIAH (derived from the Hebrew word Māshīach=anointed, through the Greek form Μεσσίας), i.e. THE ANOINTED ONE, THE CHRIST, who united in Himself all three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. *his inheritance*] See Deut. xxxii. 9; Ps. lxxviii. 71, &c. 2. *Rachel's sepulchre &c.*] Described in Gen. xxxv. 16-20, xlviii. 7, as on the road from Beth-el to Ephrath which is Bethlehem, a little way from Ephrath. This agrees with the site now marked by a tomb called *Kubbet Rahil* (dome of Rachel) a mile N. of Bethlehem. *Zelzah* is mentioned nowhere else, and cannot be identified. If Ramah was the city from which Saul started (see note on ix. 4, 5), he did not return direct to his home at Gibeah, but was sent by a circuitous route, on which he was to meet with the 'signs' given him by Samuel. *sorroweth*] R.V. **taketh thought**; i.e. is anxious, as in ix. 5. 3. *the plain of Tabor*] R.V. **the oak** (or *terebinth*) **of Tabor**. *going up to God to Beth-el*] To worship at the sanctuary there. See note on vii. 16. *a bottle*] i.e. a skin bottle. *Comp.* i. 24. 4. The present was an unconscious act of homage to the newly-anointed king. As the representative of God he receives a share of the offerings intended for the sanctuary. 5. *the hill of God*] Or, **Gibeah of God**. *Gibeah* is the term used to denote 'the bald rounded hills of central Palestine.' This eminence was distinguished as *Gibeah of God*, or *God's hill*, from the place of worship on its summit. It was probably the same as (*a*) *Gibeah of Benjamin* (*Jud.* xix. xx., *comp.* 1 Sam. xiii. 2, &c.); and (*b*) *Gibeah of Saul* (*x.* 26, xi. 4); and was situated about 3 miles N. of Jerusalem. *the garrison*] A military post established by the Philistines to maintain their hold upon the Israelites. See note on vii. 14. *Comp.* xiii. 3, 4 and 2 Sam. viii. 6, 14. *a company of prophets*] **A band** (R.V.) of the society of prophets established by Samuel. *Comp.* xix. 20.

place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: and the spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occasion serve thee; for God *is* with thee. And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What *is* this *that* is come unto the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets? And one of the

*and they shall prophesy]* R.V. **and they shall be prophesying.** The word has nothing to do with *prediction* here, but denotes the enthusiastic expression of religious feeling in hymns and otherwise. See note on xviii. 10. In 1 Chr. xxv. 1—3 the word is used of *chanting* psalms and set services. Such a procession of prophets was naturally accompanied by musical instruments. Comp. Ex. xv. 20; 1 Chr. xiii. 8; 2 Kings iii. 15. The psaltery and harp were stringed instruments: the tabret or **timbrel** (R.V.) was a tambourine or hand drum: the pipe was a kind of flute. **6.** R.V. **and the spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon thee:** and so in v. 10, xi. 6, xvi. 13, xviii. 10. See Num. xi. 25—29; Jud. xiv. 6, 19, xv. 14; 1 Sam. xi. 6, xvi. 13. **7.** *do as occasion serve thee]* Heb. *do for thee as thine hand shall find;* undertake boldly whatever presents itself. Comp. Jud. ix. 33; Eccl. ix. 10.

**8.** This is not to be understood as a direction to meet Samuel at Gilgal at once. Doubtless they had been discussing the best means of shaking off the Philistine yoke, and had agreed upon a muster of the people at Gilgal, as the national centre furthest from the Philistine power. But Saul must take no step without Samuel's sanction. The opportunity did not come for several years, and when it came Saul disobeyed Samuel's command. See xiii. 8 ff.

**9—16.** The fulfilment of the signs. **9.** *gave him another heart]* Lit. "**turned** him another heart." Cp. v. 6. The divine inspiration transformed the simple countryman into the King and Deliverer. The *heart* in Scripture denotes "the centre of the whole mental and spiritual life of will, desire, thought, perception, and feeling." **10.** *to the hill]* Or, **to Gibeah**, as in v. 5. The narrator only mentions the fulfilment of the first and second signs, but relates the fulfilment of the third in detail, because it bears on Saul's preparation for his new office. **11, 12.** Saul's neigh-

same place answered and said, But who *is* their father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is* Saul also among the prophets?  
 13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the  
 14 high place. And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when  
 15 we saw that *they were* no where, we came to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto  
 16 you. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.  
 17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to  
 18 Mizpeh; and said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the  
 19 hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppressed you: and ye have *this* day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of

bours were astonished that the son of Kish, undistinguished save by his stalwart form and handsome countenance, should suddenly appear as a prophet. But one of their fellow-townsmen reproved them by asking, And who is *their* father? Was their parentage such as to lead us to expect them to be thus specially gifted? The prophetic inspiration comes from God, and may therefore be bestowed even upon the son of Kish. See Amos vii. 14, 15. Comp. Matt. xiii. 54—57. 12. *a proverb*] Applied probably to the unexpected appearance of any person in a novel character.

14. *Saul's uncle*] Possibly Ner. See note on xiv. 50.

17—27. The public election of Saul as King. The thread of the narrative in ch. viii., which has been dropped in order to give an account of the circumstances by which Samuel was made acquainted with Saul, is now resumed, and Saul's public election by lot is described. Since the revelation to Samuel and the choice by lot were equally declarations of Jehovah's will, there could be no contradiction between them: the latter publicly confirmed the former for the satisfaction of the people. 17. Samuel convoked the national assembly or "congregation of Israel," which had made the request for a king through its representative elders (viii. 4). Leaders and kings chosen by Divine command were presented to it for approval, as on the present occasion, and in the case of Joshua (Num. xxvii. 18—23); David (2 Sam. v. 1); Solomon (1 Chron. xxix. 22). In later times some of the kings appear to have been elected by it: e.g. Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 20); Joash (2 Kings xi. 19); Josiah (2 Kings xxi. 24); Jehoahaz (2 Kings xxiii. 30). 18. *the LORD God of Israel*] R.V. **the LORD, the God of Israel**, and so elsewhere: for LORD is not a title prefixed to God, but represents the proper Name **Jehovah**. *I brought up*] **I** is emphatic, in contrast to **but ye** (R.V.) in v. 19. *out of the hand &c.*] R.V. **out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you**. The reference is to the deliverances recorded in the Book of Judges.

19. *who himself &c.*] R.V. **who himself saveth you out of**

all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is none like him among all the people?* And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

**all your calamities and your distresses.** Once more the prophet is directed to rebuke the people for their ingratitude and unbelief. See note on viii. 6. *ye have said unto him*] The request made to Samuel was virtually addressed to God.

*by your tribes, and by your thousands*] The natural subdivision of the nation into *tribes*: of the tribes into *families* or *clans*: of the families into *houses*: of the houses into *men* (Josh. vii. 14): was supplemented by Moses with an artificial organization of *thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens* (Ex. xviii. 25). The *thousand* corresponded to the *family*, and the terms appear to be used here as synonymous. Comp. ch. xxiii. 23; Jud. vi. 15; Josh. xxii. 14.

**20. R.V. So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken;** by casting lots. Comp. Josh. vii. 14 ff. The lot was in common use among all nations of antiquity. It is regarded in Scripture as a legitimate method of ascertaining the Divine will (Prov. xvi. 33). Comp. ch. xiv. 42.

**21. R.V. And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families, and the family of the Matrites was taken.** They are not mentioned elsewhere.

*Saul the son of Kish was taken*] The family taken would be brought by *houses*, and the house taken brought by *persons*. The Sept. inserts (before *and Saul &c.*), and *the family of the Matrites was brought near man by man.* *he could not be found*] Natural feelings of modesty and humility prompted Saul to hide himself.

**22. R.V. Therefore they asked of the LORD further:** the technical phrase for ascertaining God's will by means of the Urim and Thummim. See on xxviii. 6, and comp. ch. xiv. 3, xxii. 10, xxiii. 9, xxx. 7. *the stuff*] **the baggage** of the people who had come to Mizpah from a distance. Compare Shakespeare,

"Therefore away to get our *stuff* aboard."

**23, 24.** Stress is again laid on Saul's stature as a natural qualification for his office. He was a "princely person and of a majestic aspect." Comp. ix. 2. *God save the king*] Lit. *Let the king*

- 25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel  
 26 sent all the people away, every man to his house. And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band  
 27 of men, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, How shall this *man* save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.
- 11 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash,  
 2 Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a covenant with you, that *I* may thrust out all your right eyes,

*live.* Comp. 1 Kings i. 25, 34, 39; 2 Kings xi. 12; 2 Chron. xxiii. 11.

25. *the manner of the kingdom*] A charter defining the position of the king in relation to Jehovah, and to the people. *in a book*] Or, **in the book.** This important charter was to be solemnly preserved in the sanctuary. Comp. Ex. xvii. 14, xxiv. 7; Deut. xxxi. 26; Josh. xxiv. 26. 26, 27. *a band of men*] R.V. **the host**, marg. *men of valour.* Some accepted him as the choice of Jehovah, but **certain base fellows** (see note on i. 16) spoke disparagingly of him, and despised him, and *brought him no present* (1 Kings x. 25; 2 Chr. xvii. 5), to shew that they did not acknowledge his authority. **But he was as though he had been deaf** (R.V. marg.), refusing to notice the insult.

XI. 1—11. Saul's victory over the Ammonites. From ch. xii. 12 we may gather that an Ammonite attack was threatened before Saul's election, and probably the invasion took place not long after. The Sept. may be right in omitting the words *But he held his peace* in x. 27, and reading in place of them, *And it came to pass after about a month that Nahash &c.* *Nahash*] The king of the Ammonites (ch. xii. 12), probably the father or grandfather of the Nahash of 2 Sam. x. 2. *the Ammonite*] East and South of the Israelite settlements on the Eastern side of the Jordan dwelt the powerful tribes of the Ammonites and Moabites. The Ammonites were a fierce marauding tribe: the Moabites a settled and civilised nation. United by the tie of common descent from Lot, they were generally in alliance against Israel. See Jud. iii. 12—14, x. xi. After their defeat by Jephthah, the Ammonites are not mentioned until the present occasion. See further 2 Sam. x. 1 ff., xii. 26; 2 Chr. xx., xxvi. 8, xxvii. 5; Neh. iv. 7, 8. *Jabesh-Gilead*] i.e. Jabesh in Gilead, the extensive district lying immediately E. of the Jordan between Bashan on the N. and Moab and Ammon on the S. and S.E. To the southern portion of this district the Ammonites laid claim (Jud. xi. 13). Nahash now attacked Jabesh as the capital of Gilead, and the key to the possession of the country. The name of Jabesh still survives in the *Wady Yâbis.* 2. *that I may thrust out &c.*] R.V. **that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay it &c.** This barbarous mutilation was intended to disable them for war.



and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel. And the elders of 3  
 Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we  
 may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then,  
 if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee. Then 4  
 came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings  
 in the ears of the people: and all the people lift up their  
 voices, and wept. And behold, Saul came after the herd out 5  
 of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they  
 weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.  
 And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those 6  
 tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a 7  
 yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* through-  
 out all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying,  
 Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so  
 shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell  
 on the people, and they came out with one consent. And 8  
 when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were  
 three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.  
 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye 9  
 say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To morrow, by *that time*

3. *all the coasts*] R.V. **all the borders.** 4. *told the tidings*] R.V. **spake these words.** *lift up their voices, and wept*] Oriental nations display their feelings in tears accompanied by loud wailings, in a way which western nations consider unmanly. Comp. ch. xxx. 4; Gen. xxvii. 38; Jud. ii. 4, xxi. 2, &c.

5. *after the herd*] R.V. **following the oxen.** The king elect had returned to his farm work till occasion should call him to higher duties. So Cincinnatus was following the plough when the messengers of the senate came to offer him the dictatorship (Livy III. 26).

6. **And the spirit of God came mightily upon Saul** (R.V.). A new inspiration roused his energies, and enabled him to meet the crisis promptly. 7. *hewed them &c.*] R.V. **cut them in pieces, and sent them** (i.e. the pieces) **throughout all the borders of Israel.** Symbolical acts are more eloquent than words. Comp. Jud. xix. 29; 1 Kings xi. 30, xxii. 11; 2 Kings xiii. 18. We may compare the Fiery Cross which used to be sent round as the signal for the gathering of the Highland clans in Scotland. See *The Lady of the Lake*, Canto III., stanzas 8—11.

*after Saul and after Samuel*] Saul strengthens himself by an appeal to the time-honoured name and authority of Samuel.

*the fear of the LORD &c.*] R.V. **the dread of the LORD** (or, as marg. *a terror from the LORD*). Awe inspired by Jehovah supported the authority of His King and His Prophet; the people left their homes and came out to the rendezvous **as one man.**

8. *Bezek*] About half way between Shechem and Beth-shau, on the hills W. of the Jordan, and within a day's march of Jabesh. *three hundred thousand &c.*] The numbers are large, but it was a general levy of the nation. Comp. Jud. xx. 2. 9. **To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have deliver-**

- the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.
- 10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good
- 11 unto you. And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people *in* three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.
- 12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to
- 13 death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.
- 14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go *to* Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went *to* Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices *of* peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.
- 12 And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made

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**ance** (R.V.). Comp. *save*, v. 3; *salvation*, v. 13. **10.** *The men of Jabesh said*] To Nahash, in order to lull him into careless security by leading him to suppose that their efforts to get help had failed. **11.** *in three companies*] In order to attack the Ammonite camp on three sides at once. Comp. Gideon's stratagem, Jud. vii. 16 ff. *the host*] R.V. **the camp.** *in the morning watch*] The Jews anciently divided the night into three watches; the first watch (Lam. ii. 19) from sunset until 10 p.m.: the "middle watch" (Jud. vii. 19) from 10 p.m. till 2 a.m.: the "morning watch" from 2 a.m. till sunrise.

**12—15.** Confirmation of Saul as king. **13.** The execution even of malcontents would have clouded the general rejoicing; and Saul's best hope of uniting the kingdom lay in a policy of conciliation. Comp. x. 27; 2 Sam. xix. 22. *salvation*] R.V. **deliverance.** See note on v. 9. **14.** *to Gilgal*] See note on vii. 16.

*renew the kingdom*] Which had been founded in the national assembly at Mizpah (x. 25). **15.** Saul's sovereignty had received an unmistakable ratification in his victory over Nahash. He was now accepted by the general consent of the people. The assembly held after the general levy for the war was probably larger and more representative of the whole nation than the previous one at Mizpah. *sacrifices of peace offerings*] Thank-offerings for deliverance, and for the establishment of the kingdom.

XII. **1—25.** Samuel's farewell address to the people. The assembly at Gilgal marks an important epoch in Jewish history. It closed the period of the Judges, and inaugurated the new Monarchy. Samuel, though he was still to retain his authority as

a king over you. And now behold, the king walketh before 2 you: and I am old and grayheaded; and behold, my sons *are* with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood 3 unto this day. Behold, here I *am*: witness against me before 3 the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore *it* you. And 4 they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. And he 5 said unto them, The LORD *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness. And Samuel 6 said unto the people, *It is* the LORD that advanced Moses and

*Prophet*, now resigned his office as *Judge*, and in doing so delivered a solemn address to the people. (a) He challenges them to impeach his official purity (1—3), and is answered by the unanimous confirmation of his integrity (4, 5). (b) Recalling Jehovah's past mercies, he upbraids them with unbelief and ingratitude in demanding a king (6—12). (c) And now their future depends upon their bearing towards Jehovah, in confirmation of which he appeals to a miraculous sign (13—18). (d) Finally Samuel consoles the terrified people (19), by assuring them of Jehovah's faithfulness (20—22), and his own continued intercession (23), and concludes with a reiterated warning (24, 25).

2. *walketh before you*] Goes in and out in your presence in the exercise of his authority. *I am old &c.*] Samuel refers to the two reasons alleged by the elders in ch. viii. 5 for asking a king, (a) his own age, (b) the misgovernment of his sons. He mentions the first expressly, but with the natural reluctance of a father to dwell upon his sons' misconduct, only hints at the second.

*from my childhood*] R.V. **from my youth**. Samuel's public life may be said to have commenced when God first spoke to him in Shiloh (iii. 11).

3. *Behold, here I am*] R.V. omits *behold*. Samuel puts himself on his trial. The people are to be the accusers: Jehovah, and His representative Saul are the judges. *whose ox...whose ass*] The most valuable property of a pastoral and agricultural people. Comp. Ex. xx. 17; Num. xvi. 15.

*&c.*] Or, as R.V., **a ransom**. See Num. xxxv. 31, 32. Comp. Ex. xxiii. 8; Deut. xvi. 19; Am. v. 12. The Sept. has *from whose hand have I received as a bribe even a pair of shoes?* *Answer against me, and I will restore it to you.* A pair of shoes (i.e. sandals) was a proverbial expression for a mere trifle, a paltry bribe. See Amos ii. 6, viii. 6. Comp. Ecclesiasticus xlvi. 19, "And before his long sleep [Samuel] made protestations in the sight of the Lord and His anointed, I have not taken any man's goods, so much as a shoe: and no man did accuse him."

6. This verse forms the transition to what follows. Samuel identifies Jehovah, to whom they were now appealing as witness, with the God who brought their fathers out of Egypt. *advanced*] R.V. **appointed**; lit.

Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of  
 7 Egypt. Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you  
 before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which  
 8 he did to you and to your fathers. When Jacob was come *into*  
 Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD  
 sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out  
 9 of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. And when they  
 forgot the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera,  
 captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philis-  
 tines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought  
 10 against them. And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have  
 sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served  
 Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of  
 11 our enemies, and we will serve thee. And the LORD sent Jerub-  
 baal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you  
 out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled  
 12 safe. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of

*made*, comp. Hebrews iii. 2.

7. *that I may reason with you*

R.V. **that I may plead with you...concerning all the righteous acts** &c. The figure of a trial is still kept up; but the relation of the parties is changed. Samuel is now the accuser, Israel the defendant. Comp. Ezek. xx. 35, 36; Mic. vi. 1—5. *the righteous acts of the LORD*]

Punishments for sin and deliverances from distress alike proved the righteousness of Jehovah in His covenant with Israel. Comp. Jud. v. 11. 9. R.V. **But they forgot...and he sold them.**

God's abandonment of His people to their enemies is described under the figure of *sale*, just as the deliverance of them is called *redemption* or buying back. Comp. Jud. ii. 14, iii. 8; Ps. xlv. 12. The three chief oppressors of Israel during the period of the Judges are mentioned. (1) The Canaanites, who were led by Sisera. Their chief city was Hazor (= *stronghold*) situated on the high ground west of the Lake of Merom. See Jud. iv. v. (2) The Philistines. See Jud. iii. 31, x. 7, xiii. 1. (3) The Moabites under Eglon. See Jud. iii. 12—30. 10. Comp. Jud. x. 10, ii. 18, iii. 15, iv. 3, vi. 7.

**the Baalim and the Ashtaroth** (R.V.). See note on vii. 3.

11. Four typical deliverers of the nation are mentioned. (1) Jerubbaal, or Gideon, who brought the Midianite oppression to an end (Jud. vi.—viii.). (2) Bedan, a name not found in the Book of Judges, and probably a copyist's error for *Barak*, which is the reading of the Sept. and Syriac. See Jud. iv. 6 ff. There may however have been a judge named Bedan, of whom no other record has been preserved. (3) Jephthah the Gileadite, who routed the Ammonites (Jud. xi.). (4) Samuel, who includes himself as the last of the judges, and in order to point his rebuke of the Israelites for ingratitude to Jehovah by shewing that He had not forsaken them, but had continued His deliverances down to the present. 12. As the demand for a king preceded the invasion of Nahash recorded in ch. xi, the reference must be to

Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God *was* your king. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and 13 whom ye have desired: and behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey 14 his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: but if ye will not 15 obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers. Now therefore stand and see this 16 great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. *Is it* 17 not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder 18 and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for 19 thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king. And 20 Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; and turn ye not aside: for 21 *then should ye go after vain things*, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain. For the LORD will not forsake his 22

earlier inroads, or to a threatened attack. This reason for desiring a king is hinted at in viii. 20. *Nay*] Refusing to listen to my expostulations (viii. 6, 19). *when the LORD &c.*] Comp. Jud. viii. 23. 13. *desired*] R.V. **Asked for**, as in *vv.* 17, 19.

14. R.V. **If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and hearken unto his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of the LORD your God, well: but if ye will not hearken unto the voice &c.**

15. *as it was against your fathers*] As set forth in *v.* 9. The Sept. however reads *and against your king*, which offers a more complete parallel to *v.* 14. Comp. *v.* 25. 17. R.V. **I will call unto the LORD, that he may send &c.; and ye shall know and see that &c.**

"In ordinary seasons from the cessation of the showers in spring [about the end of April] until their commencement in October or November, rain never falls, and the sky is usually serene." *Robinson*. Wheat harvest was in May and June. "Rain in harvest" served as a figure for what was unseemly and anomalous (Prov. xxvi. 1). 18. The unexpected rain was a "sign," attesting the prophet's words. Comp. Ex. xiv. 31.

19. *Pray*] See note on vii. 5. 21. Better, as the Sept. in R.V. marg., *and turn ye not aside after the vanities which &c.*,

people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the  
 23 LORD to make you his people. Moreover as for me, God forbid  
 that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you:  
 24 but I will teach you the good and the right way: only fear the  
 LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider  
 25 how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still  
 do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

13 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years  
 2 over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel;  
*whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in  
 mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah  
 of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to  
 3 his tent. And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines  
 that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it*. And Saul  
 blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the

i.e. after false gods and idols.

22. *for his great name's sake*] Lest He should seem in the eyes of the heathen not to be such as He declares Himself to be, Almighty, True, Faithful. Comp. Ex. xxxii. 12; Num. xiv. 13 ff.; Josh. vii. 9. See also Rom. xi. 1, 2. *it hath pleased &c.*] God's free choice of Israel to be His

people is dwelt upon at length in Dent. vii. 6—11. *teach you*] R.V. **instruct you in.**

24. *how great things &c.*] Samuel concludes his speech as he began it (*vv.* 6, 7), with an appeal to God's gracious dealings with His people as the motive for loyal obedience.

XIII. 1—7. Revolt of the Israelites from the Philistines.

1. This verse is the common formula for denoting the age of a king at his accession, and the length of his reign. See 2 Sam. ii. 10, v. 4; 1 Kings xiv. 21, &c. But the numbers are wanting; and we must render, "**Saul was [—] years old when he began to reign, and reigned [—] and two years over Israel.**" Possibly 30 (which is inserted in some MSS. of the Sept.) should be supplied in the first place, and 20 or 30 in the second. Saul was in the prime of life when he was elected king, and his reign must have lasted some time. If he was only 30 years old at his accession, the events here narrated cannot have happened till 10 or 15 years afterwards, for Jonathan now appears as a stout warrior. See *Introd.* p. 8 f. The whole verse is omitted by the older MSS. of the Sept.

2. **And Saul chose him &c.** (R.V.). The formation of a *standing army* marks an important epoch in the history of a nation. Comp. xiv. 52. This body was only large enough to form a nucleus for the general levy of fighting men (*v.* 4). *in Michmash*] The villages of *Mākhmās* and *Jeba* preserve the names and mark the sites of Michmash and Geba. They stand on the N. and S. respectively of the *Wady es Suweinit*, a deep ravine with precipitous sides running from the highlands of Benjamin to Jericho.

*mount Beth-el*] R.V. **the mount of Beth-el**, the high ground between Beth-el and Michmash. *Jonathan*] The first mention of Saul's eldest son. His name means "Jehovah hath given," comp. the Greek *Theodore*.

3. *Saul blew the trumpet*] To

Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say *that* Saul had smitten 4 a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal. And the Philistines gathered 5 themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven. When the men of 6 Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And 7 *some of the* Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that 8 Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring 9 hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon 10 as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold,

prepare the people for an early summons to fight for their liberty. Comp. Jud. iii. 27, vi. 34; 2 Sam. xx. 1.

4. *a garrison*] R.V. **the garrison** (x. 5). The first blow was doubtless struck by Jonathan under Saul's direction.

*were called together &c.*] R.V. **were gathered together**. Gilgal (see note on vii. 15) was probably chosen as being the usual meeting-place, and the least exposed to an attack from the Philistines.

5. *thirty thousand chariots*] Perhaps a mistake for *a thousand* (comp. Jud. iv. 3). The number of chariots was always less than that of horsemen, and such a force of chariots would be useless in the mountainous country.

*people &c.*] i.e. infantry. *as the sand &c.*] Comp. Gen. xxii. 17, xli. 49; Josh. xi. 4; Ps. lxxviii. 27, &c.

*in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven*] Saul evacuated Michmash and withdrew to Gilgal. Jonathan still held Gibeah (v. 16). Beth-aven (= *house of naught*, i.e. *idols*) was near Ai, between Michmash and Beth-el (Josh. vii. 2). The position was an important one, commanding the chief approach from Gilgal to the heart of the country.

6. *in a strait*] In a difficulty: as it were, hemmed in and unable to turn in any direction (2 Sam. xxiv. 14). *did hide themselves*] Comp. Jud. vi. 2. *in high places*]

R.V. **holds**, marg. *holes*; either forts (Jud. ix. 46, 49), or caves.

7. R.V. **Now some of the Hebrews had gone over Jordan &c.; but as for Saul &c.** Some of the people fled; but most of them, though in great alarm, remained with Saul.

8—14. Saul's disobedience and its penalty. 8. Though many years had passed since the command of x. 8 was given, the spirit of it survived. Saul was not to begin the war of independence until commissioned to do so by Samuel.

9. R.V. **the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings**, which were ready, awaiting

- Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.
- And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men. And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. And the spoilers came out of the camp

Samuel's arrival. 11. Saul's army was hourly melting away. Scarcely ten miles distant was the Philistine host, ready to pour down and crush him. How could he take the field without intreating God's favour? Was not this sufficient excuse for his conduct?

12. R.V. **Now will the Philistines come down &c. and I have not intreated the favour of the LORD.**

13, 14. Saul's sin seems excusable and scarcely deserving of so heavy a punishment. But it involved the whole principle of the subordination of the theocratic king to the Will of Jehovah as expressed by His prophets. On the one hand it shewed a distrust of God, as though God after choosing him for this work could forsake him in the hour of need: on the other hand it shewed a spirit of self-assertion, as though he could make war by himself without the counsel of God communicated through His prophet. Such a character was unfit for the office of king.

*for ever*] i.e. permanently. Comp. i. 22. 14. *a man after his own heart*] Quoted by St Paul in his discourse at Antioch (Acts xiii. 22). Comp. Ps. lxxxix. 20. *hath commanded him to be captain*] R.V. **hath appointed him to be prince.**

15—18. The Philistine invasion. After Samuel's departure Saul marched up to join Jonathan at Gibeah or Geba.

*about six hundred men*] Comp. xiv. 2. Saul's precipitate action failed to produce the desired result of holding the army together.

16. *in Gibeah*] R.V. **in Geba.** The positions of *vv.* 2, 3 are now reversed, the Philistines occupying Michmash on the N. side of the valley, Saul and Jonathan holding Geba on the S. side.



of the Philistines *in* three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: and another company turned the way to Beth-horon: and 18 another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. Now there 19 was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make *them* swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, 20 to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. Yet they had a file for the mattocks, 21 and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. So it came to pass in the day of battle, 22 that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found. And the 23 garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of 14 Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that *is* on the other side. But he told not his father. And Saul tarried in 2

17. Bands of marauders used to go out (a) northward to Ophrah in Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 23), in the land of *Shual* (i.e. jackal) possibly *Shalim* (ix. 4): (b) westward to *Beth-horon* on the main pass from Judæa into the plain of Philistia: (c) eastward by *the way of the border*, probably that between Judah and Benjamin, **that looketh down upon the valley of Zeboim** (=the ravine of hyenas) towards the wilderness or uncultivated district between the central district of Benjamin and the Jordau valley. Southwards, Saul's camp in Geba protected the country.

19—23. The disarmament of the Israelites. A proof of the severity of the Philistine oppression, and the difficulties against which Saul had to contend. 20. *to sharpen*] Lit. "to sharpen by forging."

21. For the ordinary sharpening of tools they had files, but for any forging work they had to go to the Philistines. But the meaning may be, *when the edges of the mattocks... and of the axes were blunt* (R.V. marg.). The words, *and to set* (i.e. sharpen or point) *the goads*, depend on "the Israelites went down to the Philistines." The sentence *yet they...axes* is a parenthesis.

23. *the passage of Michmash*] By the **pass of Michmash** (R.V.) (comp. Is. x. 29), is meant the deep ravine now known as the *Wady es Suweinit* (v. 2, note). The Philistines threw out an advanced post to one of the bluffs on the very edge of the valley, with the view of watching the Israelites in Geba opposite. It was this post which Jonathan attacked.

XIV. 1—15. Jonathan's deed of daring. 1. R.V. **Now it fell upon a day, that Jonathan &c.** *that bare his armour*]

A confidential attendant like the *squire* of the middle ages.

*But he told not his father*] For fear lest he should forbid so hazard.

the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about  
 3 six hundred men; and Abiah, the son of Ahitub, I-chabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that  
 4 Jonathan was gone. And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the  
 5 other Seneh. The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against  
 6 Gibeah. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.  
 7 And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine

ous an attempt. *vv. 2—5* describe the circumstances under which the attack was made. *v. 6* resumes the thread of the narrative by a repetition of Jonathan's words. The vivid detail marks the account of one familiar with the spot.

2. R.V. **And Saul abode...under the pomegranate tree** &c. Comp. xxii. 6. *Migron = precipice*, a different place from that mentioned in Is. x. 28, which was N. of Michmash. 3. **Ahijah** (R.V.), was Ahimelech's brother and predecessor in the high-priesthood (xxii. 9); unless both names were borne by the same person.

*the Lord's priest in Shiloh*] These words refer to Eli, not to Ahijah. Shiloh had ceased to be the religious centre of the nation. *wearing an ephod*] i.e. officiating as high-priest. See note on ii. 18. His presence is noticed to prepare the way for the fact mentioned in *v. 18 ff.*

4. The scene of Jonathan's adventure is accurately described. The **passes** (R.V.) appear to be ravines running down into the main valley, by which it was possible to get down and cross over. *a sharp rock*] R.V.

**a rocky crag**: lit. "a tooth of the rock." Comp. note on vii. 12.

*Bozez*, i.e. *shining*, was a natural name for the chalky crag on the northern side, gleaming in the full light of the sun. The southern crag was called *Seneh*, i.e. the *acacia*, and the valley takes its modern name of *Wady es Sureinit* from the acacias which dot its course.

5. R.V. **The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.**

6. *these uncircumcised*] Jonathan's hope of success was based on the fact that the Philistines stood in no covenant relation to Jehovah, as Israel did. *there is no restraint* &c.] i.e. He can do the one as easily as the other. See ch. xvii. 46, 47; Jud. vii. 4, 7; 2 Chron. xiv. 11; and the noble words of Judas Maccabæus before the battle of Beth-horon (1 Macc. iii. 16—21): "With the God of heaven it is all one to deliver with a great multitude or with a small company; for the victory of battle standeth not in the multitude of an host; but strength

heart: turn thee; behold, I *am* with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto 8 *these men*, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they 9 say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if 10 they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this *shall be* a sign unto us. And both of them discovered themselves unto 11 the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered 12 Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon 13 his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him. And *that* first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armour- 14 bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were a half acre of land, *which a yoke of oxen might plow*. And there was 15 trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.

And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; 16 and behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down *one another*. Then said Saul unto the people 17 that *were* with him, Number now, and see who is gone from

cometh from heaven." Comp. Heb. xi. 34. 10. *this shall be the sign* (R.V.), the indication of God's will. Comp. Gen. xxiv. 14; Jud. vi. 36 ff., and ch. ii. 34, note. 11. *the holes &c.*] See

xiii. 6. There are numerous caverns in the limestone rocks of the district.

12. *we will shew you a thing*] Either, "give you some information;" or, "teach you a lesson." Perhaps a colloquial phrase, used of course contemptuously.

14. **Within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land** (R.V.); in a distance no more than half the length of one side of such a square measure of land as a yoke of oxen would plough in a day. Or, as R.V. marg., *within as it were half an acre of land*; within a small area.

15. *in the host*] **In the camp** (R.V.) of the main army, as distinguished from the outpost which Jonathan had attacked.

*the earth quaked*] Probably a forcible way of describing the tumult in the Philistine host (cp. iv. 5), though possibly an earthquake augmented the general panic, as at the Exodus (Ps. lxxvii. 18). Comp. the storm at Eben-ezer (ch. vii. 10).

**So there was an exceeding great trembling** (R.V.): lit. *a trembling of God*, a supernatural panic. Comp. 2 Kings vii. 6.

16—23. The rout of the Philistines. 16. *they went on &c.*] R.V. **they went hither and thither**: they fled in all directions.

us. And when they had numbered, behold Jonathan and his  
 18 armourbearer *were not there*. And Saul said unto Ahiah,  
 Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that  
 19 time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass, while  
 Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that *was* in the host  
 of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto  
 20 the priest, Withdraw thine hand. And Saul and all the people  
 that *were* with him assembled themselves, and they came to  
 the battle: and behold, every man's sword was against his  
 21 fellow, *and there was* a very great discomfiture. Moreover the  
 Hebrews *that were* with the Philistines before that time, which  
 went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about,  
 even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that *were* with  
 22 Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which had  
 hid themselves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the  
 Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the  
 23 battle. So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle  
 passed over *unto* Beth-aven.

24 And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul  
 had adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth  
*any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine

18. Saul wished to "inquire of God" before going to battle. See Num. xxvii. 21. But (1) we have had no mention of the transportation of the Ark from Kirjath-jearim; (2) not the Ark, but the Ephod with Urim and Thummim was the regular instrument for ascertaining the will of God; (3) "bring hither" is a term applied to the Ephod (xxiii. 9, xxx. 7) but not to the Ark. It is best therefore to follow the reading of the Sept.; *Bring hither the Ephod. For he wore the Ephod at that time before Israel.* 19. noise] R.V. **tumult.**

host] R.V. **camp.** Withdraw thine hand] Desist from the inquiry. With characteristic impatience Saul would not wait for God's answer. 20. every man's sword &c.] Comp. Jud. vii. 22; 2 Chr. xx. 23.

21. the Hebrews &c.] Those who had deserted to the Philistines, or been impressed into their service. The name "Hebrews" by which they were known to the Philistines is used to distinguish them from the "Israelites" who had not submitted to their oppressors. 23. So the Lord saved Israel] Comp. Ex. xiv. 30; 2 Chr. xxxii. 22.

unto Beth-aven] R.V. **by B.** Saul crossed the valley from Geba to Michmash, and drove the Philistines back in a north-westerly direction to Beth-aven, half way between Michmash and Beth-el. Thence the pursuit was across the watershed, and down the pass of Beth-horon to Aijalon, where the valley opens out towards the plain of Philistia (Josh. x. 10). The whole distance was between 15 and 20 miles.

24—30. Jonathan's breach of Saul's rash oath. 24. for Saul &c.] R.V. **but Saul adjured the people...until it be evening, and I be avenged &c.** Seeing the fatigued condition of the army, and fearing lest they should relinquish the pursuit to get food, Saul rashly exacted from them an oath, which

enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food. And all 25 *they of* the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground. And when the people were come into the wood, 26 behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan heard 27 not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipt it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. Then answered one of the people, 28 and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food *this* day. And the people were faint. Then said Jonathan, My father 29 hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How 30 much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to 31 Aijalon: and the people were very faint. And the people flew 32 upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground: and the people did eat *them* with the blood. Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin 33 against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me *this* day. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, 34 and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay *them* here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him *that* night, and slew *them*

led to three evil results. (1) It hindered instead of facilitating the pursuit of the enemy. (2) It involved Jonathan in an involuntary trespass. (3) It indirectly occasioned the sin of the people (*v.* 32).

25. R.V. **And all the people came into the forest.**

26. *behold the honey dropped*] Lit. **behold a stream of honey.** Palestine is literally "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. iii. 8). Wild bees settle in vast numbers in the clefts of the limestone rocks and in the trees. Comp. Matt. iii. 4.

27. *his eyes were enlightened*] He was refreshed and strengthened. Comp. Ps. xiii. 3. 28. *straitly*] i.e. strictly (Ex. xiii. 19; Josh. vi. 1).

29. *hath troubled*] Comp. Josh. vii. 25. 30. *for had there not been now &c.*] Or, as R.V. (retaining A.V. in marg.) **for now hath there been no great slaughter &c.**

31—35. The sin of the people. 31. *from Michmash to Aijalon*] See note on *v.* 23. 32. As soon as it was evening, the famished people hastened to satisfy their hunger, and in doing so transgressed the primeval prohibition (Gen. ix. 4), re-enacted in the Mosaic law (Lev. xvii. 10—14), and observed in the early days of

35 there. And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

36 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto

37 God. And Saul asked *counsel* of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel?

38 But he answered him not that day. And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see

39 wherein this sin hath been *this* day. For, *as* the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was not a man* among all the people that

40 answered him. Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto

41 thee. Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the

42 people escaped. And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and

43 Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end

44 of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and* lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely

45 die, Jonathan. And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: *as* the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his

the Christian Church (Acts xv. 20). 35. The altar was erected as a thank-offering for the victory. "The great stone" most likely formed part of it.

36—46. The consequence of Jonathan's transgression.

36. Ahijah checks Saul's eagerness, reminding him that it was necessary first to ascertain the will of God. 38. *all the*

*chief*] R.V. **all ye chiefs**, Heb. *corners* (Jud. xx. 2), probably the elders or heads of houses. *this sin*] Saul assumes

that some sin must have caused God to refuse an answer, as Achan's trespass led Him to withdraw His Presence and abandon Israel to defeat (Josh. vii. 11, 12). Jonathan's transgression of the oath, although unintentional, was an offence against God's Name (Ex. xx. 7) which could not be left unnoticed. 41. *Give a perfect*

*lot*] Or, as R.V., **Shew the right**. *And Saul &c.*] R.V.

**And Jonathan and Saul were taken** *by lot*. 43. *Tell*

*me*] Comp. Josh. vii. 19. *I did but taste &c.*] **I did**

**certainly taste...here I am: I will die**. Jonathan's words are not a lamentation over his fate, as the A.V. implies, but a confession that the guilt, though involuntary, was his, and an heroic expression of readiness to sacrifice his life for his country even in the hour of victory. 45. *there shall not one hair &c.*]

head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. Then 46 Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against 47 all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed *them*. And he gathered a host, and 48 smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them. Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, 49 and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters *were these*; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: and the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, 50 the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host *was* Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And Kish *was* 51 the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel. And there was sore war against the Philistines all the 52 days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

See 2 Sam. xiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 30; Luke xxi. 18; Acts xxvii. 34.

**47—52.** Summary account of Saul's wars and family.

**47.** R.V. **Now when Saul had taken...he fought &c.]** Saul's chief wars are here summarily noticed. (1) Against Moab. See note on xi. 1. (2) Against the Ammonites as recorded in ch. xi., and perhaps upon other occasions. (3) Against the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, surnamed Edom (Gen. xxv. 30), who occupied Edom or Idumæa, previously called Mount Seir (= *rugged*), the mountainous district stretching from the Dead Sea to the head of the gulf of Elath. Comp. 2 Sam. viii. 14; 2 Kings viii. 20. (4) Against the Syrian kingdom of Zobah on the north-east, between Damascus and the Euphrates, comp. 2 Sam. viii. 3—10. (5) Against the Philistines throughout his reign (*v.* 52). No detailed account of the wars against Moab, Edom, and Zobah is given, for the object of the book is not to give a complete history of Saul's reign, but to describe its salient features, and the sins which led to his rejection.

*he vexed them]* Or, as R.V. marg., *he put them to the worse*. The Sept. has *he was victorious*. **48.** *gathered a host]*

R.V. **did valiantly**, as in Num. xxiv. 18; Ps. lx. 12. *smote the Amalekites]* See ch. xv. **49.** **Ishvi** (R.V.) is either another name for Abinadab (ch. xxxi. 2; 1 Chr. x. 2; viii. 33; ix. 39), or an error in the Heb. text.

**50, 51.** It is probably Ner (not Abner) who is described as *Saul's uncle*, so that Saul and Abner were first cousins. *v.* 51 should be read, according to Josephus, "**And Kish the father of Saul and Ner the father of Abner were the sons of Abiel.**" **52.** *he took him]* to serve in his permanent corps of picked soldiers (xiii. 2).

- 15 Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore  
 2 hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up  
 3 from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.  
 4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men  
 5 of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait

XV. 1—9. Saul's commission to destroy Amalek. Some persons have found it hard to understand how commands such as this could be given by God, or executed by the Israelites without injury to their moral consciousness. The question is too large to discuss here; but it should be remembered, (1) that nations as well as individuals must be punished; and as the law inflicts the punishment of death in certain cases, so God may see that a nation by its crimes has forfeited its right to exist any longer: (2) that exterminating wars were not contrary to the spirit of those ancient times, so that God could employ the Israelites to execute His sentence without their feeling anything strange in the command. Such commands were accommodated to the moral and religious state of the age and nation to which they were given. In the Gospel a higher conception of justice and mercy and man's duty to his fellow man has been revealed.

1. *Samuel also said*] R.V. **And Samuel said.** How long after the repulse of the Philistines this happened we are not told. Some years must be allowed for the evident development of that wilfulness which was Saul's ruin.

2. *I remember*] R.V. **I have marked.** The marg. *I will visit* is a doubtful rendering. *Amalek*] The Amalekites were a nomad people roaming over the wilderness which lies to the south and south-west of Palestine and stretches down into the peninsula of Sinai. They disputed the passage of the Israelites, but were defeated at Rephidim (Ex. xvii. 8). Upon a later occasion they joined with the Canaanites, and were victorious in a battle near Hormah (Num. xiv. 45). In league with the Moabites (Jud. iii. 13) and Midianites (Jud. vi. 3) they continued to harass the Israelites after their entrance into Canaan. The time had now come for the execution of the sentence pronounced upon them for opposing the progress of God's people (Ex. xvii. 16; Num. xxiv. 20; Deut. xxv. 17—19).

*laid wait for him*] R.V. **set himself against him.** 3. *utterly destroy*] Heb. *devote*. Since that which was *devoted* might not be taken as spoil, it comes to signify *utterly destroy*. See Lev. xxvii. 28, 29; Josh. vi. 17 ff.

4. *gathered the people together*] R.V. **summoned the people.** *Telaim*] Perhaps the same as *Telem* (Josh. xv. 24), in the southern border of Judah. *two hundred thousand*] From the other tribes, exclusive of Judah. Comp. xi. 8. 5. *a city*] R.V. **the city.** The capital or chief settlement was called *Ir-*



in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, 6  
 get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you  
 with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel,  
 when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed  
 from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites 7  
 from Havilah *until* thou comest to Shur, that *is* over against  
 Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, 8  
 and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.  
 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, 9  
 and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all  
*that was good*, and would not utterly destroy them: but every  
 thing *that was vile* and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It <sup>10</sup>  
 repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is <sup>11</sup>

*Amalek* = "the city of Amalek," as Rabbah was called *Ar* or *Ir-Moab* = "the city of Moab" (Num. xxi. 28, xxii. 36).

6. The Kenites were an offshoot from the Midianites. The services done to Israel by Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and his son Hobab (Ex. xviii.; Num. x. 29—32) led to a firm alliance. The Kenites accompanied the Israelites as far as Jericho (Jud. i. 16), and then went and dwelt among the Amalekites in the desert to the south of Judah. Comp. xxvii. 10, xxx. 29. 7. R.V. from

**Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt.** Comp. Gen. xxv. 18. *Havilah* is supposed to be a district of Arabia. *Shur* is repeatedly mentioned in connexion with the route from Palestine to Egypt. (Gen. xvi. 7, xx. 1; Ex. xv. 22; 1 Sam. xxvii. 8.) *Shur* means *wall*, and the name may have been derived from a wall which anciently defended the north-eastern frontier of Egypt.

8. *Agag*] *Agag* perhaps means "fiery." As the name is found in Num. xxiv. 7, it was probably an hereditary title, like Pharaoh among the Egyptians. *all the people*] All who fell into their hands. Some escaped, and continued a guerilla warfare against the Israelites (xxvii. 8, xxx. 1; 2 Sam. viii. 12). Comp. 1 Chr. iv. 43.

9. *spared Agag*] Perhaps to grace his triumph (Jud. i. 7): perhaps from a feeling of sympathy (1 Kings xx. 32).

*and the best of the sheep &c.*] In direct violation of the Divine command. The people were to take no spoil, because the war was undertaken in the execution of a Divine vengeance.

10—23. Saul's disobedience and its penalty. 11. *It repenteth me*] In the language of the O.T. God is said to repent when a change in the character and conduct of those with whom He is dealing leads to a corresponding change in His purposes towards them. Thus (a) upon man's penitence God repents and withdraws a threatened punishment (Ex. xxxii. 14; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16): (b) upon man's disobedience He cancels a promise or revokes a blessing which He had given. The opposite is also true, "God is not a man that He should repent" (v. 29). His repentance is not to be understood as though He who foreknows all things *regretted* His action, nor is it a sign of mutability. A change in the attitude of man to God neces-

turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me *this* night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which

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sarily involves a corresponding change in the attitude of God to man. *it grieved Samuel*] Or, as R.V., **Samuel was wroth**, at Saul's disobedience. *he cried unto the Lord all night*] Interceding for Saul. Comp. ch. vii. 5; Ex. xxxii. 11—13.

**12.** *Carmel*] = "park" or "garden," a city in the mountainous country of Judah, about seven miles S.S.E. of Hebron.

*a place*] R.V. **a monument**, or trophy of his victory.

**13.** He attempts to conciliate Samuel with a friendly greeting.

**15.** Saul tries (*a*) like Aaron at Sinai (Ex. xxxii. 22), to shift the blame from himself on to others; (*b*) to palliate the offence by alleging a good motive. **16.** *Stay*] Forbear! cease these flimsy excuses.

**17.** **Though thou wast little** &c. (R.V.). Comp. ix. 21. One who had been so remarkably raised to the throne was specially bound to obey God. Or, as R.V. marg. *Though thou be little...art thou not head of the tribes of Israel*. Saul may depreciate his authority, but he cannot disown the responsibilities of his position.

**18.** *the sinners the Amalekites*] The special sin which marked them out for punishment was their opposition to the purpose of God for his people Israel. **20, 21.** Saul still persists in trying to defend his conduct.

**21.** *the chief...destroyed*] R.V. **the chief of the devoted things**. It might seem a praiseworthy

should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, 22

Hath the LORD *as great delight* in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice,

And to hearken than the fat of rams.

For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, 23

And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.

Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD,

He hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have trans- 24  
gressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because  
I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, 25  
I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I  
may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will 26  
not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the  
LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over  
Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold 27  
upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said 28  
unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from

act to reserve the spoil for sacrifice: but since it was "devoted," it did not belong to the Israelites, and no offering could be made of it.

22. With a burst of prophetic inspiration Samuel rends asunder Saul's tissue of excuses, and lays bare his sin. His words are the key-note of the long remonstrance of the prophets in subsequent ages against the too common error of supposing that external ceremonial can be of any value in the sight of God when separated from the true devotion of the worshipper's heart which it symbolizes. See Ps. xl. 6—8, l. 8 ff., li. 16, 17; Is. i. 11—15; Jer. vi. 20; Hos. vi. 6; Amos v. 21—24; Micah vi. 6—8; Mt. ix. 13, xii. 7. The rhythmical form of the original adds force and solemnity.

23. Opposition to the will of God is as bad as divination by the help of evil spirits, which is an act of apostasy from God: resistance to Him is no better than **idolatry and teraphim** (R.V.) i.e. image worship. See note on xix. 13. Disobedience elevates self-will into a god. There seems to be an allusion to Saul's zeal in abolishing witchcraft (xxviii. 3). Samuel charges him with being not less guilty than those whom he had been so eager to condemn.

24—31. The rejection of Saul. 24. Though a formal confession of his sin is extorted from Saul he does not humble himself before God in genuine penitence. He still tries to shift the blame on to the people, and his chief anxiety is lest the breach between Samuel and himself should weaken his authority (v. 30). Contrast David's heartfelt repentance (2 Sam. xii. 13; Ps. li. 4).

27. As Samuel turned to go Saul seized him by his robe to detain him, and a piece of it was torn off. The accident served Samuel as an emblem of the complete severance of the sovereignty from Saul. Comp.

thee *this* day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that*  
 29 *is* better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not  
 lie nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that *he* should repent.

30 Then he said, I have sinned: *yet* honour me now, I pray thee,  
 before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn  
 31 again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. So  
 Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

32 Then said Samuel, Bring you hither to me Agag the king of  
 the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And

33 Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel  
 said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy  
 mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag

34 in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. Then Samuel went to  
 Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul.

35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his  
 death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD  
 repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

16 And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn  
 for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?  
 fill thine horn *with* oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the  
 Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill

1 Kings xi. 30, 31.

29. *the Strength of Israel*] Or *Victory, or Glory* (R.V. marg.). This word, which occurs here only as a title of God, combines the ideas of *stability, permanence, constancy*: the Strength or Confidence of Israel does not change as men do.

*will not lie nor repent*] Comp. Num. xxiii. 19. There is a verbal contradiction between this utterance and *v. 11*, which is usually explained by saying that in *v. 11* the historian uses language *according to the manner of men*, while here the prophet speaks *as befits the nature of God*. But we may go further and say that just because God is unchangeable in His dealing with men He must seem to change His action as they change their conduct.

30. *honour me now &c.*] John v. 44 and xii. 43 point to the radical defect in Saul's character.

31. Samuel changed his purpose in order to maintain the honour of the king.

32—35. The execution of Agag. Samuel's departure.

32. *delicately*] Or, as R.V. marg., **cheerfully**: not fearing any harm from the prophet, as the king had spared his life.

*Surely &c.*] This was what Agag said to himself, expecting to be spared.

33. By the law of retaliation Agag's life was forfeit (cp. Jud. i. 7), and Samuel solemnly executed the Divine sentence which Saul had neglected.

XVI. 1—13. The choice of Saul's successor. 1. *from*

*reigning*] R.V. **from being king**. *Jesse the Beth-lehemite*] grandson of Ruth the Moabitess, and belonging to the tribe of Judah through the line of his male ancestors (Ruth iv. 18—22).

2. For David's safety no less than his own it was necessary that the purpose of Samuel's errand should not be known.

me. And the LORD said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did *that* which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest,

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Samuel concealed the primary intention and mentioned only the secondary object of his visit. 4. *Beth-lehem*] Beth-lehem

(=house of bread) was the later name of the ancient town of Ephrath (Gen. xlviii. 7). It was situated about five miles south of Jerusalem.

4. **And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling** (R.V.): either expecting some rebuke; or fearing to incur Saul's displeasure by welcoming him. 5. *sanctify yourselves*] By the usual ceremonial purifications, such as washing the body and clothes, the outward symbols of spiritual preparation. See Gen. xxxv. 2; Ex. xix. 10 ff. *And he sanctified &c.*]

In the case of Jesse's family Samuel superintended the purification himself. This gave him the opportunity of a private interview with them in Jesse's house, at which David's anointing took place. The sacrifice followed afterwards.

6. *and said*] Said to himself: thought. "Eliab by his height and his countenance seemed the natural counterpart of Saul, whose successor the Prophet came to select." *Stanley*. Eliab is called Elihu in 1 Chr. xxvii. 18.

7. *refused*] R.V. **rejected**, as in v. 1. *for the LORD &c.*] See 1 Chr. xxviii. 9; Lk. xvi. 15; Acts i. 24; &c. God first gave the people a king of stately stature and majestic appearance, such as they would have chosen for themselves (x. 24): now He will choose "a man after His own heart" on the true ground of his inner moral worth.

9. *Shammah*] Also called *Shimeah* (2 Sam. xiii. 3), or *Shimea* (1 Chr. xx. 7).

10. *Again, Jesse made &c.*] R.V. **And Jesse made &c.** The three already named

and behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he  
 12 come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.  
 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14 But the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil  
 15 spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.  
 16 Let our lord now command thy servants *which are* before thee, to seek out a man, *who is* a cunning player on a harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee,  
 17 that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can  
 18 play well, and bring *him* to me. Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely

are of course included. 11. *sit down*] Lit. *sit around* the table for the sacrificial feast. 12. *ruddy*] The word denotes the red hair and fair skin which are regarded as a mark of beauty in southern countries, where the hair and complexion are generally dark. *of a beautiful countenance &c.*] Comp. Gen. xxxix. 6; Ex. ii. 2; Acts vii. 20. *to look to*] R.V. **to look upon**.

13. *came upon*] R.V. **came mightily upon**. As upon Saul at the first (x. 6). The special preparation for his office began from that hour. *David*] The name means "beloved" or "darling," and was probably given to him as the youngest of the family.

14—23. David's introduction to the Court of Saul.

14. **Now the spirit of the LORD had departed &c.** (R.V.). Note the contrast to *v.* 13. As David rose, Saul sank. *an evil spirit from the LORD*] The cause of Saul's mental disorder is described as "an evil spirit from Jehovah," or "of Jehovah" (xix. 9); "an evil spirit of God" (*vv.* 15, 16, xviii. 10); "the spirit of evil" (*v.* 23); even "the spirit of (from) God" (*v.* 23); because it was God's messenger of judgment. Comp. 1 Kings xxii. 19—22. The cause of the disease was (as we commonly speak) "supernatural," the cure employed "natural."

16. *cunning*] In its original sense of *knowing, skilful*, without any idea of underhand dealing. *thou shalt be well*] The power of music to restore the harmony of a troubled mind is well known. 18. *one of the servants*] R.V. **one of the young men** (xiv. 1) or military attendants: the word used in *vv.* 15, 16, 17 includes the servants in general. *a mighty valiant man &c.*] See xvii. 32—36. "A man of war" describes his capacity and promise rather than his actual experience.

*prudent in matters*] i.e. business. Or, *skilful in speech*, eloquent.

person, and the LORD *is* with him. Wherefore Saul sent 19 messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which *is* with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass *laden* with 20 bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent *them* by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before 21 him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray 22 thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon 23 Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, 17 and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered 2 together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on 3 a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a valley between them. And 4 there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines,

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*the Lord is with him*] See note on iii. 19. 20. Cp. x. 4, 27. The character of the presents offered to the king shews the simplicity of the manners of the age. 22. David thus entered upon the first stage of special education for his office. In Saul's court he was placed in a position which gave opportunity for the development of his powers, and for gaining the esteem and love of the people. 23. The tense of the verbs in this verse expresses what happened *repeatedly*.

XVII. 1—3. The Philistine invasion. 1, 2. **The vale of Elah** (i.e. *the terebinth*) runs in a N.W. direction from the hills of Judah near Hebron. Up this the Philistines marched to their rendezvous at **Socoh**, now *Shuweikeh*, about 16 miles S.W. of Jerusalem on the road to Gaza. They pitched their camp in Ephes-dammim (comp. 1 Chron. xi. 13) i.e. *the boundary of bloodshed*, probably so named as the scene of frequent skirmishes with the Philistines. Azekah is mentioned in Josh. x. 10, but the site is uncertain. *by the valley of Elah*] R.V. in **the vale of Elah**. 3. *on a mountain &c.*] Lit. **on the mountain...on the mountain...and the ravine were between them**. The Israelites encamped on the eastern, the Philistines on the western slopes of the broad open **vale**. They were separated by the stream-bed or ravine at the bottom of the vale, which is described by travellers as "a deep trench with vertical sides, impassable except at certain places—a valley in a valley, and a natural barrier between the two hosts." *Conder*. 4—11. Goliath's challenge. 4. *a champion*] The Heb. means a man who fights in the space between the camps, challenging

named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. And *he had* a helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass. And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him. And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

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his enemies to engage in single combat with him. *Goliath of Gath*] A survivor probably of the ancient race of *Anakim* (Josh. xi. 21, 22). *six cubits and a span*] The *cubit*, or distance from the elbow to the extremity of the middle finger, is variously estimated at from 18 to 21 inches: the *span*, or distance between the extremities of the thumb and little finger in the outstretched hand, is reckoned as half a cubit: so that Goliath's height was between nine feet nine inches and eleven feet four inches. The most probable estimate is about ten feet three inches. **5. clad with a coat of mail** (R.V.), made of overlapping plates of metal, and protecting the body almost down to the knees. *five thousand shekels*] Estimated at about 157 pounds. **6. greaves**] Armour for the legs and feet: from Fr. *grève*, 'the shin.' *brass*] Or rather **bronze**, a compound of copper and tin. *Brass* (copper and zinc) was unknown to the ancients. *a target*] i.e. a small shield. So the Sept. and Vulg. But the Heb. word means **a javelin**, which was slung across his shoulders. **7.** The 'staff,' i.e. **shaft** of Goliath's spear, short, but extraordinarily stout and heavy, is compared to the "beam" to which the web is fastened in a loom (comp. 2 Sam. xxi. 19). The iron spear-head weighed nearly nineteen pounds. *one bearing a shield*] **his shield-bearer** *went before him*, carrying a shield large enough to protect the whole body. **8.** *am not I a Philistine*] Lit. **the Philistine**; the representative of the nation. **10.** *defy*] Or, as R.V. marg., *reproach*. Such a challenge was a disgrace so long as it remained unanswered. Comp. v. 26.

**12—31.** David's errand to the camp. The Sept. (as is noted in R.V. marg.) omits vv. 12—31, 55—58; xviii. 1—5: and also (though this is not noted) xviii. 9—11, 17—19, 21 (part); and a few other verses in chaps. xvii. xviii. The result of these omissions is a simple and easy narrative. David, as Saul's armour-bearer (xvi. 21), has



Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-<sup>12</sup> Judah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul. And the three eldest sons of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to <sup>13</sup> the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. And David *was* the youngest: and <sup>14</sup> the three eldest followed Saul. But David went and returned <sup>15</sup> from Saul to feed his father's sheep *at* Beth-lehem. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now <sup>17</sup> for thy brethren an ephah of this parched *corn*, and these ten loaves, and run *to* the camp to thy brethren; and carry these <sup>18</sup> ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. Now Saul, and they, <sup>19</sup>

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accompanied him into the vale of Elah: he challenges and slays Goliath: on his return he is welcomed by the songs of the women of Israel: by his further successes he wins the affections of the people and the love of Michal. Three stages in the development of Saul's enmity are clearly marked: (a) xviii. 12, "he was afraid of him;" (b) xviii. 15, "he stood in awe of him," and endeavoured indirectly to get rid of him; (c) xviii. 29, xix. 1, "he was yet more afraid of David," and openly expressed his wish that he should be slain. The Hebrew text, on the other hand, appears to combine two accounts of David's introduction to the court of Saul. Ch. xvi. 19 ff. relates how David was summoned to court for his musical skill, won Saul's affection, and became his armour-bearer: whereas in ch. xvii. we find him absent from the army in time of war, and only accidentally brought to the camp by an errand to his brothers: regarded as a mere shepherd-boy unaccustomed to the use of weapons: unknown apparently to the king and to Abner. It seems probable that the Septuagint preserves these chapters in their original form and that additions were afterwards made to the Heb. text from some other account of David's life. Perhaps the two narratives might be satisfactorily harmonized if we had all the facts before us: as it is, the difficulties must be candidly acknowledged.

12. *Ephrathite*] = of *Ephrath*, the old name of Bethlehem, which is here called in full *Beth-lehem-judah*, i.e. Bethlehem in Judah. *and the man &c.*] R.V. **and the man was**

**an old man in the days of Saul, stricken in years among men.** Jesse's age is mentioned to account for his absence from the army. 13. R.V. **And the three eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul &c.** 15. R.V. **Now David went to**

**and fro from Saul &c.** 17. *parched corn*] Fresh corn roasted in a pan, still a common article of food in Palestine. Comp. Ruth ii. 14; 1 Sam. xxv. 18; 2 Sam. xvii. 28. *run*] R.V. **carry them quickly.** 18. *look &c.*] Visit thy brethren, inquire after their welfare (Gen. xxxvii. 14), and bring home some token from them that they are well; the equivalent of a letter.

and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting  
 20 with the Philistines. And David rose up early in the morning,  
 and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse  
 had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host  
 21 was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle. For  
 Israel and the Philistines had put *the battle* in array, army  
 22 against army. And David left his carriage in the hand of the  
 keeper of the carriage, and ran *into* the army, and came and  
 23 saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them, behold,  
 there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath  
 by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake ac-  
 24 cording to the same words: and David heard *them*. And all  
 the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and  
 25 were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen  
 this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up:  
 and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will  
 enrich him *with* great riches, and will give him his daughter,  
 26 and make his father's house free in Israel. And David spake  
 to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to  
 the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the re-  
 proach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine,  
 27 that he should defy the armies of the living God? And the  
 people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be  
 28 done to the man that killeth him. And Eliab his eldest brother  
 heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was  
 kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down  
 hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the  
 wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine

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19. Or, as R.V. marg. **Now Saul and they...are** &c., i.e. it is Jesse's direction to David where to find his brothers.

20. *the trench*] R.V. **the place of the wagons**, where the baggage wagons of the army were kept. Or, as R.V. marg., **the barricade**, formed by the baggage wagons round the camp. Comp. xxvi. 5, 7.

*shouted for the battle*] Raised the 'slogan' or war-cry, like Gideon's "For the LORD and for Gideon" (Jud. vii. 18). Comp. Josh. vi. 5 ff.

21. *For Israel.....had put*] R.V. **And Israel.....put** &c.

22. *his carriage*] i.e. as always in the A.V., "that which is carried," **baggage**. See Jud. xviii. 21; Is. x. 28; Acts xxi. 15.

25. *his daughter*] Comp. Josh. xv. 16. *free*] from taxes and personal services to the king. Comp. viii. 11 ff.

26. *the living God*] Jehovah as the one "living and true God" is contrasted with the idols of the heathen "which have no breath in their mouths." Comp. Deut. v. 26; 2 Kings xix. 4.

28. *the wilderness*] i.e. the open pasture-land, as distinguished from arable land. Comp. Ps. lxxv. 12; Joel i. 19, 20, ii. 22.

*naughtiness*] i.e. wickedness. Eliab imputes bad motives to David and taunts him with (1) neglect of duty; (2) discontent with his humble occupation; (3) eagerness for

heart; for thou art come down that *thou* mightest see the battle. And David said, What have I now done? *Is there not* 29  
a cause? And he turned from him towards another, and spake 30  
after the same manner: and the people answered him again  
after the former manner. And when the words were heard 31  
which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul: and he  
sent for him.

And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of 32  
him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And 33  
Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine  
to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man  
of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant 34  
kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and  
took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and 35  
smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he  
arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him,  
and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: 36  
and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them,  
seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David 37  
said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of  
the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out  
of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go,  
and the Lord be with thee. And Saul armed David with his 38  
armour, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he  
armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword 39

the sight of bloodshed. He was unable to understand David's lofty indignation. Comp. the hatred of Joseph's brethren (Gen. xxxvii. 4).

29. *Is there not a cause?* A sufficient cause for his coming, namely, his father's command. Or, as R.V. marg., *Was it not but a word?* i.e. "May I not ask a harmless question?"

32—40. David volunteers to fight Goliath. 32. According to the Sept. text this stands in close and appropriate connexion with v. 11.

34. R.V. **And when there came a lion, or a bear.....I went out after him** &c. The Syrian bear is especially savage, and was more dreaded than the lion. See Amos v. 19.

36. *seeing he hath defied* &c.] "The trusting heart of God's servant could see no ground for fearing one who came forth to defy Jehovah." *Wilberforce*.

37. *the par*] Lit. "the hand," i.e. the power: the very same word which he uses in reference to the Philistine. *the Lord be with thee*]

R.V. **shall be with thee**: an assurance, not a prayer.

38. *armed David with his armour*] **elad David with his apparel**: a special military dress adapted to be worn with armour. The sword was fastened to it (v. 39). Comp. xviii. 4.

*a coat of mail*] See note on v. 5. The fact that he could wear Saul's armour at all shews that he must have been full grown, perhaps about twenty years old.

39. R.V. *And David girded his sword upon his apparel*. *assayed*] i.e.

upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know

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endeavoured. Never having worn armour, he did not know what an encumbrance it would be to him. *David put them off him*] God would shew, as in the case of Gideon (Jud. vii. 2), that the victory was His alone. **40.** *the brook*] Or, *torrent-bed* (R.V. marg.). "The sides and bed of this trench [see above on v. 3] are strewn with rounded and water-worn pebbles, which would have been well fitted for David's sling." *Conder.*

*in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his scrip* (R.V.). *Scrip* means a small bag, especially a traveller's wallet. (Mt. x. 10). *his sling*] In all ages the favourite weapon of the shepherds of Syria. Comp. Jud. xx. 16.

**41—54.** The victory of faith. The flight of the Philistines.

**42.** *he disdained him*] See Prov. xvi. 18. **45.** *a shield*] R.V. **a javelin**, as in v. 6. *in the name of the LORD of hosts*] Resting absolutely upon Him Who has revealed Himself as the Covenant-God of Israel, and the Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth, Whom thou defiest when thou defiest the armies of His people. See note on i. 3. *whom*] R.V. **which.** **46.** "David did not rashly and vainly boast beforehand of the victory, as Goliath had done; but being full of faith praised the Divine omnipotence, and prophesied of an assured victory." *Patrick.*

*that there is a God in Israel*] Comp. 1 Kings xviii. 36; 2 Kings xix. 19. **47.** R.V. **And that all this assembly may know** &c. A lesson needed at all times, when men are tempted to worship

that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, *As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.* And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, *thou* young man? And David answered, *I am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.

And it came to pass, when he made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of

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brute force. Comp. ii. 1—10; xiv. 6; Ps. xlv. 6, 7; Hos. i. 7; Zech. iv. 6; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

51. *their champion*] Lit. **their mighty man**: a different word from that in *rv.* 4 and 23.

52. *until &c.*] R.V. **until thou comest to Gai**, an unknown place. The Sept. has *Gath*. *Shaaraim* (= *the two gates*) is mentioned in Josh. xv. 35, 36 in connexion with Sochoh and Azekah among the towns of Judah, but was now no doubt in the hands of the Philistines. 54. *to Jerusalem*] Probably in the Tabernacle at *Nob*, close to Jerusalem, where he afterwards placed Goliath's sword (xxi. 9).

55—58. Saul's inquiry concerning David's parentage. This section is not found in the Sept. See note on *v.* 12.

56. *stripling*] A diminutive of *strip*, and like *slip*, *scion*, &c. means *a youth*, as it were a strip from the parent stem.

XVIII. 1—5. Jonathan's friendship for David. This section also is not found in the Sept.

1. *the soul of Jonathan &c.*]

2 David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul  
 took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his  
 3 father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant,  
 4 because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stript  
 himself of the robe that *was* upon him, and gave it to David,  
 and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to  
 5 his girdle. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him,  
*and* behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of  
 war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and  
 6 also in the sight of Saul's servants. And it came to pass as  
 they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of  
 the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel,  
 singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy,  
 7 and with instruments of musick. And the women answered  
*one another* as they played, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,  
 And David his ten thousands.

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Comp. Gen. xlv. 30, "seeing his soul is knit with the lad's soul" (R.V. marg.). *loved him as his own soul*] Comp. xx. 17;

Deut. xiii. 6; 2 Sam. i. 26.

4. Jonathan gave David (1) his outer robe for ordinary wear (see on ii. 19): (2) his **apparel**, or military dress (xvii. 38) and girdle: (3) even his sword, and the famous bow which was his favourite weapon (2 Sam. i. 22). The act was at once a ratification of their compact and a public mark of honour. See Gen. xli. 42; Esther vi. 8.

5. David was appointed to some post of command, and *went out* upon military expeditions. In these he *behaved himself wisely* and *prospered*: the word combines the ideas of *prudence* and *consequent success*. This verse anticipates facts which are mentioned again in *vv.* 13—16 in their proper place.

6—9. The celebration of David's victory. This section is to be read (as it actually stands in the Sept.) in close connexion with xvii. 54, though some time may have elapsed, during which the army was occupied in following up its success. *the women came out &c.*]

To escort the victors home with singing and dancing. Dancing was the usual expression of rejoicing upon occasions of national triumph (Ex. xv. 20, 21; Jud. xi. 34), and at religious festivals (Ps. lxxviii. 25, cxlix. 3). The dance was accompanied (1) with tabrets or **timbrels** (Ex. xv. 20; Jud. xi. 34): i.e. the *hand-drum*, an instrument still used by the Arabs, and described as "a hoop (sometimes with pieces of brass fixed in it to make a jingling) over which a piece of parchment is distended. It is beaten with the fingers:"—(2) with joy: i.e. jubilant shouts and songs: (3) with instruments of music; lit. *triangles*, or *three-stringed instruments*.

7. R.V. **And the women sang one to another in their play**; sang in antiphonal chorus (Ex. xv. 21) as they danced and gesticulated, a popular song, which became widely current, and was well known even among the Philistines (xxi. 11, xxix. 5).

*David his ten thousands*] For the Philistine champion was a host in himself. Comp. 2 Sam. xviii. 3.

And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and <sup>8</sup> he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day <sup>9</sup> and forward.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from <sup>10</sup> God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the <sup>11</sup> javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his presence twice. And Saul <sup>12</sup> was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, <sup>13</sup> and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David behaved himself <sup>14</sup> wisely in all his ways; and the Lord *was* with him. Where- <sup>15</sup> fore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, be- <sup>16</sup> cause he went out and came in before them.

And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, <sup>17</sup>

**9.** *Saul eyed David*] With a suspicious jealousy which soon ripened into a deadly hatred.

**10, 11.** Saul's attempt to murder David. The last sentence of *v. 8* and *vv. 9—11* are not found in the Sept. The narrative certainly gains by their omission, and describes the gradual growth of Saul's enmity more naturally. At the same time there is no impossibility in supposing that the fit of passion to which Saul gave way on the day of the triumph brought on a return of his madness, in the frenzy of which he threatened David's life: and yet that he afterwards retained him in his service and promoted him, yielding partly to the better impulses of his sane moments, partly to the force of popular opinion.

**10.** *he prophesied*] R.V. marg. **raved**. The word "prophesy" describes *an ecstatic condition due to supernatural influence good or evil*: the result in the one case being prophetic inspiration or religious enthusiasm: in the other raving madness. See on *x. 5.* *as at other times*] R.V. **as he did day by day.** *and there was &c.*]

**and Saul had his spear in his hand** (R.V.) The spear served as a sceptre, and was the symbol of royalty. See *xxii. 6, xix. 9, xx. 33, xxvi. 7.* In a modern Arab encampment the sheikh's tent is marked by the tall spear planted against it. *avoided*] i.e. withdrew, escaped.

**12—16.** David's advancement. **12.** In the Sept. this verse follows the clause of *v. 8*, "to me they have ascribed but thousands," and reads simply, "and Saul was afraid of David."

**15.** *was afraid of him*] R.V. **stood in awe of him**, a stronger expression than that in *v. 12.* **16.** David acted as the leader of the people in war, and became firmly established in their affections. *Comp. v. 5.*

**17—19.** Saul's treacherous offer to David. This section and the

her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

18 And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and what *is* my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the

19 king? But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given

20 unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife. And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing

21 pleased him. And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou

22 shalt *this* day be my son in law in *the one* of the twain. And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law.

23 And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light *thing* to be a king's son in law, seeing that I *am* a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner

25 spake David. And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not *any* dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the

clause of *v.* 21 which refers to it are omitted in the Sept. See note on xvii. 12.

Saul offered Merab to David in fulfilment of his promise (xvii. 25). In return Saul expects him to fight his battles, treacherously hoping that he may fall by the hand of the Philistines. To such cowardly hypocrisy has jealousy reduced the once brave and generous soldier! *the Lord's battles*] Israel's wars were the "wars of Jehovah," because they were undertaken for the defence of His Kingdom, and His aid might be claimed in waging them. Comp. xvii. 36, 47, xxv. 28, Num. xxi. 14. **18.** *what is my life*] Or, as R.V. marg., *who are my kinsfolk?* David acknowledges himself unworthy of the honour on the score of social position. **19.** *the Meholathite*] Of *Abel-Meholah*, in the Jordan valley near Beth-shan. Comp. 1 Kings xix. 16.

**20—30.** David's marriage with Michal. **20.** In the Sept. *v.* 20 follows *v.* 16. By his bravery David won the affections of the people, and even of the king's daughter. **21.** *a snare*] Michal was to be the *bait* to lure David into some raid upon the Philistines in which he might lose his life.

*in the one of the twain*] R.V. **a second time:** i.e. thou shalt have another opportunity of becoming my son-in-law. But the Sept. omits *Wherefore...time.* **22.** *Commune*]

i.e. converse. David mistrusted Saul and returned no answer, so Saul set his courtiers to work to persuade him. **23.** *a poor man*] And therefore unable to offer the "dowry," or price such as it was usual for the suitor to pay to the father of the bride, either in money (Gen. xxxiv. 12) or in service (Gen. xxix. 20).



Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And when his servants told David these words, it pleased 26 David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired. Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, 27 and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw and knew 28 that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal Saul's daughter loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and 29 Saul became David's enemy continually. Then the princes of 30 the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, *that* David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his ser- 19 vants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan Saul's son 2 delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: and I will go out and stand 3 beside my father in the field where thou *art*, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee. And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his 4 father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good:

26, 27. R.V. **And the days were not expired; and David arose** &c.; i.e. the time within which the condition was to be fulfilled.

27. *two hundred men*] Double the stipulated number. *tale*] = a number told or counted off, a reckoning.

28. *that Michal* &c.] The reading of the Sept. certainly suits the context better: "that all Israel loved him."

30. **And the princes** &c....*and it came to pass as often as they went forth* &c.: in all the continual warfare between Israel and the Philistines. This notice of David's continual success and growing popularity gives the ground of Saul's increasing enmity, and prepares the way for the narrative of the next chapter. *set by*] i.e. esteemed.

Comp. "He that *setteth* not by himself" (Ps. xv. 4, P.B.V.).

XIX. 1—7. Jonathan's intercession with his father for David.

1. *Saul spake* &c.] Perhaps in some outburst of passion; no definite command seems to have been given.

2. *until the morning*] R.V. **in the morning.** *and what* &c.] R.V. **and**

**if I see aught, I will tell thee.** 4. Had Jonathan simply

advised David to flee, without endeavouring to bring Saul to a better mind, he would have acted to the prejudice of his father's interests, by depriving him of the best support of his kingdom.

*to thee-ward*] "ward" is used as a termination denoting

5 for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin 6 against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, 7 *As* the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

8 And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them *with* a great slaughter; 9 and they fled from him. And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his 10 hand: and David played with *his* hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipt away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the 11 wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou *shalt be* slain.

12 So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, 13 and fled, and escaped. And Michal took an image, and laid *it*

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(a) *direction* (Ex. xxxvii. 9), (b) as here, *relation*.

5. *put his life in his hand*] i.e. exposed himself to peril of death. Comp. ch. xxviii. 21; Jud. xii. 3; Ps. cxix. 109.

*salvation*] Or, **victory** (R.V.). See xi. 9 (note), 13.

*sin against innocent blood*] Incur bloodguiltiness by the murder of an innocent man. Comp. Dent. xix. 10—13; Ps. xciv. 21.

8—11. Saul's attempt on David's life. David's fresh successes excited Saul's jealousy. 9. *the evil spirit*] See on xvi. 14.

9, 10. *javelin*] R.V. **spear**. See note on xviii. 10.

10. *escaped that night*] It is perhaps better to follow the Sept. in joining "that night" to the next sentence and reading, "and it came to pass that night that Saul &c."

11. *in the morning*] As he left his house. Comp. Jud. xvi. 2. Psalm lix. is referred by its title to the present occasion. If this is correct, the Psalm supplements the history, shewing that David was in danger not from Saul only, but from ruffians among Saul's followers who prowled about the streets of Gibeah threatening his life.

12—17. David's escape by the aid of Michal. 12. *through a window*] Comp. Josh. ii. 15; 2 Cor. xi. 33. If David's house, like Rahab's, was upon the town wall, it would be easy for him to escape thus, though the door was watched by Saul's men. Thus began that fugitive life, which was to form a new element in the education of the future king. See Introd. p. 13. 13. *an image*] R.V. **the teraphim**. These were the household gods of the Israelites, brought originally from their Chaldean home (Gen. xxxi. 19). They were used by those who professed to worship Jehovah

in the bed, and put a pillow of goat's *hair* for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth. And when Saul sent messengers to 14 take David, she said, He *is* sick. And Saul sent the mes- 15 sengers *again* to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. And when the messengers were 16 come in, behold *there was* an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster. And Saul said unto Michal, 17 Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, 18 and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was told Saul, 19 saying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah. And Saul sent 20 messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* appointed over them, the spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent 21 other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied

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in the time of the Judges (Jud. xvii. 5, xviii. 14 ff.), and even down to the later days of the Kings (2 Kings xxiii. 24). They seem to have been a charm for good luck, rather than an object of worship, and were used in divination (Zech. x. 2; Ezek. xxi. 19—22). It is surprising to find teraphim in David's house. Perhaps Michal, like Rachel, kept them secretly. The plural *teraphim* here denotes a single image, in human form, apparently of life-size. *put a pillow &c.*]

**put a quilt of goat's hair at the head thereof, and covered it with the clothes.** Michal wrapped the head of the image in a rough rug, to imitate a man's hair, and covered up the whole with the bed-covering.

**14.** Apparently she took the messengers into the outer chamber and pointed to the figure in bed in an inner closet, not letting them go near enough to detect the imposture. The plan gained David time to escape.

**16.** *there was an image &c.*]

**the teraphim was in the bed, with the quilt of goat's hair at the head thereof.** **17.** Scripture affirms the universal duty of Truth without any exception (Lev. xix. 11), nor can it be supposed to sanction breaches of this general law by recording them without express disapproval.

**18—24.** David takes refuge with Samuel at Ramah. He naturally turned for direction at this crisis to the prophet who had anointed him.

**19.** *Naioth* (= *dwelling*s) was in all probability the *College*, or common residence of the society of prophets collected together at Ramah by Samuel. Comp. 2 Kings vi. 1, 2.

**20.** Some common religious exercise conducted by Samuel, who is described as **standing as head** (R.V.) over the prophets, is meant by "prophesying." See on x. 5. Carried away by the religious excitement each set of messengers in succession forgot their errand, and joined the chant of the prophets.

- 22 also. Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where *are* Samuel and David? And *one* said, Behold, *they be* at Naioth in  
 23 Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and pro-  
 24 phesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stript off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all *that* night. Wherefore they say, *Is* Saul also among the prophets?
- 20 And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?  
 2 And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing *either* great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing  
 3 from me? *it is not so*. And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth,  
 4 *there is* but a step between me and death. Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do  
 5 *it* for thee. And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to

22. *a great well*] **The great cistern**, some well-known landmark in **Secu**, a place nowhere else mentioned. The Sept. has *the well of the threshing-floor that is in Sephi* (i.e. *the hill*).

23. *was upon him also*] R.V. **came upon him also**. The inspiration seized Saul even before he reached the company of prophets. He was to be taught, if his heart was not too hardened to learn, that in fighting against David he was fighting against God, and engaging in a futile struggle. And so he was struck down more completely than his servants, and lay there unconscious "all that day and all that night."  
 24. *naked*] Stripped of his outer garment. *Is Saul &c.*]

The origin of the proverb is related in x. 11. It now received a fresh exemplification. This second prophetic ecstasy was a startling reminder to Saul of that former occasion when the Spirit of God came upon him to fit him for that office in which he had failed so sadly.

XX. 1—10. While Saul lay in his trance, David returned to consult with Jonathan. He on his part would be unwilling finally to break with Saul till absolutely forced to do so; while Jonathan, knowing David's value to the kingdom, would use every effort to effect a reconciliation. 1. *What have I done*] Comp. the protests of innocence in Ps. vii., written during his flight, but reflecting the feelings of this time. See on xxiv. 9.

2. *my father doeth nothing either great or small*, i.e. nothing whatsoever, but that he **discloseth it unto me** (R.V.). *it is not so*] Jonathan refuses to believe that his father has any deliberate design against David's life. 3. *there is but a step &c.*] He stands, as it were, upon the very edge of a precipice. 5. *The New Moon* or first day of the

morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the fields until the third *day* at even. If thy father at all miss 6 me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me that *he* might run to Beth-lehem his city: for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. If he say thus, *It is well*; thy servant shall 7 have peace: but if he be very wroth, *then* be sure that evil is determined by him. Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with 8 thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father? And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I 9 knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee? Then said David to 10 Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what *if* thy father answer thee roughly? And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let 11 us go out *into* the field. And they went out both of them *into* the field. And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of 12 Israel, when I have sounded my father about to-morrow *any* time, or the third *day*, and behold, *if there be* good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee; the 13 LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: *but* if it please my father *to do* thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee

lunar month was celebrated with special sacrifices and blowing of trumpets. See Num. xxviii. 11—15, x. 10; Ps. lxxxii. 3. It was observed as a day of rest (Amos viii. 5), and used as an opportunity for religious instruction (2 Kings iv. 23). *to sit &c.*] To join as a member of the royal household in the sacrificial feast (*v.* 24) which lasted for two days at least (*v.* 27). 6. *for there is &c.*]

R.V. **for it is the yearly sacrifice there** &c. An interesting reference to a custom not elsewhere mentioned. 8. R.V.

**Therefore deal kindly...but if there be in me iniquity** &c.

*thou hast brought &c.*] The initiative had been on Jonathan's side (xviii. 3). David calls their league of friendship "a covenant of Jehovah" as being ratified in His name by solemn oath. See *v.* 12 ff. 9. *Far be it from thee*] God forbid that I should either slay thee or surrender thee. *if I knew certainly*] R.V.

**if I should at all know.** 10. R.V. **Who shall tell me if perchance thy father answer thee roughly?**

11—23. David and Jonathan renew their covenant. 11. In order to escape observation they leave the city in which the conversation has been held hitherto. 12, 13. R.V. **The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness; when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, or the third day, behold, if there be good toward David, shall I not then send unto thee, and disclose it unto thee? The LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee &c.**

away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with  
 14 thee, as he hath been with my father. And thou shalt not  
 only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I  
 15 die not: but *also* thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my  
 house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the  
 16 enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. So  
 Jonathan made a *covenant* with the house of David, *saying*,  
 Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies.  
 17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved  
 18 him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul. Then Jona-  
 than said to *David*, To morrow *is* the new moon: and thou  
 19 shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. And *when*  
 thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down quickly,  
 and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the  
 business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.  
 20 And I will shoot three arrows on the side *thereof*, as *though* I  
 21 shot at a mark. And behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go,  
 find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold,  
 the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them; then come  
 thou: for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt; *as* the LORD  
 22 liveth. But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the  
 arrows *are* beyond thee; go *thy way*: for the LORD hath sent

14, 15. Convinced that David will succeed to the kingdom, Jonathan exacts from him a promise to shew kindness to his posterity after his death as well as to himself during his lifetime. His words, like Saul's in ch. xxiv. 21, are prompted by a fear lest even David should conform to the barbarous Oriental custom by which the first king of a new dynasty often tried to secure himself on the throne by murdering his predecessor's family. Comp. 1 Kings xv. 29, xvi. 11; 2 Kings x. 6, xi. 1. David fulfilled his promise by shewing kindness to Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix. 1 ff., xxi. 7).

16. *Let the Lord &c.*] R.V. **And the LORD shall require it** &c.: shall exact vengeance from David by the hand of his enemies if he fails to fulfil the covenant.

17. **For the love that he had to him** (R.V.); or, **by his love toward him** (R.V. marg.); Jonathan exacted yet another oath. The intensity of his love impelled him to bind David by the strongest possible obligation.

18. *thy seat*] At the sacrificial feast. See *vv.* 5, 25.

19. *when the business was in hand*] Lit. *on the day of the business*; see xix. 1—7.

*the stone Ezel*] The name "stone of departure" may have been given in remembrance of the parting of David and Jonathan beside it. The Sept., however (comp. *v.* 41), has *this mound*.

20. This sign was arranged in case Jonathan should be watched by Saul's spies, and prevented from getting an interview with David.

21. *take them &c.*] R.V. **take them** (marg. *him*), **and come**; addressed to David.

22. *the young man*] R.V. **the boy**. *the LORD &c.*] Jonathan is prepared to recognise the Divine Will in the banishment of David. God had another school in which the

thee away. And *as touching* the matter which thou and I <sup>23</sup> have spoken of, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.

So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon <sup>24</sup> was come, the king sat him down to eat meat. And the king sat <sup>25</sup> upon his seat, as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that <sup>26</sup> day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; surely *he is* not clean. And it came to pass on the <sup>27</sup> morrow, *which was* the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly <sup>28</sup> asked *leave* of me *to go* to Beth-lehem: and he said, Let me go, <sup>29</sup> I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jona- <sup>30</sup> than, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth <sup>31</sup> upon the ground, thou shalt not be stablished, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and <sup>32</sup>

future king must be trained. **23.** *the matter &c.*] The reciprocal covenant of friendship just renewed and ratified.

*the LORD be &c.*] R.V. **is:** as the witness of our covenant, and the avenger of any breach of it. Cp. Gen. xxxi. 49, 53.

**24—34.** Saul's intention tested by Jonathan. **24.** *meat*] Lit. *bread*. *Meat* in the A.V. means *food* in general, not *flesh*, as in modern English.

**25.** Saul occupied **the seat by the wall**, the place of honour at the top or the centre of the table opposite the entrance. Jonathan first occupied his usual seat by Saul's side, but when Abner entered he **stood up** (R.V.), and resigned the place to him, probably not wishing to sit next his father in David's absence.

**26.** Persons who were ceremonially unclean were excluded from participating in a religious festival. See Lev. vii. 20, 21; 1 Sam. xvi. 5.

**27.** R.V. **And it came to pass on the morrow after the new moon, which was the second day:** i.e. the second day of the festival.

**30.** **Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman** (R.V.). The insult is directed at Jonathan, not at his mother; it implies that he is by nature perverse and rebellious.

*confusion*] R.V. **shame.** Thy unfilial conduct disgraces both thyself and the mother who bare thee.

**31.** *he shall surely die*] Or, *he is*

said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he  
 33 done? And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby  
 Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay  
 34 David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and  
 did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was  
 grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.  
 35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out  
 into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little  
 36 lad with him. And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now  
 the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an  
 37 arrow beyond him. And when the lad was come to the place  
 of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after  
 38 the lad, and said, *Is not the arrow beyond thee?* And Jona-  
 than cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And  
 Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his  
 39 master. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and  
 40 David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his artillery unto  
 41 his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city. And  
 as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a *place* toward  
 the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed him-  
 self three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one  
 42 with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to  
 David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in  
 the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and  
 thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he  
 arose and departed: and Jonathan went *into* the city.

*worthy to die*: lit. *he is a son of death*. Comp. 2 Sam. xii. 5; Ps. cii. 20; Mt. xxiii. 15; John xvii. 12. 33. *a javelin*] R.V. **his spear.**

34. He was grieved for the injustice done to his friend more than for the insult to himself. Saul had wronged David by charging him with treasonable intentions (*v.* 31).

35—42. The parting between Jonathan and David. 35. *at the time*] Or, **to the place** (*v.* 19). *a little lad*] Who would not suspect the real purpose of Jonathan's shooting: a touch of reality in the narrative.

40. *artillery*] Old English for any equipment of war. R.V. **weapons.**

41. *out of a place &c.*] i.e. from a hiding-place to the south of the stone Ezel. But the Sept. has, *from beside the mound*, as in *v.* 19. *fell on his face &c.*

As a token of reverence and loyalty to the king's son. Comp. Gen. xxxiii. 3, xlii. 6. An Oriental when he meets a superior kneels down and touches the ground with his forehead. 42. *the LORD be*] R.V. **shall be.**

XXI. 1—9. David's visit to Nob. Nob was on the N. of Jerusalem, within sight of that city. It was a city of the priests (xxii. 19); and here the Tabernacle, which has not been mentioned since the death of Eli, was now standing. Hither David betook himself to inquire the will of God concerning his future move-



Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and 21  
 Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto  
 him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee? And David 2  
 said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me  
 a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any  
 thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have  
 commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such  
 and such a place. Now therefore what is under thine hand? 3  
 give *me* five *loaves* of bread in mine hand, or what there is  
 present. And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* 4  
 no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed  
 bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from  
 women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, 5  
 Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three  
 days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are  
 holy, and *the bread is in* a manner common, yea, though it  
 were sanctified *this day* in the vessel. So the priest gave him 6  
 hallowed *bread*: for there was no bread there but the shew-  
 bread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread

ments, and to procure food and weapons. *Ahimelech*] See  
 note on xiv. 3. *was afraid* &c.] R.V. **came to meet David**  
**trembling** (xvi. 4): suspecting the truth, and afraid of in-  
 ccurring Saul's displeasure. 2. See note on xix. 17. The  
 consequences of David's falsehood were disastrous. *my*  
*servants*] R.V. **The young men**, as in v. 4. The words are  
 David's own, to explain how it was that he had no attendants.  
 But very likely he had agreed with friends upon some place where  
 they might join him, if he was forced to flee. 4. *common*] i.e.  
 unconsecrated, as distinguished from the **holy bread**.

5. R.V. **when I came out, the vessels of the young men  
 were holy, though it was but a common journey; how  
 much more then to-day shall their vessels be holy?**  
 David assures Ahimelech that there is no ceremonial objection  
 to their taking the bread, for the vessels into which it would be  
 put were clean when they started, and could not have been defiled  
 since. Or, as R.V. marg., (for *though it was* &c.), *and it may be used  
 as common bread; and especially since to-day it will be holy in  
 respect of their vessels*: i.e. under the circumstances the shewbread  
 might be used as ordinary bread. 6. *shewbread*] Lit.  
*presence bread*, so called because it was solemnly placed as an offer-  
 ing in the Presence of Jehovah. The mention of it implies that  
 the Tabernacle with its furniture was at Nob. The directions  
 for making the Table of Shewbread are given in Ex. xxv. 23—30;  
 and for the bread itself in Lev. xxiv. 5—9. It was to be renewed  
 every Sabbath, and the loaves then removed were to be eaten by  
 the priests in the Holy Place. Our Lord refers to this as an  
 instance of the great principle that where moral duties and cere-  
 monial rules come into conflict, it is the latter which must give  
 way, because the rite is only the means and the moral duty is the

- 7 in the day when it was taken away. Now a *certain* man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul. And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapt in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it*: for *there is no other* save that here. And David said, *There is none like that*; give it me.
- 10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and 11 went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is not this David the king of the land?* did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid 12 of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed his behaviour

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end. The high-priest was bound to preserve David's life, even at the expense of a ceremonial rule. See Matt. xii. 3, 4; Mk. ii. 25, 26; Lk. vi. 3—5. In St Mark the high priest is called *Abiathar*, perhaps by an accidental error; perhaps because he was associated with his father as Hophni and Phinehas were with Eli.

7. *detained*] In charge of the priest for the fulfilment of a vow, or for purification, or on account of suspected leprosy (Lev. xiii. 4, 11, 31).

**Doeg the Edomite** (R.V.) may have joined Saul in his wars with Edom (xiv. 47), and had become a proselyte.

*the chiefest &c.*] An important post in a pastoral country. Comp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 29, 31.

9. *behind the ephod*] It had been dedicated as a memorial of the victory, and was laid up in a secure place, behind the most sacred part of the high-priestly vestments.

*There is none like that*] The monument of God's deliverance in the past was a pledge of His help for the future.

10—15. David's flight to Gath. In the extremity of peril David was driven to take refuge among Saul's bitterest enemies. He hoped no doubt that the Philistines would not recognise the stripling who slew their champion. But he had no intention of turning traitor to his country.

11. *the king of the land*] The natural exaggeration of popular rumour. David had appeared as chief leader in the Philistine wars.

*did they not sing &c.*] **Do they not sing.** It had become a popular song. See on xviii. 7.

13. Ps. xxxiv. is ascribed by its title to this occasion, but the contents do not bear out the reference. The title of Ps. lvi. states that it was written by David "when the Philistines laid hold on him in Gath," and though it is not expressly said here that he was arrested, the words "feigned himself mad in their hands" together with the mention of his *escape* in xxii. 1, imply

before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, you see the man *is* mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me? *Have* I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard *it*, they went down thither to him. And every one *that* was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one *that* was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men. And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold. And the prophet Gad said unto David,

that he was a prisoner. *feigned himself mad*] So that they might suppose him harmless. Orientals regard madness with a kind of reverence. *scrabled*] Scratched, or made marks.

15. *Have I need of &c.*] R.V. **Do I lack.** *come into my house*] Be taken into my service (Ps. ci. 7).

XXII. 1—5. David's band of followers. 1. **The cave of Adullam** was in the vale of Elah, between Socoh and Keilah. The ruins called *Aid el Ma* mark the site of the city (Josh. xii. 15; xv. 35); and there are numerous caves in the neighbourhood, amply sufficient to accommodate David and his 400 men. *they went down thither to him*] For fear lest Saul might wreak his vengeance upon them. In the East it was not uncommon for a whole family to be put to death for the fault of one member, and the massacre at Nob soon shewed them what they might expect. 2. To the cave of Adullam resorted some who were smarting under Saul's tyranny; some who were involved in debt through the neglect of the laws concerning usury (Ex. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 35—37); some who were in despair at the condition of the kingdom, and desired a leader from whom they might hope for better things.

*about four hundred men*] Soon increased to 600 (xxiii. 13).

3. *Mizpeh of Moab*] Mentioned here only. David's connexion with Moab through his great-grandmother Ruth naturally suggested it as a refuge for his parents. What became of David's parents does not appear. A Jewish tradition affirms that the king of Moab murdered them, for which David exacted vengeance when he came to the throne (2 Sam. viii. 2).

5. *Gad*] Mentioned here for the first time, and not again till David had come to the throne, when he appears as holding the office of "the king's seer." See 1 Chr. xxix. 29; 2 Chr. xxix. 25; 2 Sam. xxiv. 11 ff. In the face of all risks David must return to his own country,

Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee *into* the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came *into* the forest of Hareth.

- 6 When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants  
7 *were* standing about him;) then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make  
8 you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; that all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that sheweth me that my son hath made *a league* with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me,  
9 to lie in wait, as at this day? Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which *was* set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of  
10 Ahitub: and he inquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.  
11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in  
12 Nob: and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said,

in order that by such exploits as the relief of Keilah he might gain reputation, and prepare his way to the throne. **Hereth**

(R.V.) was probably 2 or 3 miles E. of Keilah. Ps. lxiii. is referred by its title to the time when David was in the wilderness of Judah; but internal evidence points rather to his flight from Absalom; v. 11 implies that he was already king.

6—19. Saul's vengeance on the priests of Nob. **6.** *now Saul &c.] now Saul was sitting in Gibeah under the tamarisk tree on the height (or, in Ramah).* A vivid picture of a solemn council met to deliberate on affairs of state or to administer justice. The king sits in state under some venerable tamarisk (comp. xiv. 2; Jud. iv. 5); his spear, the emblem of royalty (see on xviii. 10), is in his hand; his servants, still chiefly the men of his own tribe (v. 7), stand round him. **7.** Saul appeals to tribal jealousies. Will not David promote his own fellow-tribesmen rather than the Benjamites? **8.** *there is none &c.] R.V. there is none that discloseth to me when my son maketh a league;* i.e. the 'covenant' of xx. 16. **9.** The title of Ps. lii. states that it was composed in reference to this occasion. vv. 1—4 describe such a character as we may well suppose Doeg to have been. His tongue "devised destruction," and "loved devouring words," for his story was told with malicious intent and fatal result.

*which was set over &c.] Or, which stood by the servants of Saul (R.V.).* The presence of the *foreigner* Doeg is specially noticed. **10.** *he inquired &c.]* See on x. 22. This was probably the chief object of David's visit. Comp. v. 15.

Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I *am*,  
 my lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired 13  
 against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given  
 him bread and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him,  
 that *he* should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?  
 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who *is so* 14  
 faithful among all thy servants as David, which *is* the king's  
 son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and *is* honourable in  
 thine house? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? 15  
 be it far from me: let not the king impute *any* thing unto his  
 servant, *nor* to all the house of my father: for thy servant  
 knew nothing of all this, less or more. And the king said, 16  
 Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's  
 house. And the king said unto the footmen that stood about 17  
 him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand  
 also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled, and  
 did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would  
 not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD.  
 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the 18  
 priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the  
 priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that  
 did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, 19  
 smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women,  
 children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with  
 the edge of the sword.

And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named 20  
 Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar shewed 21  
 David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests. And David said 22

14. *goeth at thy bidding*] R.V. is taken into thy council,  
 i.e. is a trusted privy-councillor. Comp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 23, *marg.*

15. **Have I to-day begun** &c. (R.V.). Ahimelech pleads  
 that there was no harm in doing as he had often done before.

*be it far from me*] To plot against the king. *knew nothing*]  
 R.V. **knoweth nothing**: is in no way a party to the alleged  
 conspiracy.

17. *footmen*] R.V. **guard**. Lit. *runners*. See  
 on ch. viii. 11; and comp. 2 Kings x. 25.

*would not put forth their hand*] They shrank from executing a command at  
 once so cold-blooded and sacrilegious.

18. Saul had to employ the foreigner to execute his command.  
*a linen ephod*]

See on ii. 18. The distinctive priestly dress should have reminded  
 Saul of the sacredness of their persons.

19. In the madness of his self-willed fury Saul wreaked upon an innocent city in  
 his own kingdom the vengeance he had failed to execute upon a  
 guilty heathen nation at God's command (xv. 3). Thus the doom  
 upon the house of Eli (ii. 31) received a fresh fulfilment.

20—23. Abiathar's escape to David. Henceforward he was  
 the companion of David's wanderings, and helped him by "in-  
 quiring of the LORD" for him (xxiii. 9, xxx. 7; 2 Sam. ii. 1, &c.).

- unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned  
 23 *the death* of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou  
 with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life:  
 but with me thou *shalt be* in safeguard.
- 23 Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight  
 2 against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors. Therefore  
 David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these  
 Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite  
 3 the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto  
 him, Behold, we *be* afraid here in Judah: how much more  
 then if we come *to* Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?  
 4 Then David inquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD  
 answered him and said, Arise, go down *to* Keilah; for I will  
 5 deliver the Philistines into thine hand. So David and his  
 men went *to* Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and  
 brought away their cattle, and smote them *with* a great slaugh-  
 ter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.
- 6 And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech  
 fled to David *to* Keilah, *that* he came down *with* an ephod in  
 7 his hand. And it was told Saul that David was come *to* Keilah.  
 And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he  
 is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.  
 8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down *to*  
 9 Keilah, to besiege David and his men. And David knew that  
 Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to  
 10 Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. Then said David,

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He held the office of high-priest till the close of David's reign, when after remaining faithful through Absalom's rebellion, he took part in Adonijah's rebellion, and was deposed by Solomon (1 Kings ii. 26, 27).

XXIII. 1—5. The rescue of Keilah. 1. *Then*] R.V. **And**. There is no mark of time. The appeal to David shews that he was growing to be regarded as the champion of Israel.

*Keilah*] A fortified city (*v.* 7), perched on a steep hill above the vale of Elah, about 3 miles S. of Adullam, where the name *Kila* still marks the site. Comp. Josh. xv. 44. *the threshingfloors*] The raid took place after harvest, when the corn was stacked by the floors ready for threshing. 2. *inquired*] Through the high-priest Abiathar. See on *v.* 6. 3. *here in Judah*] In the forest of Hereth (xxii. 5) further off from the Philistines. *armies*] David's men exaggerate the marauding bands of Philistines into a regular army.

6—15. The treachery of the Keilites. 6. This verse explains how it was that David could 'inquire of God' at Keilah.

7. *delivered*] Lit. *alienated*; i.e. rejected and delivered him. So blind was Saul as to imagine that it was not himself but David whom God had rejected. 9. *secretly practised*] R.V.

O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? 11 Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver *thee* up. Then David and 13 his men, *which were* about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth. And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. And David saw that Saul was come 15 out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David *into* the 16 wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find 17 thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they 18 two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth 19 not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon?

**devised.** 11. *the men of Keilah*] Lit. *the lords*, or *masters*, i.e. the governors of the city, as distinguished from the mass of inhabitants (*v.* 5). *Will Saul come down*] The logical order of the questions is inverted, and the most important put first.

14—18. David in the wilderness of Judah. His last interview with Jonathan. David's next resort was "the wilderness of Judah," the wild uncultivated tract lying between the mountains of Judah and the Dead Sea. His chief abode was **the hill country** in the wilderness of Ziph, a district S.E. of Hebron, where a rounded hill half way between Hebron and Carmel still bears the name of *Tell Zif*. *every day*] i.e. continually. 15. **The wood** (R.V.). The word may however be the name of a district, *Horesh* (R.V. marg.); and so in *vv.* 16, 18, 19. 16. *strengthened &c.*] Confirmed his courage by pointing him to the true ground of confidence. Comp. ch. xxx. 6; Job iv. 3. 18. *to his house*] Home to Gibeah, where Saul was (*v.* 19). It was the final parting of the friends.

19—28. The treachery of the Ziphites. Cp. xxvi. 1 ff. The title of Ps. liv. refers it to this occasion, or that recorded in xxvi. 1. See especially *v.* 3. *the hill of Hachilah*] Situated on the south of, or according to xxvi. 3, "in front of" **the desert**. *Jeshimon*

20 Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire  
of thy soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him  
21 into the king's hand. And Saul said, Blessed *be ye* of the  
22 LORD; for ye have compassion on me. Go, I pray you, pre-  
pare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and  
who hath seen him there: for it is told me *that* he dealeth very  
23 subtilly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking  
places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with  
the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to  
pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout  
24 all the thousands of Judah. And they arose, and went to Ziph  
before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of  
25 Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. Saul also and  
his men went to seek *him*. And they told David: wherefore  
he came down *into* a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon.  
And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David *in* the wilder-  
26 ness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain,  
and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and  
David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and  
his men compassed David and his men round about to take  
27 them. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste  
thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.  
28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went  
against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-  
hammahlekoth.

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means **the Waste** or **desert**; the district on which the plateau of Ziph looks down. From *Tell Zif* the Ziphites could observe the movements of David's men over this region. 22. *haunt*] Lit. **foot**. Observe his tracks as you would those of a wild beast.

23. *with the certainty*] R.V. **of a certainty**: marg. *with the certainty*: or, *to a set place*. *thousands*] i.e. families. See on x. 19.

24. *in the wilderness of Maon*] The district round the conical hill about 7 miles S. of Hebron still known as *Tell Ma'in*. Comp. ch. xxv. 2; Josh. xv. 55. *in the plain &c.*]

R.V. **in the Arabah on the south of the desert**. The *Arabah* generally denotes either the depressed valley of the Jordan, or the valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba, but here it seems to be used for the district south of "the Waste," where the plateau falls away towards the plains of Beersheba. 25. *into a rock*]

**To the rock** (R.V.), which was afterwards called "the rock of divisions" (v. 28). 26. *compassed...round about*] i.e. encompassed, surrounded. Comp. Ps. v. 12; xvii. 9, 11.

27. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Comp. 2 Kings xix. 7, 9. *have invaded*] R.V. **made a raid upon**.

28. *Sela-hammahlekoth*] i.e. *the rock of divisions*, or *escape*, because there Saul had to relinquish the pursuit.

29.—XXIV. 8. David spares Saul's life in the cave at En-gedi. Cp. xxvi. 5 ff. Pss. lvii. and cxlii. are referred by their titles to



And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds 29  
 at En-gedi. And it came to pass, when Saul was returned 24  
 from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying,  
 Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of En-gedi. Then Saul took 2  
 three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek  
 David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And he 3  
 came to the sheepecotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul  
 went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in  
 the sides of the cave. And the men of David said unto him, 4  
 Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I  
 will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do  
 to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose,  
 and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to 5  
 pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had  
 cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The LORD for- 6  
 bid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's  
 anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is*  
 the anointed of the LORD. So David stayed his servants with 7  
*these* words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But  
 Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on *his* way. David also 8  
 rose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul,

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the time when David fled from Saul in the cave. 29. En-gedi  
 (= *fountain of the kid*), now *Ain-Jidy*, is situated about half-way  
 along the western shore of the Dead Sea. On all sides the  
 country is full of caverns which might serve as lurking-places  
 for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day.

XXIV. 2. *the rocks of the wild goats*] Precipitous cliffs scarcely  
 accessible except to the ibex and chamois. Wild goats and antelopes  
 still abound on the heights above Ain-Jidy. 3. *the sheepecotes*]  
 Sheepfolds are still formed in the East by building a wall of loose  
 stones round the mouth of a cave, which serves for shelter in case  
 of bad weather. *to cover his feet*] An euphemism for perform-  
 ing the necessities of nature. *and David &c.*] R.V. **Now David**

**and his men were abiding in the innermost parts of the  
 cave.** Large caves with numerous side passages are found in the  
 district. "They are as dark as midnight, and the keenest eye  
 cannot see five paces *inward*: but one who has been long within,  
 and is looking *outward* toward the entrance, can observe with  
 perfect distinctness all that takes place in that direction." Hence  
 David and his men could watch Saul without being seen.

4. David may have received from Samuel and Gad assurances  
 of his ultimate deliverance from Saul's persecutions, which his  
 followers interpret in their own way. Comp. xxiii. 17, xxv. 28—30.

*the skirt*] Comp. xv. 27. He wished to have some proof to con-  
 vince Saul that his life had been in his power. 5. David's  
 conscience reproached him for offering even so slight an indignity  
 to the king. 6. *my master*] R.V. **my lord**, as in *vr.* 8, 10.

7. *stayed his servants*] R.V. **checked his men.**

saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped *with his face* to the earth, and bowed himself.

9 And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's  
10 words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this  
day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee  
to day into mine hand in the cave: and *some* bade *me* kill thee:  
but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine  
11 hand against my lord; for he *is* the LORD's anointed. More-  
over, my father, see, yea see the skirt of thy robe in my hand:  
for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not,  
know thou and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression  
in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou  
12 huntest my soul to take it. The LORD judge between me and  
thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall  
13 not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wick-  
edness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not  
14 be upon thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out?  
after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.  
15 The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee,  
and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.  
16 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of  
speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, *Is* this thy  
voice, my son David? And Saul lift up his voice, and wept.  
17 And he said to David, Thou *art* more righteous than I: for  
thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee

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8. *stooped &c.*] R.V. bowed with his face to the earth, and did obeisance: the usual Oriental gesture of reverence to a king or superior. See on xx. 41. Comp. 1 Kings i. 16, 31.

9—15. David pleads his innocence. 9. R.V. **Wherefore hearkenest thou to men's words.** Calumniators like "Cush the Benjamite," against whom Ps. vii. is directed, inflamed Saul's mind against David. Comp. David's protestation of innocence in *vr.* 3, 4 of the Psalm with his words in *vr.* 10, 11; and his appeal to the judgment of Jehovah in *vr.* 8, 9 of the Psalm with that in *v.* 15. 11. *my father*] The address of respect and affection. Comp. 2 Kings v. 13, vi. 21. *my soul*] i.e. my life.

13. **Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness** (R.V.). A man's character is known by his actions. If I were wicked at heart, I should have shewn it by killing you. Comp. Mt. vii. 16—20. *but mine hand &c.*] The conclusion of the proverb, disclaiming the intention of vengeance.

14. "A dead dog, a **single** flea," express what is absolutely contemptible, harmless, and insignificant. 15. *plead my cause*] Comp. Ps. xxxv. 1 ff.; possibly written about this time. *deliver me &c.*] Lit. *give sentence for me out of thy hand*: give me my right, and set me free. Comp. Ps. xxxv. 24.

16—22. Saul's momentary remorse. The old fatherly feeling revived. The generous loving heart of old days had not utterly perished.

17. *for thou &c.*] R.V. **for thou hast rendered**

evil. And thou hast shewed *this* day how that thou hast dealt 18 well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his 19 enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, 20 and *that* the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou 21 wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David sware 22 unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered to- 25 gether, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran. And *there was* a man in Maon, whose possessions *were* 2 in Carmel; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man *was* Nabal; 3 and the name of his wife Abigail: and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man *was* churlish and evil *in* his doings; and he *was* of the house of Caleb. And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did 4 shear his sheep. And David sent out ten young men, and 5 David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: and thus shall ye say to 6

**unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil.**

19. *find his enemy*] Get him into his power. Comp. xxiii. 17; Ps. xxi. 8.

20. *I know &c.*] And yet, knowing the Will of God, he resists it!

21. See note on xx. 14.

22. David returned to the fastnesses of En-gedi. Experience had proved that Saul's repentance was not to be trusted.

XXV. 1. Samuel's death and burial. A public mourning was held as after the death of Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 8), and the whole nation met to do honour to him, who for well-nigh eighty years had gone in and out amongst them as Prophet, Judge, and Counsellor of the King.

*in his house*] i.e. in some court or garden attached to the house. Comp. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 20 with 2 Kings xxi. 18. *the wilderness of Paran*] A general name for the great tract of desert S. of Palestine, between the wilderness of Shur on the W., Edom on the E., and the wilderness of Sinai on the S.

2—13. Nabal's churlish behaviour to David. 2. *a man in Maon*] Nabal's home was in the city of Maon, and his possessions (or, **business**) about a mile to the north at Carmel. See notes on xv. 12, xxiii. 24. *very great*] i.e. very rich. Comp. 2 Sam. xix. 32.

3. *Nabal* means *fool*. Comp. v. 25. *churlish*] Lit. **hard**: (comp. Mt. xxv. 24), surly and niggardly. *Caleb*] Who settled at Hebron (Josh. xv. 13). Comp. ch. xxx. 14. 6. *to him*

him that liveth *in prosperity*, Peace be both to thee, and peace  
 7 be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And  
 now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds  
 which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought  
 8 missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask  
 thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the  
 young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good  
 day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto  
 9 thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young  
 men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in  
 10 the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered David's  
 servants, and said, Who *is* David? and who *is* the son of Jesse?  
 there be many servants now a days that break away every man  
 11 from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water,  
 and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* unto  
 12 men, whom I know not whence they *be*? So David's young  
 men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him  
 13 all those sayings. And David said unto his men, Gird you on  
 every man his sword. And they girded on every man his  
 sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up  
 after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode  
 by the stuff.

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife,  
 saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness  
 15 to salute our master; and he railed on them. But the men  
*were* very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed  
 we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them,  
 16 when we were in the fields: they were a wall unto us both  
 by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping  
 17 the sheep. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt  
 do; for evil is determined against our master, and against

*that liveth in prosperity*] Or, as R.V. marg., **thus shall ye say, All hail! and peace be unto thee** &c. The Vulg. has, *thus shall ye say to my brethren.*

7. Sheep-shearing was and still is an occasion of festivity. See 2 Sam. xiii. 23, 24. David's request was reasonable, and in accordance with Eastern custom. He had done Nabal real service, by protecting his flocks from roving marauders, and he was entitled to recompence. 8. *a good day*] A day of festivity and rejoicing. Comp. Esth. viii. 17.

11. *my water*] Water is specially mentioned because it is scarce in the district. Comp. Josh. xv. 19. 12. R.V. **turned on their way, and went back, and came and told him according to all these words.** 13. *abode by the stuff*] Remained to guard their property. See on x. 22: cp. xxx. 24.

14—22. Abigail's wise counsel. 14. *to salute*] Lit. to bless, as in ch. xiii. 10. Comp. 2 Kings iv. 29. *railed on them*] R.V. **flew upon them.** 15. *conversant with them*] Living along with them. 16. *a wall unto us*] A defence

all his household: for he *is such* a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him. Then Abigail made haste, and took 18 two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. And she said unto her servants, Go on 19 before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. And it was *so, as* she rode on the ass, that 20 she came down by the covert of the hill, and behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them. Now 21 David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good. So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave 22 of all that *pertain* to him by the morning light *any that* pisseth against the wall. And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, 23 and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and fell at his feet, and said, 24 Upon me, my lord, *upon me let this iniquity be*: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the

against marauders. See Job i. 15, 17. 17. *such a son of Belial*] **Such a base fellow.** Comp. v. 25. See on i. 16. His servants did not dare to speak to him, but appealed to Abigail instead.

18. Provisions had been prepared for the shearing feast (v. 11). For the different items comp. 2 Sam. xvi. 1; 1 Chr. xii. 40.

*bottles*] **Skins**, holding a considerable quantity (i. 24). Those now used in the East are made of kid, goat, or ox skins, according to the size required.

*five measures of parched corn*] The "measure" contained one-third of an ephah, or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  gallons. See note on i. 24. Parched corn was only a delicacy, which accounts for the comparatively small quantity. See note on xvii. 17.

*clusters of raisins*] Lumps of dried grapes. *cakes of figs*] Figs dried and compressed. Grapes and figs still grow in abundance in the neighbourhood of Hebron.

19. *servants*] R.V. **young men**, as in v. 14.

20. R.V. **And it was so, as she rode...and came down by the covert of the mountain, that behold** &c. *Covert* = shelter, hiding-place. Abigail chose a route by which she would be concealed from observation. *Against* = to meet. Comp. ix. 14.

21. *in vain*] Only to be deceived and disappointed. *pertained*] i.e. belonged.

22. *unto the enemies of David*] In the usual oath-formula the swearer invokes Divine vengeance upon himself (xx. 13), or upon the person adjured (iii. 17). And so the Sept. is probably right in reading here; *So God do unto David*. David vows that he will exterminate the family and not leave **so much as one man child** (R.V.) alive.

23—31. Abigail's meeting with David. 23. *lighted*] i.e. alighted, got down.

24. *and fell at his feet*] She prostrated herself as soon as she saw David, while he was still some distance off, and then approached and knelt down at his feet to make her petition. *in thine audience*] R.V. **in thine ears**.

25 words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name *is*, so *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst  
 26 send. Now therefore, my lord, *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to *shed* blood, and *from* avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as  
 27 Nabal. And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men  
 28 that follow my lord. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and  
 29 evil hath not been found in thee *all* thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out *as*  
 30 *out* of the middle of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed  
 31 thee ruler over Israel; that this shall be no grief unto thee,

26. *from coming to shed blood*] R.V. **from bloodguiltiness.** Abigail affirms that it is God who by her means has restrained David from committing a great crime. *let thine enemies*

&c.] As foolish, and consequently as little able to injure thee. In view of Nabal's fate, the words are prophetic. 27. *this blessing*

] R.V. **present:** comp. ch. xxx. 26; Gen. xxxiii. 11; 2 Cor. ix. 5. *unto the young men*] She does not presume to offer it for David's own use.

28. *the trespass of thine handmaid*] She takes the blame of the wrong done to David upon herself, as in *v.* 24. *for the Lord* &c.] Abigail grounds her request on the conviction that David will succeed to the kingdom, when, as she points out in *vv.* 30, 31, such an act of violence as he was minded to commit would be a burden on his conscience. Her conviction rests (1) on the fact that he has proved himself the champion of Jehovah's people (see on xviii. 17); (2) on his blameless life. Doubtless the nation was already anxiously looking forward to David as its future king. *will certainly make* &c.] Will establish him and his posterity on the throne. See ii. 35; and comp. 2 Sam. vii. 16. *evil* &c.] R.V. **evil shall not be found in thee.** Comp. xxiv. 11; Ps. vii. 3. David's generous character was in sharp contrast to Saul's jealous cruelty.

29. R.V. **And though man be risen up...yet the soul...in the bundle of life** (or, as marg., *the living*): as valuables are bound up in a bag or bundle. Comp. Gen. xlii. 35. *Soul* here = life. *shall he sling out* &c.] A metaphor for total rejection. Comp. Jer. x. 18.

*the middle*] R.V. **the hollow**, in which the stone was placed. The marg. rendering *bought* means the *bowed* or bent part of a sling in which the stone was placed. 30. *ruler*] R.V.

nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid. And David said to Abigail, Blessed <sup>32</sup> *be* the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed *be* thy advice, and blessed *be* thou, which hast kept <sup>33</sup> me this day from coming to *shed* blood, and *from* avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, *as* the LORD <sup>34</sup> God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light *any that* pisseth against the wall. So David received of her hand <sup>35</sup> *that* which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

And Abigail came to Nabal; and behold, he held a feast in <sup>36</sup> his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. But it <sup>37</sup> came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became *as* a stone. And it came to <sup>38</sup> pass about ten days *after*, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died. And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, <sup>39</sup> Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach

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**prince.** Comp. xiii. 14 (R.V.). **31.** *grief*] Heb. cause of *staggering*; a burden upon his conscience.

**32—35.** David's answer. He rightly recognises that God's Providence has saved him from a foolish and wicked revenge. Comp. his prayer in Ps. xix. 13. There is no lack of faults in David's life, and this outburst of passion was one of them; but with all his faults he had that spirit of genuine repentance which makes it possible for men

"To rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things."

**33.** *advice*] **Wisdom** (R.V.); or *discretion* (R.V. marg.). *from coming to shed blood*] R.V. **from blood-guiltiness**, as in v. 26.

**35.** *have accepted thy person*] Here in a good sense = I have granted thy petition. Comp. Gen. xix. 21.

**36—38.** Nabal's death. **36.** *like the feast of a king*] His shearing-revel (comp. 2 Sam. xiii. 23) was on a scale of regal luxury.

**37.** R.V. **And it came to pass...that his wife told him... and his heart died** &c. An outburst of passion brought on a stroke of apoplexy. He lay insensible for ten days, until he died.

**38.** *the LORD smote Nabal*] His death was a Divine judgment none the less that a partly natural cause may be assigned for it in his intemperance and passion.

**39—41.** David's marriage with Abigail. **39.** *pleaded the cause*

from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to  
 40 take her to him to wife. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David  
 41 sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. And she arose, and bowed herself *on her* face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants  
 42 of my lord. And Abigail hasted, and rose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.  
 43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both  
 44 of them his wives. But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of Gallim.  
 26 And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before  
 2 Jeshimon? Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him,

&c.] Exacted from Nabal a due penalty for the injury he did me. Comp. xxiv. 15. In O. T. times godly men looked for visible judgments upon the wicked in this world, and rejoiced in them as a proof of God's righteous government. *hath kept &c.*] R.V. **hath kept back his servant from evil: and the evil-doing of Nabal hath the LORD returned upon his own head.** Notice the emphatic contrast between David and Nabal. *communed with*] R.V. **spake concerning**; made proposals of marriage.

41. *let thine handmaid be*] R.V. **thine handmaid is**. "Washing the feet" like "loosing the shoe-latchet" (Mk. i. 7) was the service of the meanest slaves. 43. *also took*] Before his marriage with Abigail. Ahinoam stands first in 2 Sam. iii. 2. *Jezreel*] A city in the mountains of Judah near Carmel and Juttah (Josh. xv. 55, 56). 44. *Saul had given Michal*] Probably when David fled. David afterwards compelled Palti (or *Paltiel*) to restore Michal (2 Sam. iii. 15). *Gallim*] Between Gibeah and Jerusalem (Is. x. 30).

XXVI. 1—4. Saul's renewed pursuit of David. [The resemblance of the narrative of ch. xxvi. to that of ch. xxiii. 19—xxiv. 22 has led some commentators to suppose that it is only a more detailed account of the same events. The chief points common to both narratives are (a) the conduct of the Ziphites; (b) Saul's pursuit of David; (c) David's refusal to take Saul's life. But if the narratives are closely examined, it will be found that the differences outweigh the resemblances; and somewhat similar events might easily have happened twice, during a pursuit which lasted several years, and was confined to a small district.] Ps. liv. is referred to this occasion or to that of xxiii. 19 ff.

1. *Hachilah*] See note on xxiii. 19. *is before Jeshimon*] i.e. looks towards **the desert**. See note on xxiii. 19.

2. *three thousand*] The number of his standing army. Comp.



to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul pitched in <sup>3</sup> the hill of Hachilah, which *is* before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. David therefore sent out spies, <sup>4</sup> and understood that Saul was come in very deed. And David <sup>5</sup> arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him. Then answered David <sup>6</sup> and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and <sup>7</sup> behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground *at* his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath de- <sup>8</sup> livered thine enemy into thine hand *this* day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time. And David <sup>9</sup> said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless? David <sup>10</sup> said furthermore, *As* the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The LORD forbid that *I* should stretch forth <sup>11</sup> mine hand against the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is at* his bolster, and the cruse of

xxiv. 2. 3. *by the way*] Close to some well-known high road. Comp. xxiv. 3. 4. *in very deed*] R.V. of a certainty: or, as marg., *to a set place*. Comp. xxiii. 23.

5—12. Saul's life again in David's power. 5. *in the trench*] R.V. **within the place of the wagons**; or, as marg., *the barricade*, and so in *v.* 7. See note on xvii. 20. 6. *Ahimelech the Hittite*] Not mentioned elsewhere. Uriah was a Hittite. The Hittites, or descendants of Heth, the second son of Canaan, occupied Kirjath-Arba, afterwards called Hebron, in the days of Abraham (Gen. xxiii. 2 ff.). Esau married Hittite wives (Gen. xxvi. 34). They are repeatedly mentioned as one of the nations inhabiting the land.

*Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother to Joab*] The first mention of David's valiant but hard-hearted nephews, the sons of his sister Zeruah, who play such an important part in his history. See 2 Sam. xxi. 17, x. 10, iii. 30, xvi. 9, xviii. 2; 1 Kings i. 7, ii. 28—34.

7. *to the people*] i.e. to Saul's army. Comp. xiv. 45. *his spear*] See note on xviii. 10. *at his bolster*] R.V. **at his head**; and so in *vv.* 11 and 16. 8. *at once*] i.e. as R.V., **at one stroke**.

10. R.V. **And David said** &c. The person of the anointed king is inviolable: his life is in Jehovah's hands. It may be ended either (*a*) by a sudden stroke (comp. xxv. 38); or (*b*) by a natural death; or (*c*) by death in battle; but violent hands may not be laid upon him with impunity. 11. *cruse*] A small

- 12 water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.
- 13 Then David went over to the *other* side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off; a great space *being* between them: and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said,
- 15 Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king? And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.
- 16 This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's
- 17 spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster. And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king.
- 18 And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?
- 19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the LORD; for they have driven me out *this* day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying,

cup or jar (1 Kings xvii. 12, xix. 6). 12. *from Saul's bolster*] R.V. **from Saul's head.** *a deep sleep*] A word used especially of *supernaturally* caused sleep, as in Gen. ii. 21, xv. 12.

13—25. David's final expostulation with Saul. 13. David trusted Saul less now than upon a former occasion. Comp. v. 22.

15. *kept*] R.V. **kept watch over.** 16. *worthy to die*] Lit. *sons of death.* Comp. xx. 31. *your master*] R.V. **your lord**, as in vv. 15, 17, 19. 17. It was still too dark to see him at a distance. Saul's question is the same as in xxiv. 16, but there it stands in quite a different connexion.

18. Comp. David's speech in xxiv. 9ff. Here he affirms his innocence indirectly by challenging Saul to give his reasons for persecuting him: there he appeals directly to his having spared Saul's life as a proof of his loyalty. 19. *If the LORD &c.*] R.V. **If it be the LORD that hath stirred thee up...but if it be the children of men &c.** Saul may be acting as God's instrument, to punish David for some fault. In that case David desires to obtain pardon by a propitiatory offering. But if calumnious enemies have set Saul against him (xxiv. 9), they are worthy of execration. *from abiding in &c.*] **That I should not cleave unto &c.** (R.V.); or, as marg., *that I should have no share in*; banishing me from the people of Israel who are Jehovah's inheritance

Go, serve other gods. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to 20  
 the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is  
 come out to seek a flea, as when *one* doth hunt a partridge in  
 the mountains. Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my 21  
 son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul  
 was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the  
 fool, and have erred exceedingly. And David answered and 22  
 said, Behold, the king's spear; and let one of the young men  
 come over and fetch it. The LORD render to every man his 23  
 righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee  
 into *my* hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand  
 against the LORD's anointed. And behold, as thy life was 24  
 much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set  
 by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all  
 tribulation. Then Saul said to David, Blessed *be* thou, my son 25  
 David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still  
 prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his  
 place.

And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by 27  
 the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than that I  
 should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and

(x. 1). Such a banishment is tantamount to bidding me go serve  
 false gods, for it is only in the land of promise and at the place  
 which He has chosen that Jehovah manifests Himself and can be  
 worshipped.

20. *before the face of the LORD*] R.V. **away  
 from the presence of the LORD**: let me not die a violent  
 death in a heathen land. *a flea*] **A single flea**. Comp.

xxiv. 14. But the Sept. has, perhaps rightly, *my life*.

*a partridge*] "David alludes to the mode of chase practised  
 now as of old, when the partridge continuously chased was at length,  
 when fatigued, knocked down by sticks thrown along the ground."  
*Tristram*.

21. *my soul*] R.V. **my life**. Compare and contrast xxiv. 16 ff.

22. R.V. **Behold the spear, O king!  
 let then one &c.**] He will not now put himself in Saul's  
 power, as he appears to have done upon the former occasion. Comp.  
 v. 13.

23. R.V. **And the LORD shall render**. Comp. Saul's  
 words in xxiv. 19. David is not sounding his own praises, but as  
 before (xxiv. 12) declaring his confidence that God will recompense  
 him for his uprightness and loyalty. Comp. Ps. vii. 8, xviii. 20.

24. *much set by*] Comp. xviii. 30. *deliver me &c.*] Comp.  
 Ps. xxxiv. 17; liv. 7.

25. *thou shalt &c.*] R.V. **thou shalt  
 both do mightily, and shalt surely prevail**. *to his  
 place*] Home to Gibeah. Comp. xxiv. 22.

XXVII. 1—6. David's flight to Achish, and residence at Ziklag.  
 The result anticipated in xxvi. 19 has come to pass. David is  
 forced to seek refuge in a heathen land. The circumstances of  
 this flight are entirely different from those related in xxi. 10 ff.  
 Then the solitary fugitive, recognised as the slayer of Goliath,  
 narrowly escaped losing his life; now the outlaw leader of a band

Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of  
 2 Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand. And David arose,  
 and he passed over with the six hundred men that *were* with  
 3 him unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath. And David  
 dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with  
 his household, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the  
 4 Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. And it  
 was told Saul that David was fled *to* Gath: and he sought no  
 5 more again for him. And David said unto Achish, If I have  
 now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some  
 town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should  
 6 thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? Then Achish  
 gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto  
 the kings of Judah unto this day.  
 7 And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philis-  
 8 tines was a full year and four months. And David and his  
 men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites,  
 and the Amalekites: for those *nations were* of old the inhabit-  
 ants of the land as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of

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of stalwart warriors is welcomed as an ally. 1. *in any coast*] R.V. **in all the borders.** 2. *Achish, the son of Maoch*] If he was the same as the Achish of xxi. 10 and the Achish son of Maachah of 1 Kings ii. 39, he must have reigned some fifty years. But more probably the same name was borne by different individuals.

3. *with his household*] Comp. ch. xxx. 3 ff.; 2 Sam. ii. 3.

5. *in some town &c.*] In one of the provincial cities as distinguished from the metropolis Gath. He wished for a more independent position, where he might be less exposed to the jealousy of the Philistine lords and have free opportunity for organizing his followers.

6. *Ziklag*] One of the cities in the *Negeb* or "South Country," originally assigned to Judah (Josh. xv. 31), but transferred to Simeon (Josh. xix. 5), and either never occupied by them or reconquered by the Philistines. "In this city David laid the foundation of his kingdom. Here he could already rule with greater freedom and independence, collect fugitives and deserters around him in larger and larger numbers, send or receive embassies like a prince (1 Sam. xxx. 26—31), and as a ruler over soldiers and peaceable citizens rehearse, on a small scale, those arts by which he afterwards acquired and maintained his great kingdom." *Ewald*. Comp. 1 Chr. xii. 1—7, 20—22. *unto the kings of Judah*] Ziklag became part of the crown estates.

7—12. David's raids upon neighbouring tribes. 8. *invaded*] R.V. **made a raid upon** (*v.* 8). *the Geshurites*] A tribe dwelling south of Philistia near the Amalekites (Josh. xiii. 2), to be distinguished from the Geshurites in Syria (2 Sam. xv. 8). *the Gezrites*] R.V. **Girzites**; another reading is *Girrites*; probably an Arabian tribe. *the Amalekites*] Such remnants of them as had escaped from Saul's sword. See on xv. 8. *those nations &c.*] R.V. **those nations were the inhabitants of the**

Egypt. And David smote the land, and left neither man nor 9 woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish. And Achish said, Whither have ye made a 10 road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. And David saved neither man nor 11 woman alive, to bring *tidings to Gath*, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so *will be* his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his 12 people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines 28 gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men. And David 2 said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can

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**land, which were of old, as** &c.: a statement inserted with reference to the Amalekite attack upon Israel in the march from Egypt (Ex. xvii. 8 ff.). But instead of *which were of old*, some copies of the Sept. have *from Telam*, the southernmost city of Judah (see note on xv. 4). This makes better sense. 9. *the sheep* &c.] In which the wealth of nomad tribes consists. Comp.

xv. 3, &c.; Job i. 3. *returned* &c.] Achish expected David to pay a kind of tribute, as well as to render service in war (xxviii. 1). 10. *a road*] A plundering excursion or **raid** (R.V.) as in *r. 8.* *the Jerahmeelites*] Descendants of Jeralmeel the son of Hezron (1 Chr. ii. 9, 25), who were settled on the southern frontier of Judah. Comp. xxx. 29. *the south*] R.V. **the South**, to indicate that the district of the *Negeb* is meant. Comp. Gen. xii. 9. See note on ch. xxx. 1. *the Kenites*] Who were in alliance with the Israelites. See on xv. 6. David represented his expeditions as made against his own countrymen and their allies. His falsehoods are not to be judged by the Christian standard of morality.

11. *to bring tidings to Gath*] R.V. **to bring them to Gath**, as prisoners. Such barbarity was nothing strange at the time, and David did not rise above the practice of his contemporaries. *tell on us*] "On" used as we now use "of" is common in Shakespeare. *and so will be* &c.] R.V. **and so hath been his manner all the while he hath dwelt** &c.

12. Connect *r. 12* with *r. 10*. Achish believed David's story, and naturally supposed that he had made his countrymen detest him by his raids on them.

XXVIII. 1, 2. David forced to join the Philistine army. 1. *in those days*] While David was at Ziklag. 2. R.V. **Therefore thou shalt know what thy servant will do**. David's answer is ambiguous. He is placed in a dilemma. It seems as though he must either fight against his own nation, or appear false to Achish.

do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

- 3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a

The difficulty was providentially solved by the suspicion of the Philistine princes (xxix. 3 ff.). *keeper of mine head*] Captain of his body-guard. Achish accepts David's answer as a profession of loyalty.

3—14. Saul resorts to the witch of En-dor. *v. 3* states certain facts as the key to the incidents about to be related: (1) the death and burial of Samuel (xxv. 1); (2) Saul's expulsion of the soothsayers. This he probably did in the early part of his reign. An allusion to it may be traced in xv. 23. It was in accordance with the Law. See Lev. xix. 31, xx. 27; Deut. xviii. 10 ff. *familiar spirits*] Demons or spirits supposed to be in attendance on necromancers. Comp. Acts xvi. 16. *the wizards*] Wizard, connected with *wit* and *wise*, is an exact equivalent of the Heb. word, which means *a knowing one*: one who is supposed to possess a knowledge of the future by mysterious means.

4. This was no mere border raid, but a gathering of the whole force of the confederacy, for a decisive struggle with Israel. They marched northwards along the coast to the plain of Esdraelon, the great battle-field of Palestine, where their chariots and horsemen could move freely. *Shunem*] Now *Sólam*, on the S.W. slope of the Little Hermon, opposite Jezreel and Mount Gilboa, having the deep broad valley of Jezreel between, and overlooking the whole western plain to Carmel. (See 1 Kings i. 3; 2 Kings iv. 8 ff.). *Gilboa*] A mountainous tract to the S.E. of the plain of Esdraelon.

5. *he was afraid*] The consciousness that "the Spirit of Jehovah had departed from him" made the once brave king a coward.

6. The statement in 1 Chr. x. 13, 14 is a contradiction in appearance only. Instead of humbling himself in penitence for the sin which he knew must be withholding the Divine answer (xiv. 37), he resorted to a plan which was a practical desertion of Jehovah. *answered him not*] See Prov. i. 24—30. *by dreams*] A recognised method of Divine communications to man, Num. xii. 6. *by Urim*] The Urim and the Thummim, i. e. *the Lights and the Perfections*, were certain objects placed inside the breastplate of judgment which formed part of the high-priest's Ephod (Ex. xxviii. 30). What they were is not known; but they were employed by the high-priest for ascertaining Jehovah's will. Comp. Ezra ii. 63; Neh. vii. 65. *by prophets*] Cp. ix. 6, xxii. 5.

woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor. And Saul 8 disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee. And the 9 woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her 10 by the LORD, saying, *As the LORD liveth*, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, 11 Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a 12 loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul. And the king said unto 13 her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And 14 he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped *with his* face to the ground, and bowed himself.

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for instances of counsel given through prophets. 7. *En-dor*] = *fountain of the dwelling*, was on the northern slope of the Little Hermon, where the village of *Endôr* still marks the site. Comp. Ps. lxxxiii. 10.

8. It was an adventurous journey. They had to pass over the shoulder of the hill on which the Philistines were encamped, and traverse a distance of not less than ten or twelve miles. The darkness around was a fit emblem of the darkness in Saul's soul.

11. *Bring me up*] From *Sheól*, the realm of departed spirits, which is always spoken of as beneath the earth. The question whether Samuel actually appeared has been hotly discussed in ancient and modern times. It may suffice to say here, (1) that the plain sense of the narrative is that he *did* appear, and foretell Saul's death: (2) that it cannot be supposed that the witch had power to summon him at her pleasure: she meant to impose on Saul, and was aghast at Samuel's appearance.

12. The woman had not previously recognised her visitor, but on the apparition of Samuel discovered that he was Saul, either by the fact of the apparition for which she was unprepared, or by her intensified perception in a state of clairvoyance.

13. *I saw gods ascending*] R.V. **I see a god coming up** (marg. *gods*); i.e. a supernatural, non-earthly being. It is evident from r. 14 that only a *single* figure appeared.

14. *a mantle*] R.V. **a robe**: the prophet's dress (xv. 27). *Saul perceived*] Saul recognised from the description that it was Samuel, and shewed his reverence for the great prophet by the usual gesture. **He bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance** (xxiv. 8).

15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that *thou* mayest  
 16 make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour,  
 17 *even* to David: because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore  
 18 hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all  
 21 the night. And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto  
 22 me. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when  
 23 thou goest on *thy* way. But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But the servants, together with the woman, compelled

15—19. Samuel pronounces Saul's doom. 15. *Why hast thou disquieted me*] Disturbed me from my rest in Sheôl. Although he came as God's messenger, Saul's sin was the moving cause of so unnatural a mission.

16. *Wherefore then &c.*] As if in such extremity I who am only God's servant could do aught for thee. *is become thine enemy*] R.V. **thine adversary**.

But the reading of the Sept., *is on the side of thy neighbour*, is preferable. Comp. v. 17, xv. 28, xvi. 13, 14.

17. *hath done to him*] R.V. **hath wrought for himself**, in fulfilment of His purpose. But the Sept. and Vulg. read *done unto thee*. *as he spake by me*] See xv. 28.

18. Comp. xv. 20, 26. 19. *will also deliver Israel*] R.V. **will deliver Israel also**. The guilt of the king involves the nation also in punishment. *with me*] In Sheôl, the abode of departed spirits of righteous and wicked alike. Comp. Job iii. 17; 2 Sam. xii. 23.

20—25. Saul entertained by the woman. 20. *all along*] R.V. **his full length**. Terror of mind and exhaustion of body left him powerless.

21. *I have put &c.*] By doing that which rendered her liable to the punishment of death. Comp. xix. 5.



him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: and she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they arose up, and went away that night.

Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish. Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is* not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no *fault* in him since he fell *unto me* unto this day? And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make *this* fellow return, that he may go again to his place, which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be

**23.** *compelled*] R.V. **constrained.** *upon the bed*] The *diran*, or platform running along the wall, which in the East serves for a seat by day and a bed at night. Comp. Esth. i. 6; Ezek. xxiii. 41. **24.** Meals are rapidly prepared in the East. "With the Bedawin it is nearly universal to cook the meat immediately after it is butchered, and to bake fresh bread for every meal." Thomson. Comp. Gen. xviii. 6 ff.

XXIX. 1—5. The Philistine lords' distrust of David.

**1.** The narrative of xxviii. 1, 2 is resumed, with a precise description of the positions of the armies before the battle.

*Aphek*] Not the Aphek of iv. 1, but a place near Shunem.

**The fountain which is in Jezreel** (R.V.) was probably the present *Ain Júlûd*, less than two miles E.S.E. of *Zerin*, a large fountain spreading out at once into a pool, forty or fifty feet in diameter. Jezreel, now called *Zerin*, was a strong and central position, commanding the broad valley which slopes eastward to the Jordan, and the great plain reaching westward to the long blue ridge of Carmel. See 1 Kings xxi. 1 ff., xviii. 19; 2 Kings ix. 30 ff.

**2.** The narrative now goes back to a point of time during the march of the Philistine army northwards, probably soon after the junction of the forces from the different cities of the league.

*the lords*] See note on ch. v. 8. They were marching at the head of "the hundreds and the thousands" which were the military divisions of the army.

*the rereward*] The rear-guard, *ward* and *guard* being related as *wise* and *guise*. Comp. Is. lii. 12.

**3.** *these days, or these years*] i.e. for a considerable time, sufficient to test his fidelity. Comp. xxvii. 7. *fell*] i.e. as R.V., **fell away**, deserted and came over to me. Cp. 1 Chr. xii. 19, 20.

**4.** R.V. **Make the man return...for**

an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it not be* with the heads of these  
 5 men? *Is not this David*, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten  
 6 thousands? Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, *as the LORD liveth*, thou *hast been* upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host *is good* in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords  
 7 favour thee not. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that  
 8 thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my  
 9 lord the king? And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art good* in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall  
 10 not go up with us to the battle. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have  
 11 light, depart. So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

30 And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burnt it with fire;

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**wherewith should this fellow reconcile himself unto his lord?** 5. See xviii. 7, xxi. 11.

6—11. David dismissed from the army. 6. *as the LORD liveth*] Either the wording of the speech is due to the historian, or Achish, to convince David of his sincerity, swears by the God of Israel.

8. A hypocritical answer, designed to confirm Achish in the belief of his fidelity. But David can scarcely have intended to fight against his countrymen, and must have rejoiced that God had delivered him out of so perplexing a dilemma.

9. *as an angel of God*] Comp. 2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20, xix. 27.

10. *thy master's servants*] R.V. **the servants of thy lord.** Achish speaks of David's men as *Saul's subjects*, in view of the objection which has been made to their presence in the army.

XXX. 1—6. Sack of Ziklag in David's absence. 1. *on the third day*] After leaving the Philistine army. Evidently he had not accompanied them far.

*the Amalekites*] Possibly they had got information of David's absence, and took the opportunity to make reprisals for his raids on them (xxvii. 8).

*had invaded the south*] R.V. **had made a raid upon the South.** The *Negeb* or "south country" is the technical name for the district between the hills of Judah and the actual desert. It is a series of rolling hills, clad with scanty herbage

and had taken the women captives, that *were* therein: they slew 2 not any, either great or small, but carried *them* away, and went on their way. So David and his men came to the city, and 3 behold, *it was* burnt with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and 4 the people that *were* with him lift up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two 5 wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was 6 greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. And David said to Abiathar the priest, 7 Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David in- 8 quired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*. So David went, he and the six hundred men that *were* with 9 him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred 10 men: for two hundred abode *behind*, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.

And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him 11 to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; and they gave him a piece of a cake of *figs*, 12 and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk *any* water, three days and three nights. And David said unto 13

here and there. In places there is fine upland pasture, but not a tree nor a shrub to relieve its bareness. In this district Ziklag was situated.

**2.** R.V. and had taken captive the women and all that were therein, both small and great: they slew not any, but carried them off, and went their way.

**4.** *wept*] See note on xi. 4. **6.** *spake of stoning him*] Comp. Ex. xvii. 4; Num. xiv. 10. They laid the blame on him because he had left no force to guard Ziklag.

*encouraged himself*] R.V. **strengthened himself.** Comp. xxiii. 16; Eph. vi. 10; and many of the Psalms, e.g. xviii. 2, xxvii. 14, xxxi. 1 ff., 24, &c.

**7—20.** The pursuit. **7.** He first consults God, as before at Keilah (xxiii. 9).

**8.** *inquired at*] = **inquired of.** Comp. Gen. xxiv. 57. *pursue...overtake*] Or, as R.V. **If I pursue...**

**shall I overtake them?** **9.** *the brook Besor*] Perhaps the *Wady es Sheriah*, which runs down to the sea a few miles south of Gaza.

**10.** *abode behind*] R.V. **stayed behind,** as in v. 9. **12.** *his spirit &c.*] He revived. Comp. Jud.

him, To whom *belongest* thou? and whence *art* thou? And he said, I *am* a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.

14 We made an invasion *upon* the south of the Cherethites, and upon the *coast* which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the south

15 of Caleb; and we burnt Ziklag with fire. And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring

16 thee down to this company. And when he had brought him down, behold *they were* spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines,

17 and out of the land of Judah. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men,

18 which rode upon camels, and fled. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his

19 two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any *thing* that they had taken to them: David recovered all.

xv. 19. 13. *To whom &c.*] His appearance shewed that he was a slave. *servant*] A slave captured in some raid.

*agone*] An old form for *ago*. *my master left me*] "A barbarous act, to leave him there to perish, when they had camels' good store, for the carriage of men as well as of their spoil (*v.* 17): but this inhumanity cost them dear; for by this means they lost their own lives." *Patrick*.

14. R.V. **We made a raid upon the South of the Cherethites, and upon that which belongeth to Judah, and upon the South of Caleb.** The Cherethites were a tribe of Philistines living on the southern border of Philistia. Comp. 2 Sam. viii. 18; Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5. Caleb received Hebron for his inheritance (Josh. xiv. 13), and when he ceded the city to the priests for a city of refuge, retained the surrounding land (Josh. xxi. 11, 12; comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 3).

15. *company*] R.V. **troop**, as in *vv.* 8, 23, the regular word for a band of roving plunderers. Comp. Ps. xviii. 29.

16. *upon all the earth*] R.V. **over all the ground.** *dancing*] R.V. **feasting.**

17. David reached the neighbourhood of their camp in the evening, and found them scattered about in disorder, carousing over the spoil. As soon as the morning began to dawn he attacked them (comp. xi. 11), and the fight lasted till nightfall. After the first surprise, the Amalekites made a stubborn resistance. *the evening of the next day*] i.e. the evening with which the next day commenced, Jewish days being reckoned from sunset to sunset.

The fight lasted from early dawn till past sunset. *camels*] For which the Amalekites were famous. Comp. Jud. vii. 12; 1 Sam. xv. 3.

19. *that they had taken to them*] i.e. which the Amalekites had taken for themselves. They carried off the women

And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drave 20 before those *other* cattle, and said, This *is* David's spoil.

And David came to the two hundred men, which were so 21 faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that *were* with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. Then 22 answered all the wicked men and *men* of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not 23 do so, my brethren, with *that* which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. For who will hearken unto you in 24 this matter? but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was *so* from that day forward, that he made it a 25 statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto 26 the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord; to 27 *them* which *were* in Beth-el, and to *them* which *were* in south

and children alive to use or sell for slaves. 20. He not only recovered his own property, but took a rich booty besides, which his men drove off with shouts of triumph. The number of places to which he sent presents (*vv.* 26—31) shews how large it was.

21—25. The division of the spoil. 21. *to the people*] i.e. the 200: or as R.V. marg. *with the people*, i.e. the main body of his men. 22. Lit. **Then answered every wicked man and every base fellow...Because they went not with me.**

Each spoke for himself, in the true spirit of selfishness.

23. *company*] R.V. **troop.** 24. *but as &c.*] R.V. **for as his share is...so shall his share be...they shall share alike.**

The rule for the division of the spoil between combatants and non-combatants was an ancient one. (Num. xxxi. 27; Josh. xxii. 8.) David now enforced a special application of it with reference to the divisions of the army. *the stuff*] i.e. **the baggage.** (x. 22).

*they shall part*] = *share*. The use of the verb in this sense is an archaism. Comp. Acts ii. 45.

26—31. The presents sent to the elders of Judah in gratitude for the assistance he had received from them during his wanderings, and to secure their good-will when Saul's death should open the way for him to the throne. *a present*] Lit. **a blessing**, as in xxv. 27.

27. *Beth-el*] Not the well-known Beth-el, but *Bethul* or *Bethuel*, near Ziklag (Josh. xix. 4; 1 Chr. iv. 30). *south Ramoth*]

**Ramoth of the South** (R.V.) as distinguished from *Ramoth-Gilead*, is probably the same as *Ramah* of the South (Josh. xix. 8).

- 28 Ramoth, and to *them* which were in Jattir, and to *them* which were in Aroer, and to *them* which were in Siphmoth, and to  
 29 *them* which were in Eshtemoa, and to *them* which were in Rachal, and to *them* which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which were in the cities of the Kenites,  
 30 and to *them* which were in Hormah, and to *them* which were in Chor-ashan, and to *them* which were in Athach, and to *them*  
 31 which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.
- 31 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in  
 2 mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul

Perhaps "Shimei the Ramathite," the overseer of David's vineyards, came from it (1 Chr. xxvii. 27). [*Jattir*] In the mountains of Judah (Josh. xv. 48, xxi. 14), probably the modern *Attir*, 4½ miles S.W. of Eshtemoa. It may have been the native place of David's heroes Ira and Gareb the *Ithrites* (2 Sam. xxiii. 38).

28. *Aroer*] Not the famous city on the R. Arnon, but a place S. E. of Beersheba. "Shama and Jehiel the sons of Hothan the Aroerite" are mentioned in the catalogue of David's valiant men (1 Chr. xi. 44). [*Siphmoth*] Perhaps the home of Zabdi the *Shiphmite*, the steward of David's wine-cellars (1 Chr. xxvii. 27).

[*Eshtemoa*] A priestly city (Josh. xv. 50, xxi. 14); now *Es Semûa*, nine miles S.S.W. of Hebron.

29. *Rachal*] Nowhere else mentioned. The Sept. has **Carmel**. [*the Jerahmeelites*] See on xxvii. 10.

[*the Kenites*] See on xv. 6. 30. *Hormah*] or *Zephath* (Jud. i. 17), an ancient Canaanite city (Josh. xii. 14), near Ziklag (Josh. xv. 30, xix. 4).

[*Chor-ashan*] The true reading is **Bor-ashan** (= *Cistern of Ashan*): the same as *Ashan* (Josh. xv. 42, xix. 7).

[*Athach*] Nowhere else mentioned.

31. *Hebron*] One of the most ancient cities in the world (Num. xiii. 22), soon to attain greater importance as the capital of David's kingdom during the first seven years and a half of his reign. It lies 20 miles south of Jerusalem, picturesquely situated in a narrow valley surrounded by rocky hills, whose sides are clothed with luxuriant vineyards. [*all the places*

&c.] David's outlaw life helped to prepare the men of Judah to welcome him as their king. The instances quoted above indicate that it was during this period that he gained many of the adherents who afterwards filled offices of trust in his kingdom.

XXXI. 1—7. The death of Saul on Mount Gilboa. [Ch. xxxi. = 1 Chron. x. 1—12.] Four battles memorable in the history

of Israel were fought in or near the plain of Esdraelon "the great battlefield of Palestine." (1) The battle of Kishon, Jud. iv.

15, v. 21. (2) The battle of Jezreel, Jud. vii. (3) The battle of Mount Gilboa. (4) The battle of Megiddo, 2 Chron. xxxv.

22. [*fled*] Probably the battle took place in the plain of Jezreel; the men of Israel were driven back on their camp, and finally fled in confusion up the heights of Gilboa, pursued by the

and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid: therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body

Philistines. 2. *Saul's sons*] See xiv. 49. 3. *the archers &c.*] R.V. **the archers overtook him; and he was greatly distressed by reason of the archers.** 4. Comp. Jud. ix. 54. *abuse me*] Or, as R.V. marg., *make a mock of me: maltreat me for their amusement.*

*a sword*] R.V. **his sword.** *fell upon it*] This account of Saul's death is inconsistent with that given by the Amalekite (2 Sam. i. 9 ff.). His story was a fabrication. He found the king's corpse on the field, stripped it, and brought the spoil to David in the hope of a reward.

6. *all his men*] The soldiers of the royal body-guard, who fell fighting round him like Harold's *hus-carls* at the battle of Hastings.

7. *on the other side of the valley*] On the side of the valley or plain of Jezreel opposite to the battle-field. The district to the north is meant, in which the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali dwelt.

**they that were beyond Jordan** (R.V.). The panic spread even to the eastern side of the Jordan.

8—13. The burial of Saul and his sons. 9. *to publish it*] R.V. **to carry the tidings unto the house of their idols,** which were regarded as the givers of the victory (ch. v. 2); **and to the people.** Comp. 2 Sam. i. 20.

10. **the house of the Ashtaroth** (R.V.). See on vii. 3. It was probably at Ashkelon. Comp. 2 Sam. i. 20. Saul's body and the bodies of his sons (v. 12) were hung on the wall in the "open place" (2 Sam. xxi. 12) by the gate, that all the passers by might join in exulting

11 to the wall of Beth-shan. And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-  
 12 gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all  
 the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body  
 of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan,  
 13 and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took  
 their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and  
 fasted seven days.

over the defeat and disgrace of Israel. *Beth-shan*] Now *Beisán*, situated in the *Wady Jálád*, between Jezreel and the Jordan.

11. *the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead*] Mindful of the debt of gratitude they owed to Saul (ch. xi.). Beth-shan is within view of the probable site of Jabesh. The distance over the hills, down into the Jordan valley, and up the *Wady Jálád* is not much under twenty miles.

12. Cremation was not a Hebrew practice, but the bodies may have been burnt to avoid the possibility of further insult, if the Philistines should take Jabesh.

13. *under a tree*] R.V. **under the tamarisk tree**, some well-known tree at Jabesh. David removed the bones to the family sepulchre at Zela (2 Sam. xxi. 12—14). *fasted seven days*] A sign of general mourning. Comp. 2 Sam. i. 12, iii. 35, &c.



## INDEX.

- Abiathar, 99  
 Abishai, 111  
 Abner, 69  
 Achish, 114, 96  
 Adullam, 97  
 Agag, 71  
*against*, 47  
 Amalekites, 70 f., 120 f.  
 Ammonites, 54, 69  
 Amorites, 42  
 Anointed, the LORD's, 22, 50  
 anointing, 49  
 Aphek, 30, 119  
 Arabah, 102  
 Ark, the, symbol of Jehovah's covenant with Israel, 31, 33; at Shiloh, 27; captured by the Philistines, 33 ff.; at Kirjath-jearim, 39, 66  
 Ashdod, 33  
 Ashkelon, 125  
 Ashtaroth, Ashtoreth, 40  
  
 Baal, Baalim, 40  
 Beer-sheba, 29  
 Belial, son or daughter of, 18  
 Benjamin, tribe of, 48  
 Bethel, 42; in Judah, 123  
 Beth-horon, 63, 65  
 Bethlehem, 75  
 bottle, 19, 107  
 brass, 78  
  
*Carriage*, 80  
*coast*, 34  
 congregation of Israel, 52  
*cruse*, 111  
 cubit, 78  
*cunning*, 76  
  
 Dagon, 33  
 Dan, 29  
 David, the king of God's choice, 75; life and character of, 12-14; contrasted with Saul, 14; friendship with Jonathan, 14, 83; meaning of name, 76; anointing of, 76; fight with Goliath, 81; faith of, 82; celebration of his victory, 84; Saul's jealousy of, 85; advancement, 85; marriage with Michal, 86; life attempted by Saul, 85, 88; escapes, 88; goes to Samuel at Ramah, 89; at Nob, 94; at Gath, 96; at Adullam, 97; character of his followers, 97; spares Saul's life, 102, 111; meeting and marriage with Abigail, 107 ff.; at Ziklag, 114; friends gained during his outlaw life, 123 f.; imperfections, 109, 115  
  
*car*=plough, 44  
 Eben-ezer, 30, 41  
 Edomites, 69  
 Ekron, 35  
 Elah, valley of, 77  
 elders, 43  
 Eli, 17 f.  
 ephah, 19  
 ephod, 23, 99  
 Ephod, the, 66, 96, 116, 121  
 Ephraim, mount, 15  
 Esdraclon, battles in the plain of, 124  
  
 faith, victories of, 41, 82  
  
 Gad, 97  
 Gath, 34, 96  
 Gibeah, 50  
 Gilgal, 42  
 Glory, the, 33  
 God, when printed in capitals in A. V., 16; vindicates His Holiness, 39, 68; His omnipresence not yet realised, 112; His repentance, 71, 74; His commands accommodated to the moral condition of their recipients, 70  
  
 harvest, scene of, 37; time of, 59; rain in, 59  
 heart, meaning of, in O. T., 51  
 Hebrew MSS., age of, 5  
 Hebrews, 31  
 Hebron, 124  
 Hittites, 111  
*horn, to exalt the*, 20  
 housetop, 49  
  
 inquire of the Lord, 53  
 Israel, subject to the Philistines, 39, 63; congregation of, 52; elders of, 43; divisions of the nation, 53; exterminating wars of, 70  
  
*Jehovah*, true pronunciation lost, 16; represented in A. V. by LORD, 16; the living God, 80; the Name of, 60, 82; wars of, 86, 108

- Jezreel, 119; of Judah, 110  
 Joab, 111  
 Jonathan, his friendship with David, 14, 83 ff.; meaning of name, 60; heroic character, 68; rescued by the people, 58; gives his arms to David, 84; renews his covenant with David, 91; parting from David, 101; death and burial, 125
- Kenites**, 71  
**King**, sin of the request for a, 10, 43; why granted, 9, 10; character of an Oriental, 44
- LORD**=Jehovah, 16  
**LORD** of hosts, 16  
 lords of the Philistines, 34  
 lot, use of the, 53, 63  
*lucre*, 43
- meat*, 93  
 Messiah, 22, 50  
 Moabites, 54, 69  
 moral difficulties of O.T., 70, 89, 115
- Nabal**, 105  
 Name of God, 60, 82  
 Nazirite vow, 17  
 Negeb, 120  
 new moon, 90
- on*=of, 115
- part*=share, 123  
*peradventure*, 46  
 Philistines, 30  
 polygamy, 15  
 prayer, postures for, 13  
*presently*, 23  
*prophecy*, 51, 85, 89 f.  
*prophet*, 46  
 prophets as historians, 3 f.  
 Psalms referred to, 88, 90, 96, 98, 101, 102, 104, 110
- rain in harvest, 59  
*raid*=raid, 115  
 religious observances of the time, 15, 90 f.
- Sabaoth*, 16  
 sacrifice, description of a, 19  
 Samuel, meaning of name, 18; life and work of, 9-11; age at call, 27; at Shiloh, 30; contrasted with Eli's sons, 23; effects a reformation, 9, 39; as judge, 41; farewell address, 56; work in establishing the kingdom, 10; as prophet-counsellor, 16; founder of the Prophetic-Order, 10; priestly functions, 10; his intercessions, 40; death, 105; apparition, 117; character, 11
- Samuel, Books of, originally one, 3; meaning of title, 3; titles in Sept. and Vulg., 3; authorship, 3; sources, 3, 4; date, 4; canonicity, 4; historical accuracy, 5; authorities for the text, 5; analysis of contents, 6-8; chronology, 8, 9
- Saul, the king of the people's choice, 75; meaning of name, 45; life and character of, 11, 12; anointing, 49; Saul among the prophets, 52, 90; election, 52; rescues Jabesh, 54; confirmation of his kingdom, 56; his rash oath, 66; commission to destroy Amalek, 70; disobedience, 62, 71; want of real penitence, 73; rejection, 73; abolition of witchcraft, 116; possessed by an evil spirit, 76; jealous of David, 85; attempt on David's life, 85, &c.; deserted by God, 116; consults the witch, 117; death and burial, 124 f.; his wars, 69; his family, 69
- seer, 46  
 Septuagint, 5  
*Sheol*, 21  
*Shephēlah*, 30  
 shewbread, 95  
 Shiloh, 16  
 south, the, 120  
 spear, a symbol of royalty, 85  
 symbolical actions, 55, 73
- tabernacle, at Shiloh, 16 ff.; at Nob, 94  
 tabernacle of the congregation, 24  
 tablet, 51  
 Targum, 5  
 Teraphim, 88
- Urim and Thummim, 116
- Versions of the O.T., 5  
 vows, 17  
 Vulgate, 5
- wars of extermination, 70  
 watches of the night, 56  
*wax*, 27  
*wealth*, 26  
 wilderness, 80  
 witch of En-dor, 116 f.  
 worship, places of, 11, 42  
 Ziklag, 114



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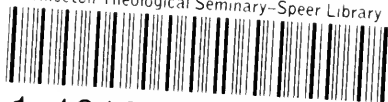
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