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First Samuel

From Commentary on the Old Testament

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adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

1 Samuel - Keil and Delitzsch

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1 SAMUEL

Introduction

Title, Contents, Character, and Origin of the Books of Samuel.

The books of Samuel originally formed one undivided work, and in the Hebrew MSS they do so still. The division into two books originated with the Alexandrian translators (LXX), and was not only adopted in the Vulgate and other versions, but in the sixteenth century it was introduced by Daniel Bomberg into our editions of the Hebrew Bible itself. In the Septuagint and Vulgate, these books are reckoned as belonging to the books of the Kings, and have the heading, Βασιλειῶν πρώτὴ δευτέρα (*Regum,* i. *et* ii.). In the Septuagint they are called "books of the kingdoms," evidently with reference to the fact that each of these works contains an account of the history of a double kingdom, viz.: the books of Samuel, the history of the kingdoms of Saul and David; and the books of Kings, that of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. This title does not appear unsuitable, so far as the books before us really contain an account of the rise of the monarchy in Israel. Nevertheless, we cannot regard it as the original title, or even as a more appropriate heading than the one given in the Hebrew canon, viz., *"the book of Samuel,"* since this title not only originated in the fact that the first half (i.e., our first book) contains an account of the acts of the prophet Samuel, but was also intended to indicate that the spirit of Samuel formed the soul of the true kingdom in Israel, or that the earthly throne of the Israelitish kingdom of God derived its strength and perpetuity from the Spirit of the Lord which lived in the prophet. The division into two books answers to the contents, since the death of Saul, with which the first book closes, formed a turning-point in the development of the kingdom.

The Books of Samuel contain the history of the kingdom of God in Israel, from the termination of the age of the judges to the close of the reign of king David, and embrace a period of about 125 years, viz., from about 1140 to 1015 B.C. The *first* book treats of the judgeship of the prophet Samuel and the reign of king Saul, and is divided into three sections, answering to the three epochs formed by the judicial office of Samuel (1 Samuel 1–7), the reign of Saul from his election till his rejection (1 Samuel 8–15), and the decline of his kingdom during his conflict with David, whom the Lord had chosen to be the leader of His people in the place of Saul (1 Samuel 16–31). The renewal of the kingdom of God, which was now thoroughly disorganized both within and without, commenced with Samuel. When the pious Hannah asked for a son from the Lord, and Samuel was given to her, the sanctuary of God at Shiloh was thoroughly desecrated under the decrepit high priest Eli by the base conduct of his worthless sons, and the nation of Israel was given up to the power of the Philistines. If Israel, therefore, was to be delivered from the bondage of the heathen it was necessary that it should be first of all redeemed from the bondage of sin and idolatry, that its false confidence in the visible pledges of the gracious presence of God should be shaken by heavy judgments, and the way prepared for its conversion to the Lord its God by deep humiliation. At the very same time, therefore, at which Samuel was called to be the prophet of God, the judgment of God was announced upon the degraded priesthood and the desecrated sanctuary. The *first* section of our book, which describes the history of the renewal of the theocracy by Samuel, does not commence with the call of Samuel as prophet, but with an account on the one hand of the character of the national religion in the time of Eli, and on the other hand of the piety of the parents of Samuel, especially of his mother, and with an announcement of the judgment that was to fall upon Eli's house (1 Samuel 1–2). Then follow first of all the call of Samuel as prophet (1 Samuel 3), and the fulfilment of the judgment upon the house of Eli and the house of God (1 Samuel 4); secondly, the manifestation of the omnipotence of God upon the enemies of His

people, by the chastisement of the Philistines for carrying off the ark of the covenant, and the victory which the Israelites gained over their oppressors through Samuel's prayer (1 Samuel 5–7:14); and lastly, a summary of the judicial life of Samuel (1 Samuel 7:15–17). The *second* section contains, first, the negotiations of the people with Samuel concerning the appointment of a king, the anointing of Saul by the prophet, and his election as king, together with the establishment of his kingdom (1 Samuel 8–12); and secondly, a brief survey of the history of his reign, in connection with which the only events that are at all fully described are his first successful conflicts with the Philistines, and the war against the Amalekites which occasioned his ultimate rejection (1 Samuel 13–15). In the *third* section (1 Samuel 16–31) there is a much more elaborate account of the history of Saul from his rejection till his death, since it not only describes the anointing of David and his victory over Goliath, but contains a circumstantial account of his attitude towards Saul, and the manifold complications arising from his long-continued persecution on the part of Saul, for the purpose of setting forth the gradual accomplishment of the counsels of God, both in the rejection of Saul and the election of David as king of Israel, to warn the ungodly against hardness of heart, and to strengthen the godly in their trust in the Lord, who guides His servants through tribulation and suffering to glory and honour. The *second* book contains the history of the reign of David, arranged in four sections: (1) his reign over Judah in Hebron, and his conflict with Ishbosheth the son of Saul, whom Abner had set up as king over the other tribes of Israel (1 Samuel 1–4): (2) the anointing of David as king over all Israel, and the firm establishment of his kingdom through the conquest of the citadel of Zion, and the elevation of Jerusalem into the capital of the kingdom; the removal of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem; the determination to build a temple to the Lord; the promise given him by the Lord of the everlasting duration of his dominion; and lastly, the subjugation of all the enemies of Israel (1 Samuel 5–8:14), to which there is appended a list of the principal officers of state (1 Samuel 8:15–18), and an account of the favour shown to the house of Saul in the person of Mephibosheth (1 Samuel 9): (3) the disturbance of his reign through his adultery with Bathsheba during the Ammonitish and Syrian war, and the judgments which came upon his house in consequence of this sin through the wickedness of his sons, viz., the incest of Amnon and rebellion of Absalom, and the insurrection of Sheba (1 Samuel 10–20): (4) the close of his reign, his song of thanksgiving for deliverance out of the hand of all his foes (1 Samuel 22), and his last prophetic words concerning the just ruler in the fear of God (1 Samuel 23:1–7). The way is prepared for these, however, by an account of the expiation of Saul's massacre of the Gibeonites, and of various heroic acts performed by his generals during the wars with the Philistines (1 Samuel 21); whilst a list of his several heroes is afterwards appended in 1 Samuel 23:8–39, together with an account of the numbering of the people and consequent pestilence (1 Samuel 24), which is placed at the close of the work, simply because the punishment of this sin of David furnished the occasion for the erection of an altar of burnt-offering upon the site of the future temple. His death is not mentioned here, because he transferred the kingdom to his son Solomon before he died; and the account of this transfer forms the introduction to the history of Solomon in the first book of Kings, so that the close of David's life was most appropriately recorded there.

So far as the *character* of the historical writing in the books of Samuel is concerned, there is something striking in the contrast which presents itself between the fulness with which the writer has described many events of apparently trifling importance, in connection with the lives of persons through whom the Lord secured the deliverance of His people and kingdom from their foes, and the summary brevity with which he disposes of the greatest enterprises of Saul and David, and the fierce and for the most part tedious wars with the

surrounding nations; so that, as Thenius says, "particular portions of the work differ in the most striking manner from all the rest, the one part being very brief, and written almost in the form of a chronicle, the other elaborate, and in one part composed with really biographical fulness." This peculiarity is not to be accounted for from the nature of the sources which the author had at his command; for even if we cannot define with precision the nature and extent of these sources, yet when we compare the accounts contained in these books of the wars between David and the Ammonites and Syrians with those in the books of Chronicles (2 Samuel 8 and 10 with 1 Chron. 18–19), we see clearly that the sources from which those accounts were derived embraced more than our books have given, since there are several places in which the chronicler gives fuller details of historical facts, the truth of which is universally allowed. The preparations for the building of the temple and the organization of the army, as well as the arrangement of the official duties of the Levites which David undertook, according to 1 Chron. 22–28, in the closing years of his life, cannot possibly have been unknown to the author of our books. Moreover, there are frequent allusions in the books before us to events which are assumed as known, though there is no record of them in the writings which have been handed down to us, such as the removal of the tabernacle from Shiloh, where it stood in the time of Eli (1 Samuel 1:3, 9, etc.), to Nob, where David received the shewbread from the priests on his flight from Saul (1 Samuel 21:1ff.); the massacre of the Gibeonites by Saul, which had to be expiated under David (2 Samuel 21); the banishment of the necromancers out of the land in the time of Saul (1 Samuel 28:3); and the flight of the Beerothites to Gittaim (2 Samuel 4:3). From this also we must conclude, that the author of our books knew more than he thought it necessary to mention in his work. But we certainly cannot infer from these peculiarities, as has often been done, that our books are to be regarded as a compilation. Such an inference as this simply arises from an utter disregard of the plan and object, which run through both books and regulate the selection and arrangement of the materials they contain. That the work has been composed upon a definite plan, is evident from the grouping of the historical facts, in favour of which the chronological order generally observed in both the books has now and then been sacrificed. Thus, in the history of Saul and the account of his wars (1 Samuel 14:47, 48), the fact is also mentioned, that he smote the Amalekites; whereas the war itself, in which he smote them, is first described in detail in 1 Samuel 15, because it was in that war that he forfeited his kingdom through his transgression of the divine command, and brought about his own rejection on the part of God. The sacrifice of the chronological order to the material grouping of kindred events, is still more evident in the history of David. In 2 Samuel 8 all his wars with foreign nations are collected together, and even the wars with the Syrians and Ammonites are included, together with an account of the booty taken in these wars; and then after this, viz., in 1 Samuel 10–12, the war with the Ammonites and Syrians is more fully described, including the circumstances which occasioned it, the course which it took, and David's adultery which occurred during this war. Moreover, the history of Saul, as well as that of David, is divided into two self-contained periods, answering indeed to the historical course of the reigns of these two kings, but yet so distinctly marked off by the historian, that not only is the turning-point distinctly given in both instances, viz., the rejection of Saul and the grievous fall of David, but each of these periods is rounded off with a comprehensive account of the wars, the family, and the state officials of the two kings (1 Samuel 14:47–52, and 2 Samuel 8). So likewise in the history of Samuel, after the victory which the Israelites obtained over the Philistines through his prayer, everything that had to be related concerning his life as judge is grouped together in 1 Samuel 7:15–17, before the introduction of the monarchy is described; although Samuel himself lived till nearly the close of the reign of Saul, and not only

instituted Saul as king, but afterwards announced his rejection, and anointed David as his successor. These comprehensive accounts are anything but proofs of compilations from sources of different kinds, which ignorance of the peculiarities of the Semitic style of writing history has led some to regard them as being; they simply serve to round off the different periods into which the history has been divided, and form resting-places for the historical review, which neither destroy the material connection of the several groups, nor throw any doubt upon the unity of the authorship of the books themselves. And even where separate incidents appear to be grouped together, without external connection or any regard to chronological order, on a closer inspection it is easy to discover the relation in which they stand to the leading purpose of the whole book, and the reason why they occupy this position and no other (see the introductory remarks to 2 Samuel 9, 21–24).

If we look more closely, however, at the contents of these books, in order to determine their character more precisely, we find at the very outset, in Hannah's song of praise, a prophetic glance at the anointed of the Lord (1 Samuel 2:10), which foretells the establishment of the monarchy what was afterwards accomplished under Saul and David. And with this there is associated the rise of the new name, *Jehovah Sabaoth,* which is never met with in the Pentateuch or in the books of Joshua and Judges; whereas it occurs in the books before us from the commencement (1 Samuel 1:3, 11, etc.) to the close. (For further remarks on the origin and signification of this divine name, see at 1 Samuel 1:3.) When Israel received a visible representative of its invisible God-king in the person of an earthly monarch; Jehovah, the God of Israel, became the God of the heavenly hosts. Through the establishment of the monarchy, the people of Jehovah's possession became a "world-power;" the kingdom of God was elevated into a kingdom of the world, as distinguished from the other ungodly kingdoms of the world, which it was eventually to overcome in the power of its God. In this conflict Jehovah manifested himself as the Lord of hosts, to whom all the nations and kingdoms of this world were to become subject. Even in the times of Saul and David, the heathen nations were to experience a foretaste of this subjection. When Saul had ascended the throne of Israel, he fought against all his enemies round about, and extended his power in every direction in which he turned (1 Samuel 1:14, 47, 48). But David made all the nations who bordered upon the kingdom of God tributary to the people of the Lord, as the Lord gave him victory wherever he went (1 Samuel 2:8, 14, 15); so that his son Solomon reigned over all the kingdoms, from the stream (the Euphrates) to the boundary of Egypt, and they all brought him presents, and were subject to him (1 Kings 5:1). But the Israelitish monarchy could never thus acquire the power to secure for the kingdom of God a victory over all its foes, except as the king himself was diligent in his endeavours to be at all times simply the instrument of the God-king, and exercise his authority solely in the name and according to the will of Jehovah. And as the natural selfishness and pride of man easily made this concentration of the supreme earthly power in a single person merely an occasion for self-aggrandisement, and therefore the Israelitish kings were exposed to the temptation to use the plenary authority entrusted to them even in opposition to the will of God; the Lord raised up for Himself organs of His own Spirit, in the persons of the prophets, to stand by the side of the kings, and make known to them the will and counsel of God. The introduction of the monarchy was therefore preceded by the development of the prophetic office into a spiritual power in Israel, in which the kingdom was to receive not only a firm support to its own authority, but a strong bulwark against royal caprice and tyranny. Samuel was called by the Lord to be His prophet, to convert the nation that was sunk in idolatry to the Lord its God, and to revive the religious life by the establishment of associations of prophets, since the priests had failed to resist the growing apostasy of the nation, and had become

unfaithful to their calling to instruct and establish the congregation in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. Even before the call of Samuel as a prophet, there was foretold to the high priest Eli by a man of God, not only the judgment that would fall upon the degenerate priesthood, but the appointment of a faithful priest, for whom the Lord would build a permanent house, that he might ever walk before His anointed (1 Samuel 2:26–36). And the first revelation which Samuel received from God had reference to the fulfilment of all that the Lord had spoken against the house of Eli (1 Samuel 3:11ff.). The announcement of a faithful priest, who would walk before the anointed of the Lord, also contained a prediction of the establishment of the monarchy, which foreshadowed its worth and great significance in relation to the further development of the kingdom of God. And whilst these predictions of the anointed of the Lord, before and in connection with the call of Samuel, show the deep spiritual connection which existed between the prophetic order and the regal office in Israel; the insertion of them in these books is a proof that from the very outset the author had this new organization of the Israelitish kingdom of God before his mind, and that it was his intention not simply to hand down biographies of Samuel, Saul, and David, but to relate the history of the Old Testament kingdom of God at the time of its elevation out of a deep inward and outward decline into the full authority and power of a kingdom of the Lord, before which all its enemies were to be compelled to bow.

Israel was to become a kingship of priests, i.e., a kingdom whose citizens were priests and kings. The Lords had announced this to the sons of Israel before the covenant was concluded at Sinai, as the ultimate object of their adoption as the people of His possession (Ex. 19:5, 6). Now although this promise reached far beyond the times of the Old Covenant, and will only receive its perfect fulfilment in the completion of the kingdom of God under the New Covenant, yet it was to be realized even in the people of Israel so far as the economy of the Old Testament allowed. Israel was not only to become a priestly nation, but a royal nation also; not only to be sanctified as a congregation of the Lord, but also to be exalted into a kingdom of God. The establishment of the earthly monarchy, therefore, was not only an eventful turning-point, but also an "epoch-making" advance in the development of Israel towards the goal set before it in its divine calling. And this advance became the pledge of the ultimate attainment of the goal, through the promise which David received from God (2 Samuel 7:12–16), that the Lord would establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. With this promise God established for His anointed the eternal covenant, to which David reverted at the close of his reign, and upon which he rested his divine announcement of the just ruler over men, the ruler in the fear of God (2 Samuel 23:1–7). Thus the close of these books points back to their commencement. The prophecy of the pious mother of Samuel, that the Lord would give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed (1 Samuel 2:10), found a fulfilment in the kingdom of David, which was at the same time a pledge of the ultimate completion of the kingdom of God under the sceptre of the Son of David, the promised Messiah.

This is one, and in fact the most conspicuous, arrangement of the facts connected with the history of salvation, which determined the plan and composition of the work before us. By the side of this there is another, which does not stand out so prominently indeed, but yet must not be overlooked. At the very beginning, viz., in 1 Samuel 1, the inward decay of the house of God under the high priest Eli is exhibited; and in the announcement of the judgment upon the house of Eli, a long-continued oppression of the dwelling-place (of God) is foretold (1 Samuel 2:32). Then, in the further course of the narrative, not only is the fulfilment of these threats pointed out, in the events described in 1 Samuel 4, 6:19–7:2, and 22:11–19; but it is also shown how David first of all brought the ark of the covenant, about which no one had troubled himself in the time of Saul, out of its concealment, had a tent erected for it in the

capital of his kingdom upon Mount Zion, and made it once more the central point of the worship of the congregation; and how after that, when God had given him rest from his enemies, he wished to build a temple for the Lord to be the dwelling-place of His name; and lastly, when God would not permit him to carry out this resolution, but promised that his son would build the house of the Lord, how, towards the close of his reign, he consecrated the site for the future temple by building an altar upon Mount Moriah (2 Samuel 24:25). Even in this series of facts the end of the work points back to the beginning, so that the arrangement and composition of it according to a definite plan, which has been consistently carried out, are very apparent. If, in addition to this, we take into account the deep-seated connection between the building of the temple as designed by David, and the confirmation of his monarchy on the part of God as exhibited in 2 Samuel 7, we cannot fail to observe that the historical development of the true kingdom, in accordance with the nature and constitution of the Old Testament kingdom of God, forms the leading thought and purpose of the work to which the name of Samuel has been attached, and that it was by this thought and aim that the writer was influenced throughout in his selection of the historical materials which lay before him in the sources that he employed.

The full accounts which are given of the birth and youth of Samuel, and the life of David, are in the most perfect harmony with this design. The lives and deeds of these two men of God were of significance as laying the foundation for the development and organization of the monarchical kingdom in Israel. Samuel was the model and type of the prophets; and embodied in his own person the spirit and nature of the prophetic office, whilst his attitude towards Saul foreshadowed the position which the prophet was to assume in relation to the king. In the life of David, the Lord himself education the king of His kingdom, the prince over His people, to whom He could continue His favour and grace even when he had fallen so deeply that it was necessary that he should be chastised for his sins. Thus all the separate parts and sections are fused together as an organic whole in the fundamental thought of the work before us. And this unity is not rendered at all questionable by differences such as we find in the accounts of the mode of Saul's death as described in 1 Samuel 31:4 and 2 Samuel 1:9, 10, or by such repetitions as the double account of the death of Samuel, and other phenomena of a similar kind, which can be explained without difficulty; whereas the assertion sometimes made, that there are some events of which we have two different accounts that contradict each other, has never yet been proved, and, as we shall see when we come to the exposition of the passages in question, has arisen partly from unscriptural assumptions, partly from ignorance of the formal peculiarities of the Hebrew mode of writing history, and partly from a mistaken interpretation of the passages themselves.

With regard to the *origin* of the books of Samuel, all that can be maintained with certainty is, that they were not written till after the division of the kingdom under Solomon's successor. This is evident from the remark in 1 Samuel 27:6, that *"Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day."* For although David was king over the tribe of Judah alone for seven years, it was not till after the falling away of the ten tribes from the house of David that there were really "kings of Judah." On the other hand, nothing can be inferred with certainty respecting the date of composition, either from the distinction drawn between Israel and Judah in 1 Samuel 11:8; 17:52; 18:16, and 2 Samuel 3:10; 24:1, which evidently existed as early as the time of David, as we may see from 2 Samuel 2:9, 10; 5:1–5; 19:41; 20:2; or from the formula *"to this day,"* which we find in 1 Samuel 5:5; 6:18; 30:25, 2 Samuel 4:3; 6:18; 18:18, since the duration of the facts to which it is applied is altogether unknown; or lastly, from such passages as 1 Samuel 9:9, 2 Samuel 13:18, where explanations are given of expressions and customs belonging to the times of Saul and David, as it is quite possible that they may have been altogether changed by the time of

Solomon. In general, the contents and style of the books point to the earliest times after the division of the kingdom; since we find no allusions whatever to the decay of the kingdoms which afterwards took place, and still less to the captivity; whilst the style and language are classical throughout, and altogether free from Chaldaisms and later forms, such as we meet with in the writings of the Chaldean period, and even in those of the time of the captivity. The author himself is quite unknown; but, judging from the spirit of his writings, he was a prophet of the kingdom of Judah. It is unanimously admitted, however, that he made use of written documents, particularly of prophetic records made by persons who were contemporaries of the events described, not only for the history of the reigns of Saul and David, but also for the life and labours of Samuel, although no written sources are quoted, with the exception of the "book of Jasher," which contained the elegy of David upon Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:18); so that the sources employed by him cannot be distinctly pointed out. The different attempts which have been made to determine them minutely, from the time of Eichhorn down to G. Em. Karo (*de fontibus librorum qui feruntur Samuelis Dissert. Berol.* 1862), are lacking in the necessary proofs which hypotheses must bring before they can meet with adoption and support. If we confine ourselves to the historical evidence, according to 1 Chron. 29:29, the first and last acts of king David, i.e., the events of his entire reign, were recorded in the *"dibre* of Samuel the seer, of Nathan the prophet, and of Gad the seer." These prophetic writings formed no doubt the leading sources from which our books of Samuel were also drawn, since, on the one hand, apart from sundry deviations arising from differences in the plan and object of the two authors, the two accounts of the reign of David in 2 Samuel 8–24 and 1 Chron. 11–21 agree for the most part so thoroughly word for word, that they are generally regarded as extracts from one common source; whilst, on the other hand, the prophets named not only lived in the time of David but throughout the whole of the period referred to in the books before us, and took a very active part in the progressive development of the history of those times (see not only 1 Samuel 1–3, 7–10, 12, 15–16, but also 1 Samuel 19:18–24; 22:5, 2 Samuel 7:7:12, 24:11–18). Moreover, in 1 Chron. 27:24, there are "chronicles (diaries or annals) of king David" mentioned, accompanied with the remark that the result of the census appointed by David was not inserted in them, from which we may infer that all the principal events of his reign were included in these chronicles. And they may also have formed one of the sources for our books, although nothing certain can be determined concerning the relation in which they stood to the writings of the three prophets that have been mentioned. Lastly, it is every evident from the character of the work before us, that the author had sources composed by eye-witnesses of the events at his command, and that these were employed with an intimate knowledge of the facts and with historical fidelity, inasmuch as the history is distinguished by great perspicuity and vividness of description, by a careful delineation of the characters of the persons engaged, and by great accuracy in the accounts of localities, and of subordinate circumstances connected with the historical events.

1 Samuel 1

History of the People of Israel Under the Prophet Samuel.

1 Samuel 1–7. The call of Samuel to be the prophet and judge of Israel formed a turning-point in the history of the Old Testament kingdom of God. As the prophet of Jehovah, Samuel was to lead the people of Israel out of the times of the judges into those of the kings, and lay the foundation for a prosperous development of the monarchy. Consecrated like Samson as a Nazarite from his mother's womb, Samuel accomplished the deliverance of Israel out of the power of the Philistines, which had been only commenced by Samson; and that not by the physical might of his arm, but by the

spiritual power of his word and prayer, with which he led Israel back from the worship of dead idols to the Lord its God. And whilst as one of the judges, among whom he classes himself in 1 Samuel 12:11, he brought the office of judge to a close, and introduced the monarchy; as a prophet, he laid the foundation of the prophetic office, inasmuch as he was the fist to naturalize it, so to speak, in Israel, and develope it into a power that continued henceforth to exert the strongest influence, side by side with the priesthood and monarchy, upon the development of the covenant nation and kingdom of God. For even if there were prophets before the time of Samuel, who revealed the will of the Lord at times to the nation, they only appeared sporadically, without exerting any lasting influence upon the national life; whereas, from the time of Samuel onwards, the prophets sustained and fostered the spiritual life of the congregation, and were the instruments through whom the Lord made known His purposes to the nation and its rulers. To exhibit in its origin and growth the new order of things which Samuel introduced, or rather the deliverance which the Lord sent to His people through this servant of His, the prophetic historian goes back to the time of Samuel's birth, and makes us acquainted not only with the religious condition of the nation, but also with the political oppression under which it was suffering at the close of the period of the judges, and during the high-priesthood of Eli. At the time when the pious parents of Samuel were going year by year to the house of God at Shiloh to worship and offer sacrifice before the Lord, the house of God was being profaned by the abominable conduct of Eli's sons (1 Samuel 1–2). When Samuel was called to be the prophet of Jehovah, Israel lost the ark of the covenant, the soul of its sanctuary, in the war with the Philistines (1 Samuel 3–4). And it was not till after the nation had been rendered willing to put away its strange gods and worship Jehovah alone, through the influence of Samuel's exertions as prophet, that the faithful covenant God gave it, in answer to Samuel's intercession, a complete victory over the Philistines (1 Samuel 7). In accordance with these three prominent features, the history of the judicial life of Samuel may be divided into three sections, viz.: 1 Samuel 1–2; 3–6; and 7.

Samuel's Birth and Dedication to the Lord. Hannah's Song of Praise.—Ch. 1–2:10.

1 Samuel 1:1–2:10. While Eli the high priest was judging Israel, and at the time when Samson was beginning to fight against the Philistines, a pious Israelitish woman prayed to the Lord for a son (vv. 1–18). Her prayer was heard. She bore a son, to whom she gave the name of Samuel, because he had been asked for from the Lord. As soon as he was weaned, she dedicated him to the Lord for a lifelong service (vv. 19–28), and praised the Lord in a sing of prophetic character for the favour which He had shown to His people through hearkening to her prayer (1 Samuel 2:1–10).

1 Samuel 1:1–8. *Samuel's pedigree.*—V. 1. His father was a man of Ramathaim-Zophim, on the mountains of Ephraim, and named Elkanah. *Ramathaim-Zophim,* which is only mentioned here, is the same place, according to v. 3 (comp. with v. 19 and 1 Samuel 2:11), which is afterwards called briefly *ha-Ramah,* i.e., the height. For since Elkanah of Ramathaim-Zophim went year by year out of his city to Shiloh, to worship and sacrifice there, and after he had done this, returned to his house to Ramah (v. 19, 1 Samuel 2:11), there can be no doubt that he was not only a native of Ramathaim-Zophim, but still had his home there; so that Ramah, where his house was situated, is only an abbreviated name for Ramathaim-Zophim.[1] This Ramah (which is invariably written with the article, ha-Ramah), where Samuel was not only born (vv. 19ff.), but lived, laboured, died (1 Samuel 7:17; 15:34; 16:13; 19:18, 19, 22, 23), and was buried (1 Samuel 25:1; 28:3), is not a different place, as has been frequently assumed,[2] from the Ramah in Benjamin (Josh. 18:25), and is not to be sought for in Ramleh near Joppa (v. Schubert, etc.), nor in Soba on the north-west of Jerusalem (Robinson, *Pal.* ii. p. 329), nor three-

quarters of an hour to the north of Hebron (Wolcott, v. de Velde), nor anywhere else in the tribe of Ephraim, but is identical with Ramah of Benjamin, and was situated upon the site of the present village of *er-Râm,* two hours to the north-west of Jerusalem, upon a conical mountain to the east of the Nablus road (see at Josh. 18:25). This supposition is neither at variance with the account in 1 Samuel 9–10 (see the commentary upon these chapters), nor with the statement that Ramathaim-Zophim was upon the mountains of Ephraim, since the mountains of Ephraim extended into the tribe-territory of Benjamin, as is indisputably evident from Judg. 4:5, where Deborah the prophetess is said to have dwelt between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. The name Ramathaim-Zophim, i.e., "the two heights (of the) Zophites" appear to have been given to the town to distinguish it from other Ramah's, and to have been derived from the Levitical family of Zuph or Zophai (see 1 Chron. 6:26, 35), which emigrated thither from the tribe of Ephraim, and from which Elkanah was descended. The full name, therefore, is given here, in the account of the descent of Samuel's father; whereas in the further history of Samuel, where there was no longer the same reason for giving it, the simple name Ramah is invariably used.[3] The connection between Zophim and Zuph is confirmed by the fact that Elkanah's ancestor, Zuph, is called Zophai in 1 Chron. 6:26, and Zuph or Ziph in 1 Chron. 6:35. Zophim therefore signifies the descendants of Zuph or Zophai, from which the name "land of Zuph," in 1 Samuel 9:5, was also derived (see the commentary on this passage). The tracing back of Elkanah's family through four generations to Zuph agrees with the family registers in 1 Chron. 6, where the ancestors of Elkanah are mentioned twice,—first of all in the genealogy of the Kohathites (v. 26), and then in that of Heman, the leader of the singers, a grandson of Samuel (v. 33),—except that the name Elihu, Tohu, and Zuph, are given as Eliab, Nahath, and Zophai in the first instance, and Eliel, Toah, and Ziph (according to the *Chethibh*) in the second,—various readings, such as often occur in the different genealogies, and are to be explained partly from the use of different forms for the same name, and partly from their synonymous meanings. *Tohu* and *Toah,* which occur in Arabic, with the meaning to press or sink in, are related in meaning to *nachath* or *nuach,* to sink or settle down.

From these genealogies in the Chronicles, we learn that Samuel was descended from Kohath, the son of Levi, and therefore was a Levite. It is no valid objection to the correctness of this view, that his Levitical descent is never mentioned, or that Elkanah is called an Ephrathite. The former of these can very easily be explained from the fact, that Samuel's work as a reformer, which is described in this book, did not rest upon his Levitical descent, but simply upon the call which he had received from God, as the prophetic office was not confined to any particular class, like that of priest, but was founded exclusively upon the divine calling and endowment with the Spirit of God. And the difficulty which Nägelsbach expresses in Herzog's *Cycl.,* viz., that "as it was stated of those two Levites (Judg. 17:7; 19:1), that they lived in Bethlehem and Ephraim, but only after they had been expressly described as Levites, we should have expected to find the same in the case of Samuel's father," is removed by the simple fact, that in the case of both those Levites it was of great importance, so far as the accounts which are given of them are concerned, that their Levitical standing should be distinctly mentioned, as is clearly shown by Judg. 17:10, 13, and 19:18; whereas in the case of Samuel, as we have already observed, his Levitical descent had no bearing upon the call which he received from the Lord. The word *Ephrathite* does not belong, so far as the grammatical construction is concerned, either to *Zuph* or *Elkanah,* but to *"a certain man,"* the subject of the principal clause, and signifies an Ephraimite, as in Judg. 12:5 and 1 Kings. 11:26, and not an inhabitant of Ephratah, i.e., a Bethlehemite, as in 1 Samuel 17:12 and Ruth 1:2; for in both these passages the word is more precisely defined by the addition of the expression "of Bethlehem-Judah," whereas in

this verse the explanation is to be found in the expression "of Mount Ephraim." Elkanah the Levite is called an Ephraimite, because, so far as his civil standing was concerned, he belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, just as the Levite in Judg. 17:7 is described as belonging to the family of Judah. The Levites were reckoned as belonging to those tribes in the midst of which they lived, so that there were Judaean Levites, Ephraimitish Levites, and so on (see Hengstenberg, *Diss.* vol. ii. p. 50). It by no means follows, however, from the application of this term to Elkanah, that Ramathaim-Zophim formed part of the tribe- territory of Ephraim, but simply that Elkanah's family was incorporated in this tribe, and did not remove till afterwards to Ramah in the tribe of Benjamin. On the division of the land, dwelling-places were allotted to the Levites of the family of Kohath, in the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and Manasseh (Josh. 21:5, 21ff.). Still less is there anything at variance with the Levitical descent of Samuel, as Thenius maintains, in the fact that he was dedicated to the Lord by his mother's vow, for he was not dedicated to the service of Jehovah generally through this view, but was set apart to a lifelong service at the house of God as a Nazarite (vv. 11, 22); whereas other Levites were not required to serve till their twenty-fifth year, and even then had not to perform an uninterrupted service at the sanctuary. On the other hand, the Levitical descent of Samuel receives a very strong confirmation from his father's name. All the Elkanahs that we meet with in the Old Testament, with the exception of the one mentioned in 2 Chron. 28:7, whose genealogy is unknown, can be proved to have been Levites; and most of them belong to the family of Korah, from which Samuel was also descended (see Simonis, *Onomast.* p. 493). This is no doubt connected in some way with the meaning of the name *Elkanah,* the man whom God has bought or acquired; since such a name was peculiarly suitable to the Levites, whom the Lord had set apart for service at the sanctuary, in the place of the first-born of Israel, whom He had sanctified to himself when He smote the first-born of Egypt (Num. 3:13ff., 44ff.; see Hengstenberg, *ut sup.*).

1 Samuel 1:2, 3. Elkanah had two wives, Hannah (grace or gracefulness) and Peninnah (coral), the latter of whom was blessed with children, whereas the first was childless. He went with his wives year by year (מִיָּמִים יָמִימָה, as in Ex. 13:10, Judg. 11:40), according to the instructions of the law (Ex. 34:23, Deut. 16:16), to the tabernacle at Shiloh (Josh. 18:1), to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts. *"Jehovah Zebaoth"* is an abbreviation of *"Jehovah Elohe Zebaoth,"* or יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת; and the connection of *Zebaoth* with *Jehovah* is not to be regarded as the construct state, nor is *Zebaoth* to be taken as a genitive dependent upon *Jehovah.* This is not only confirmed by the occurrence of such expressions as *"Elohim Zebaoth"* (Ps. 59:6; 80:5, 8, 15, 20; 84:9) and *"Adonai Zebaoth"* (Isa. 10:16), but also by the circumstance that *Jehovah,* as a proper name, cannot be construed with a genitive. The combination "Jehovah Zebaoth" is rather to be taken as an ellipsis, where the general term Elohe (God of), which is implied in the word *Jehovah,* is to be supplied in thought (see Hengstenberg, *Christol.* i. p. 375, English translation); for frequently as this expression occurs, especially in the case of the prophets, *Zebaoth* is never used alone in the Old Testament as one of the names of God. It is in the Septuagint that the word is first met with occasionally as a proper name (Σαβαώθ), viz., throughout the whole of the first book of Samuel, very frequently in Isaiah, and also in Zech. 13:2. In other passages, the word is translated either κύριος, or θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, or παντοκράτωρ; whilst the other Greek versions use the more definite phrase κύριος στρατιῶν instead.

This expression, which was not used as a divine name until the age of Samuel, had its roots in Gen. 2:1, although the title itself was unknown in the Mosaic period, and during the times of the judges (see p. 366). It represented Jehovah as ruler over the heavenly hosts (i.e., the angels, according to Gen. 32:2, and the stars, according

to Isa. 40:26), who are called the "armies" of Jehovah in Ps. 103:21; 148:2; but we are not to understand it as implying that the stars were supposed to be inhabited by angels, as Gesenius (*Thes. s. v.*) maintains, since there is not the slightest trace of any such notion in the whole of the Old Testament. It is simply applied to Jehovah as the God of the universe, who governs all the powers of heaven, both visible and invisible, as He rules in heaven and on earth. It cannot even be proved that the epithet Lord, or God of Zebaoth, refers chiefly and generally to the sun, moon, and stars, on account of their being so peculiarly adapted, through their visible splendour, to keep alive the consciousness of the omnipotence and glory of God (Hengstenberg on Ps. 24:10). For even though the expression צְבָאָם (their host), in Gen. 2:1, refers to the heavens only, since it is only to the heavens (vid., Isa. 40:26), and never to the earth, that a "host" is ascribed, and in this particular passage it is probably only the stars that are to be thought of, the creation of which had already been mentioned in Gen. 1:14ff.; yet we find the idea of an army of angels introduced in the history of Jacob (Gen. 32:2, 3), where Jacob calls the angels of God who appeared to him the "camp of God," and also in the blessing of Moses (Deut. 33:2), where the "ten thousands of saints" (*Kodesh*) are not stars, but angels, or heavenly spirits; whereas the fighting of the stars against Sisera in the song of Deborah probably refers to a natural phenomenon, by which God had thrown the enemy into confusion, and smitten them before the Israelites (see at Judg. 5:20). We must also bear in mind, that whilst on the one hand the tribes of Israel, as they came out of Egypt, are called Zebaoth Jehovah, "the hosts of Jehovah" (Ex. 7:4; 12:41), on the other hand the angel of the Lord, when appearing in front of Jericho in the form of a warrior, made himself known to Joshua as "the prince of the army of Jehovah," i.e., of the angelic hosts. And it is in this appearance of the heavenly leader of the people of God to the earthly leader of the hosts of Israel, as the prince of the angelic hosts, not only promising him the conquest of Jericho, but through the miraculous overthrow of the walls of this strong bulwark of the Canaanitish power, actually giving him at the same time a practical proof that the prince of the angelic hosts was fighting for Israel, that we have the material basis upon which the divine epithet "Jehovah God of hosts" was founded, even though it was not introduced immediately, but only at a later period, when the Lord began to form His people Israel into a kingdom, by which all the kingdoms of the heathen were to be overcome. It is certainly not without significance that this title is given to God for the first time in these books, which contain an account of the founding of the kingdom, and (as Auberlen has observed) that it was by Samuel's mother, the pious Hannah, when dedicating her son to the Lord, and prophesying of the king and anointed of the Lord in her song of praise (1 Samuel 2:10), that this name was employed for the first time, and that God was addressed in prayer as "Jehovah of hosts" (v. 11). Consequently, if this name of God goes hand in hand with the prophetic announcement and the actual establishment of the monarchy in Israel, its origin cannot be attributed to any antagonism to Sabaeism, or to the hostility of pious Israelites to the worship of the stars, which was gaining increasing ground in the age of David, as Hengstenberg (on Ps. 24:10) and Strauss (on Zeph. 2:9) maintain; to say nothing of the fact, that there is no historical foundation for such an assumption at all. It is a much more natural supposition, that when the invisible sovereignty of Jehovah received a visible manifestation in the establishment of the earthly monarchy, the sovereignty of Jehovah, if it did possess and was to possess any reality at all, necessarily claimed to be recognised in its all-embracing power and glory, and that in the title "God of (the heavenly hosts" the fitting expression was formed for the universal government of the God-king of Israel,—a title which not only serves as a bulwark against any eclipsing of the invisible sovereignty of God by the earthly monarchy in Israel, but overthrew the vain delusion of the heathen, that the God of

Israel was simply the national deity of that particular nation.[4]

The remark introduced in v. 3*b, "and there were the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests of the Lord,"* i.e., performing the duties of the priesthood, serves as a preparation for what follows. This reason for the remark sufficiently explains why the sons of Eli only are mentioned here, and not Eli himself, since, although the latter still presided over the sanctuary as high priest, he was too old to perform the duties connected with the offering of sacrifice. The addition made by the LXX, Ἠλὶ καὶ, is an arbitrary interpolation, occasioned by a misapprehension of the reason for mentioning the sons of Eli.

1 Samuel 1:4, 5. *"And it came to pass, the day, and he offered sacrifice"* (for, "on which he offered sacrifice"), that he gave to Peninnah and her children portions of the flesh of the sacrifice at the sacrificial meal; but to Hannah he gave מָנָה אַחַת אַפַּיִם, *"one portion for two persons,"* i.e., a double portion, because he loved her, but Jehovah had shut up her womb: i.e., he gave it as an expression of his love to her, to indicate by a sign, "thou art as dear to me as if thou hadst born me a child" (O. v. Gerlach). This explanation of the difficult word אַפַּיִם, of which very different interpretations have been given, is the one adopted by Tanchum Hieros., and is the only one which can be grammatically sustained, or yields an appropriate sense. The meaning *face* (*facies*) is placed beyond all doubt by Gen. 3:19 and other passages; and the use of לְאַפֵּי as a synonym for לִפְנֵי in 1 Samuel 25:23, also establishes the meaning "person," since פָּנִים is used in this sense in 2 Samuel 17:11. It is true that there are no other passages that can be adduced to prove that the singular אַף was also used in this sense; but as the word was employed promiscuously in both singular and plural in the derivative sense of anger, there is no reason for denying that the singular may also have been employed in the sense of *face* (πρόσωπον). The combination of אַפַּיִם with מָנָה אַחַת in the absolute state is supported by many other examples of the same kind (see Ewald, § 287, *h*). The meaning *double* has been correctly adopted in the Syriac, whereas Luther follows the *tristis* of the Vulgate, and renders the word *traurig,* or sad. But this meaning, which Fr. Böttcher has lately taken under his protection, cannot be philologically sustained either by the expression נָפְלוּ פָּנֶיךָ (Gen. 4:6), or by Dan. 11:20, or in any other way. אַף and אַפַּיִם do indeed signify anger, but anger and sadness are two very different ideas. But when Böttcher substitutes "angrily or unwillingly" for sadly, the incongruity strikes you at once: "he gave her a portion unwillingly, because he loved her!" For the custom of singling out a person by giving double or even large portions, see the remarks on Gen. 43:34.

1 Samuel 1:6. *"And her adversary* (Peninnah) *also provoked her with provocation, to irritate her."* The גַּם is placed before the noun belonging to the verb, to add force to the meaning. רָעַם (*Hiphil*), to excite, put into (inward) commotion, not exactly to make angry.

1 Samuel 1:7. *"So did he* (Elkanah) *from year to year* (namely give to Hannah a double portion at the sacrificial meal), *as often as she went up to the house of the Lord. So did she* (Peninnah) *provoke her* (Hannah), *so that she wept, and did not eat."* The two כֵּן correspond to one another. Just as Elkanah showed his love to Hannah at every sacrificial festival, so did Peninnah repeat her provocation, the effect of which was that Hannah gave vent to her grief in tears, and did not eat.

1 Samuel 1:8. Elkanah sought to comfort her in her grief by the affectionate appeal: *"Am I not better to thee* (טוֹב, i.e., dearer) *than ten children?" Ten* is a found number for a large number.

1 Samuel 1:9–18. *Hannah's prayer for a son.*— Vv. 9–11. *"After the eating at Shiloh, and after the drinking,"* i.e., after the sacrificial meal was over, Hannah rose up with a troubled heart, to pour out her grief in prayer before God, whilst

Eli was sitting before the door-posts of the palace of Jehovah, and vowed this vow: *"Lord of Zebaoth, if Thou regardest the distress of Thy maiden, and givest men's seed to Thy maiden, I will give him to the Lord all his life long, and no razor shall come upon his head."* The choice of the infinitive absolute שָׁתֹה instead of the infinitive construct is analogous to the combination of two nouns, the first of which is defined by a suffix, and the second written absolutely (see e.g., עָזִּי וְזִמְרָת, Ex. 15:2; cf. 2 Samuel 23:5, and Ewald, § 339, *b*). The words from וְעֵלִי onwards to מָרַת נָפֶשׁ form two circumstantial clauses inserted in the main sentence, to throw light upon the situation and the further progress of the affair. The tabernacle is called *"the palace of Jehovah"* (cf. 1 Samuel 2:22), not on account of the magnificence and splendour of the building, but as the dwelling-place of Jehovah of hosts, the God-king of Israel, as in Ps. 5:8, etc. מְזוּזָה is probably a porch, which had been placed before the curtain that formed the entranced into the holy place, when the tabernacle was erected permanently at Shiloh. מָרַת נָפֶשׁ, troubled in soul (cf. 2 Kings 4:27). וּבָכֹה תִבְכֶּה is really subordinate to תִּתְפַּלֵּל, in the sense of "weeping much during her prayer." The depth of her trouble was also manifest in the crowding together of the words in which she poured out the desire of her heart before God: *"If Thou wilt look upon the distress of Thine handmaid, and remember and not forget,"* etc. *"Men's seed"* (*semen virorum*), i.e., a male child. אֲנָשִׁים is the plural of אִישׁ, a man (see Ewald, § 186–7), from the root אשׁ, which combines the two ideas of fire, regarded as life, and giving life and firmness. The vow contained two points: (1) she would give the son she had prayed for to be the Lord's all the days of his life, i.e., would dedicate him to the Lord for a lifelong service, which, as we have already observed at p. 374, the Levites as such were not bound to perform; and (2) no razor should come upon his head, by which he was set apart as a Nazarite for his whole life (see at Num. 6:2ff., and Judg. 13:5). The Nazarite, again, was neither bound to perform a lifelong service nor to remain constantly at the sanctuary, but was simply consecrated for a certain time, whilst the sacrifice offered at his release from the vow shadowed forth a complete surrender to the Lord. The second point, therefore, added a new condition to the first, and one which was not necessarily connected with it, but which first gave the true consecration to the service of the Lord at the sanctuary. At the same time, the qualification of Samuel for priestly functions, such as the offering of sacrifice, can neither be deduced from the first point in the vow, nor yet from the second. If, therefore, at a later period, when the Lord had called him to be a prophet, and had thereby placed him at the head of the nation, Samuel officiated at the presentation of sacrifice, he was not qualified to perform this service either as a Levite or as a lifelong Nazarite, but performed it solely by virtue of his prophetic calling.

1 Samuel 1:12–14. But when Hannah prayed much (i.e., a long time) before the Lord, and Eli noticed her mouth, and, as she was praying inwardly, only saw her lips move, but did not hear her voice, he thought she was drunken, and called out to her: *"How long dost thou show thyself drunken? put away thy wine from thee,"* i.e., go away and sleep off thine intoxication (cf. 1 Samuel 25:37). מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל לִבָּהּ, *lit.* speaking to her heart. עַל is not to be confounded with אֶל (Gen. 24:45), but has the subordinate idea of a comforting address, as in Gen. 34:3, etc.

1 Samuel 1:15, 16. Hannah answered: *"No, my lord, I am a woman of an oppressed spirit. I have not drunk wine and strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord* (see Ps. 42:5). *Do not count thine handmaid for a worthless woman, for I have spoken hitherto out of great sighing and grief."* נָתַן לִפְנֵי, to set or lay before a person, i.e., generally to give a person up to another; here to place him in thought in the position of another, i.e., to take him for

another. שִׂיחַ, meditation, inward movement of the heart, sighing.

1 Samuel 1:17. Eli then replied: *"Go in peace, and the God of Israel give* (grant) *thy request* (שְׁאֵלָתֵךְ for שְׁאֵלָתֵךְ), *which thou hast asked of Him."* This word of the high priest was not a prediction, but a pious wish, which God in His grace most gloriously fulfilled.

1 Samuel 1:18. Hannah then went her way, saying, *"Let thine handmaid find grace in thine eyes,"* i.e., let me be honoured with thy favour and thine intercession, and was strengthened and comforted by the word of the high priest, which assured her that her prayer would be heard by God; and she did eat, *"and her countenance was no more,"* sc., troubled and sad, as it had been before. This may be readily supplied from the context, through which the word countenance (פָּנִים) acquires the sense of a troubled countenance, as in Job 9:27.

1 Samuel 1:19–28. *Samuel's birth, and dedication to the Lord.*—Vv. 19, 20. The next morning Elkanah returned home to Ramah (see at v. 1) with his two wives, having first of all worshipped before the Lord; after which he knew his wife Hannah, and Jehovah remembered her, i.e., heard her prayer. *"In the revolution of the days,"* i.e., of the period of her conception and pregnancy, Hannah conceived and bare a son, whom she called Samuel; *"for* (she said) *I have asked him of the Lord."* The name שְׁמוּאֵל (Σαμουήλ, LXX) is not formed from שְׁמוּ = שֵׁם and אֵל, name of God (Ges. *Thes.* p. 1434), but from שְׁמוּעַ אֵל, *heard of God, a Deo exauditus,* with an elision of the ע (see Ewald, § 275, *a.,* Not. 3); and the words *"because I have asked him of the Lord"* are not an etymological explanation of the name, but an exposition founded upon the facts. Because Hannah had asked him of Jehovah, she gave him the name, *"the God-heard,"* as a memorial of the hearing of her prayer.

1 Samuel 1:21, 22. When Elkanah went up again with his family to Shiloh, to present his yearly sacrifice and his vow to the Lord, Hannah said to her husband that she would not go up till she had weaned the boy, and could present him to the Lord, that he might remain there for ever. זֶבַח הַיָּמִים, the sacrifice of the days, i.e., which he was accustomed to offer on the days when he went up to the sanctuary; really, therefore, the annual sacrifice. It follows from the expression *"and his vow,"* that Elkanah had also vowed a vow to the Lord, in case the beloved Hannah should have a son. The vow referred to the presentation of a sacrifice. And this explains the combination of אֶת־נִדְרוֹ with לִזְבֹּחַ.[5] Weaning took place very late among the Israelites. According to 2 Macc. 7:28, the Hebrew mothers were in the habit of suckling their children for three years. When the weaning had taken place, Hannah would bring her son up to the sanctuary, to appear before the face of the Lord, and remain there for ever, i.e., his whole life long. The Levites generally were only required to perform service at the sanctuary from their twenty-fifth to their fiftieth year (Num. 8:24, 25); but Samuel was to be presented to the Lord immediately after his weaning had taken place, and to remain at the sanctuary for ever, i.e., to belong entirely to the Lord. To this end he was to receive his training at the sanctuary, that at the very earliest waking up of his spiritual susceptibilities he might receive the impressions of the sacred presence of God. There is no necessity, therefore, to understand the word גָּמַל (wean) as including what followed the weaning, namely, the training of the child up to his thirteenth year (Seb. Schmidt), on the ground that a child of three years old could only have been a burden to Eli: for the word never has this meaning, not even in 1 Kings 11:20; and, as O. v. Gerlach has observed, his earliest training might have been superintended by one of the women who worshipped at the door of the tabernacle (1 Samuel 2:22).

1 Samuel 1:23. Elkanah expressed his approval of Hannah's decision, and added, *"only the Lord establish His word,"* i.e., fulfil it. By "His word" we are not to understand some direct

revelation from God respecting the birth and destination of Samuel, as the Rabbins suppose, but in all probability the word of Eli the high priest to Hannah, "The God of Israel grant thy petition" (v. 17), which might be regarded by the parents of Samuel after his birth as a promise from Jehovah himself, and therefore might naturally excite the wish and suggest the prayer that the Lord would graciously fulfil the further hopes, which the parents cherished in relation to the son whom they had dedicated to the Lord by a vow. The paraphrase of דִּבְּרוֹ in the rendering given by the LXX, τὸ ἐξελθὸν ἐκ τοῦ στόματός σου, is the subjective view of the translator himself, and does not warrant an emendation of the original text.

1 Samuel 1:24, 25. As soon as the boy was weaned, Hannah brought him, although still a נַעַר, i.e., a tender boy, to Shiloh, with a sacrifice of three oxen, an ephah of meal, and a pitcher of wine, and gave him up to Eli when the ox (bullock) had been slain, i.e., offered in sacrifice as a burnt-offering. The striking circumstance that, according to v. 24, Samuel's parents brought three oxen with them to Shiloh, and yet in v. 25 the ox (הַפָּר) alone is spoken of as being slain (or sacrificed), may be explained very simply on the supposition that in v. 25 that particular sacrifice is referred to, which was associated with the presentation of the boy, that is to say, the burnt-offering by virtue of which the boy was consecrated to the Lord as a spiritual sacrifice for a lifelong service at His sanctuary, whereas the other two oxen served as the yearly festal offering, i.e., the burnt-offerings and thank-offerings which Elkanah presented year by year, and the presentation of which the writer did not think it needful to mention, simply because it followed partly from v. 3 and partly from the Mosaic law.[6]

1 Samuel 1:26–28. When the boy was presented, his mother made herself known to the high priest as the woman who had previously prayed to the Lord at that place (see vv. 11ff.), and said, *"For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath granted me my request which I asked of Him: therefore I also make him one asked of the Lord all the days that he liveth; he is asked of the Lord."* וְגַם אָנֹכִי: *I also; et ego vicissim* (Cler.). הִשְׁאִיל, to let a person ask, to grant his request, to give him what he asks (Ex. 12:36), signifies here to make a person "asked" (שָׁאוּל). The meaning to lend, which the lexicons give to the word both here and Ex. 12:36, has no other support than the false rendering of the LXX, and is altogether unsuitable both in the one and the other. Jehovah had not *lent* the son to Hannah, but had *given* him (see v. 11); still less could a man *lend* his son to the Lord. The last clause of v. 28, *"and he worshipped the Lord there,"* refers to Elkanah, *qui in votum Hannae consenserat,* and not to Samuel. On a superficial glance, the plural יִשְׁתַּחֲווּ, which is found in some Codd., and in the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic, appears the more suitable; but when we look more closely at the connection in which the clause stands, we see at once that it does not wind up the foregoing account, but simply introduces the closing act of the transference of Samuel. Consequently the singular is perfectly appropriate; and notwithstanding the fact that the subject is not mentioned, the allusion to Samuel is placed beyond all doubt. When Hannah had given up her son to the high priest, his father Elkanah first of all worshipped before the Lord in the sanctuary, and then Hannah worshipped in the song of praise, which follows in 1 Samuel 2:1–10.

1 Samuel 2:1–10. *Hannah's song of praise.*— The prayer in which Hannah poured out the feelings of her heart, after the dedication of her son to the Lord, is a song of praise of a prophetic and Messianic character. After giving utterance in the introduction to the rejoicing and exulting of her soul at the salvation that had reached her (v. 1), she praises the Lord as the only holy One, the only rock of the righteous, who rules on earth with omniscience and righteousness, brings down the proud and lofty, kills and makes alive, maketh poor and maketh rich (vv. 2–8). She then closes with the confident assurance that He will keep His

saints, and cast down the rebellious, and will judge the ends of the earth, and exalt the power of His king (vv. 9, 10).

This psalm is the mature fruit of the Spirit of God. The pious woman, who had gone with all the earnest longings of a mother's heart to pray to the Lord God of Israel for a son, that she might consecrate him to the lifelong service of the Lord, "discerned in her own individual experience the general laws of the divine economy, and its signification in relation to the whole history of the kingdom of God" (Auberlen, p. 564). The experience which she, bowed down and oppressed as she was, had had of the gracious government of the omniscient and holy covenant God, was a pledge to her of the gracious way in which the nation itself was led by God, and a sign by which she discerned how God not only delivered at all times the poor and wretched who trusted in Him out of their poverty and distress, and set them up, but would also lift up and glorify His whole nation, which was at that time so deeply bowed down and oppressed by its foes. Acquainted as she was with the destination of Israel to be a *kingdom,* from the promises which God had given to the patriarchs, and filled as she was with the longing that had been awakened in the nation for the realization of these promises, she could see in spirit, and through the inspiration of God, the *king* whom the Lord was about to give to His people, and through whom He would raise it up to might and dominion.

The refusal of modern critics to admit the genuineness of this song is founded upon an *a priori* and utter denial of the supernatural saving revelations of God, and upon a consequent inability to discern the prophetic illumination of the pious Hannah, and a complete misinterpretation of the contents of her song of praise. The "proud and lofty," whom God humbles and casts down, are not the heathen or the national foes of Israel, and the "poor and wretched" whom He exalts and makes rich are not the Israelites as such; but the former are the *ungodly,* and the latter the *pious,* in Israel itself. And the description is so well sustained throughout, that it is only by the most arbitrary criticism that it can be interpreted as referring to definite historical events, such as the victory of David over Goliath (Thenius), or a victory of the Israelites over heathen nations (Ewald and others). Still less can any argument be drawn from the words of the song in support of its later origin, or its composition by David or one of the earliest of the kings of Israel. On the contrary, not only is its genuineness supported by the general consideration that the author of these books would never have ascribed a song to Hannah, if he had not found it in the sources he employed; but still more decisively by the circumstance that the songs of praise of Mary and Zechariah, in Luke 1:46ff. and 68ff., show, through the manner in which they rest upon this ode, in what way it was understood by the pious Israelites of every age, and how, like the pious Hannah, they recognised and praised in their own individual experience the government of the holy God in the midst of His kingdom.

1 Samuel 2

1 Samuel 2:1. The first verse forms the introduction to the song. Holy joy in the Lord at the blessing which she had received impelled the favoured mother to the praise of God:

1 My heart is joyful in the Lord,
My horn is exalted in the Lord,
My mouth is opened wide over mine enemies:
For I rejoice in Thy salvation.

Of the four members of this verse, the first answers to the third, and the second to the fourth. The heart rejoices at the lifting up of her horn, the mouth opens wide to proclaim the salvation before which the enemies would be dumb. *"My horn is high"* does not mean 'I am proud' (Ewald), but "my power is great in the Lord." The horn is the symbol of strength, and is taken from oxen whose strength is in their horns (vid., Deut. 33:17; Ps. 75:5, etc.). The power was high or exalted by the salvation which the Lord had manifested to her. To Him

all the glory was due, because He had proved himself to be the holy One, and a rock upon which a man could rest his confidence.

2 None is holy as the Lord; for there is none beside Thee;

And no rock is as our God.

3 Speak ye not much lofty, lofty;

Let (not) insolence go out of thy mouth!

For the Lord is an omniscient God,

And with Him deeds are weighed.

1 Samuel 2:2, 3. God manifests himself as holy in the government of the kingdom of His grace by His guidance of the righteous to salvation (see at Ex. 19:6). But holiness is simply the moral reflection of the glory of the one absolute God. This explains the reason given for His holiness, viz., "there is not one (a God) beside thee" (cf. 2 Samuel 22:32). As the holy and only One, God is the rock (vid., Deut. 32:4, 15; Ps. 18:3) in which the righteous can always trust. The wicked therefore should tremble before His holiness, and not talk in their pride of the *lofty* things which they have accomplished or intend to perform. גְּבֹהָה is defined more precisely in the following clause, which is also dependent upon אַל by the word עָתָק, as insolent words spoken by the wicked against the righteous (see Ps. 31:19). For Jehovah hears such words; He is *"a God of knowledge"* (*Deus scientiarum*), a God who sees and knows every single thing. The plural דֵּעוֹת has an intensive signification. לֹא נִתְכְּנוּ עֲלִלוֹת might be rendered "deeds are not weighed, or equal" (cf. Ezek. 18:25, 26; 33:17). But this would only apply to the actions of men; for the acts of God are always just, or weighed. But an assertion respecting the actions of men does not suit the context. Hence this clause is reckoned in the Masora as one of the passages in which לֹא stands for לוֹ (see at Ex. 21:8). *"To Him* (with Him) *deeds are weighed:"* that is to say, the acts of God are weighed, i.e., equal or just. This is the real meaning according to the passages in Ezekiel, and not "the actions of men are weighed by Him" (De Wette, Maurer, Ewald, etc.): for God weighs the minds and hearts of men (Prov. 16:2; 21:2; 24:12), not their actions. This expression never occurs. The weighed or righteous acts of God are described in vv. 4–8 in great and general traits, as displayed in the government of His kingdom through the marvellous changes which occur in the circumstances connected with the lives of the righteous and the wicked.

4 Bow-heroes are confounded,

And stumbling ones gird themselves with strength;

5 Full ones hire themselves out for bread,

And hungry ones cease to be.

Yea, the barren beareth seven (children),

And she that is rich in children pines away.

6 The Lord kills and makes alive;

Leads down into hell, and leads up.

7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich,

Humbles and also exalts.

8 He raises mean ones out of the dust,

He lifts up poor ones out of the dunghill,

To set them beside the noble;

And He apportions to them the seat of glory:

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,

And He sets the earth upon them.

1 Samuel 2:4–8. In v. 4, the predicate חַתִּים is construed with the *nomen rectum* גִּבֹּרִים, not with the *nomen regens* קֶשֶׁת, because the former is the leading term (vid., Ges. § 148, 1, and Ewald, § 317, *d.*). The thought to be expressed is, not that the bow itself is to be broken, but that the heroes who carry the bow are to be confounded or broken inwardly. *"Bows of the heroes"* stands for heroes carrying bows. For this reason the verb is to be taken in the sense of confounded, not broken, especially as, apart from Isa. 51:56, חָתַת is not used to denote the breaking of outward things, but the breaking of men.

1 Samuel 2:5. שְׂבֵעִים are the rich and well to do; these would become so poor as to be obliged to hire themselves out for bread. חָדֵל, to cease to be what they were before. The use of עַד as a conjunction, in the sense of "yea" or "in fact," may be explained as an elliptical expression, signifying "it comes to this, that." *"Seven children"* are mentioned as the full number of the divine blessing in children (see Ruth 4:15). "The mother of many children" pines away, because she has lost all her sons, and with them her support in her old age (see Jer. 15:9). This comes from the Lord, who kills, etc. (cf. Deut. 32:39). The words of v. 6 are figurative. God hurls down into death and the danger of death, and also rescues therefrom (see Ps. 30:3, 4). The first three clauses of v. 8 are repeated *verbatim* in Ps. 113:7, 8. *Dust* and the *dunghill* are figures used to denote the deepest degradation and ignominy. The antithesis to this is, sitting upon the chair or throne of glory, the seat occupied by noble princes. The Lord does all this, for He is the creator and upholder of the world. *The pillars* (מְצֻקֵי, from צוּק = צָצַק) *of the earth are the Lord's;* i.e., they were created or set up by Him, and by Him they are sustained. Now as Jehovah, the God of Israel, the Holy One, governs the world with His almighty power, the righteous have nothing to fear. With this thought the last strophe of the song begins:

9 The feet of His saints He will keep,
And the wicked perish in darkness;
For by power no one becomes strong.

10 The Lord—those who contend against Him are confounded.
He thunders above him in the heavens;
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth,
That He may lend might to His king,
And exalt the horn of His anointed.

1 Samuel 2:9, 10. The Lord keeps the feet of the righteous, so that they do not tremble and stumble, i.e., so that the righteous do not fall into adversity and perish therein (vid., Ps. 56:14; 116:8; 121:3). But the wicked, who oppress and persecute the righteous, will perish in darkness, i.e., in adversity, when God withdraws the light of His grace, so that they fall into distress and calamity. For no man can be strong through his own power, so as to meet the storms of life. All who fight against the Lord are destroyed. To bring out the antithesis between man and God, "Jehovah" is written absolutely at the commencement of the sentence in v. 10: *"As for Jehovah, those who contend against Him are broken,"* both inwardly and outwardly (חָתַת, as in v. 4). The word עָלָו, which follows, is not to be changed into עֲלֵיהֶם. There is simply a rapid alternation of the numbers, such as we frequently meet with in excited language. *"Above him,"* i.e., above every one who contends against God, He thunders. Thunder is a premonitory sign of the approach of the Lord to judgment. In the thunder, man is made to feel in an alarming way the presence of the omnipotent God. In the words, *"The Lord will judge the ends of the earth,"* i.e., the earth to its utmost extremities, or the whole world, Hannah's prayer rises up to a prophetic glance at the consummation of the kingdom of God. As certainly as the Lord God keeps the righteous at all times, and casts down the wicked, so certainly will He judge the whole world, to hurl down all His foes, and perfect His kingdom which He has founded in Israel. And as every kingdom culminates in its throne, or in the full might and government of a king, so the kingdom of God can only attain its full perfection in the king whom the Lord will give to His people, and endow with His might. *The king,* or the *anointed of the Lord,* of whom Hannah prophesies in the spirit, is not one single king of Israel, either David or Christ, but an ideal king, though not a mere personification of the throne about to be established, but the actual king whom Israel received in David and his race, which culminated in the Messiah. The exaltation of the horn of the anointed to Jehovah commenced with the victorious and splendid expansion of the power of David, was repeated with every victory over the enemies of

God and His kingdom gained by the successive kings of David's house, goes on in the advancing spread of the kingdom of Christ, and will eventually attain to its eternal consummation in the judgment of the last day, through which all the enemies of Christ will be made His footstool.

Samuel's Service Before Eli. Ungodliness of Eli's Sons. Denunciation of Judgment Upon Eli and His House.—Ch. 2:11–36.

1 Samuel 2:11–17. *Samuel the servant of the Lord under Eli. Ungodliness of the sons of Eli.*—V. 11 forms the transition to what follows. After Hannah's psalm of thanksgiving, Elkanah went back with his family to his home at Ramah, and the boy (Samuel) was serving, i.e., ministered to the Lord, in the presence of Eli the priest. The fact that nothing is said about Elkanah's wives going with him, does not warrant the interpretation given by Thenius, that Elkanah went home alone. It was taken for granted that his wives went with him, according to 1 Samuel 1:21 ("all his house"). שֵׁרֵת אֶת־יְהוָֹה, which signifies literally, both here and in 1 Samuel 3:1, to serve the Lord, and which is used interchangeably with שֵׁרֵת אֶת־פְּנֵי יי׳ (v. 18), to serve in the presence of the Lord, is used to denote the duties performed both by priests and Levites in connection with the worship of God, in which Samuel took part, as he grew up, under the superintendence of Eli and according to his instruction.

1 Samuel 2:12. But Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas (v. 34), were בְּנֵי בְלִיַּעַל, worthless fellows, and knew not the Lord, sc., as He should be known, i.e., did not fear Him, or trouble themselves about Him (vid., Job 18:21; Hos. 8:2; 13:4).

1 Samuel 2:13, 14. *"And the right of the priests towards the people was* (the following)." *Mishpat* signifies the right which they had usurped to themselves in relation to the people. *"If any one brought a sacrifice* (כָּל־אִישׁ זֹבֵחַ זֶבַח is placed first, and construed absolutely: 'as for every one who brought a slain-offering'), *the priest's servant* (*lit.* young man) *came while the flesh was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and thrust into the kettle, or pot, or bowl, or saucepan. All that the fork brought up the priest took. This they did to all the Israelites who came thither to Shiloh."*

1 Samuel 2:15, 16. They did still worse. *"Even before the fat was consumed,"* i.e., before the fat portions of the sacrifice had been placed in the altar-fire for the Lord (Lev. 3:3–5), the priest's servant came and demanded flesh of the person sacrificing, to be roasted for the priest; *"for he will not take boiled flesh of thee, but only* חַי, *raw,* i.e., fresh meat." And if the person sacrificing replied, *"They will burn the fat directly* (*lit.* 'at this time,' as in Gen. 25:31, 1 Kings 22:5), *then take for thyself, as thy soul desireth,"* he said, *"No* (לוֹ for לֹא), *but thou shalt give now; if not, I take by force."* These abuses were practised by the priests in connection with the thank-offerings, with which a sacrificial meal was associated. Of these offerings, with which a sacrificial meal was associated. Of these offerings, the portion which legally fell to the priest as his share was the heave-leg and wave-breast. And this he was to receive after the fat portions of the sacrifice had been burned upon the altar (see Lev. 7:30–34). To take the flesh of the sacrificial animal and roast it before this offering had been made, was a crime which was equivalent to a robbery of God, and is therefore referred to here with the emphatic particle גַּם, as being the worst crime that the sons of Eli committed. Moreover, the priests could not claim any of the flesh which the offerer of the sacrifice boiled for the sacrificial meal, after burning the fat portions upon the altar and giving up the portions which belonged to them, to say nothing of their taking it forcibly out of the pots while it was being boiled.

1 Samuel 2:17. Such conduct as this on the part of the young men (the priests' servants), was a great sin in the sight of the Lord, as they thereby brought the sacrifice of the Lord into contempt. נִאֵץ, causative, to bring into contempt, furnish occasion for blaspheming (as

in 2 Samuel 12:14). "The robbery which they committed was a small sin in comparison with the contempt of the sacrifices themselves, which they were the means of spreading among the people" (O. v. Gerlach). *Minchah* does not refer here to the meat-offering as the accompaniment to the slain-offerings, but to the sacrificial offering generally, as a gift presented for the Lord.

1 Samuel 2:18–21. *Samuel's service before the Lord.*—V. 18. Samuel served as a boy before the Lord by the side of the worthless sons of Eli, girt with an ephod of white material (בַּד, see at Ex. 28:42). The ephod was a shoulder-dress, no doubt resembling the high priest's in shape (see Ex. 28:6ff.), but altogether different in the material of which it was made, viz., simple white cloth, like the other articles of clothing that were worn by the priests. At that time, according to 1 Samuel 22:18, all the priests wore clothing of this kind; and, according to 2 Samuel 6:14, David did the same on the occasion of a religious festival. Samuel received a dress of this kind even when a boy, because he was set apart to a lifelong service before the Lord. חָגוּר is the technical expression for putting on the ephod, because the two pieces of which it was composed were girt round the body with a girdle.

1 Samuel 2:19. The small מְעִיל also (*Angl.* "coat"), which Samuel's mother made and brought him every year, when she came with her husband to Shiloh to the yearly sacrifice, was probably a coat resembling the *me•l* of the high priest (Ex. 28:31ff.), but was made of course of some simpler material, and without the symbolical ornaments attached to the lower hem, by which that official dress was distinguished.

1 Samuel 2:20. The priestly clothing of the youthful Samuel was in harmony with the spiritual relation in which he stood to the high priest and to Jehovah. Eli blessed his parents for having given up the boy to the Lord, and expressed this wish to the father: *"The Lord lend thee seed of this woman in the place of the one asked for* (הַשְּׁאֵלָה), *whom they* (one) *asked for from the Lord."* The striking use of the third pers. masc. שָׁאַל instead of the second singular or plural may be accounted for on the sup[position that it is an indefinite form of speech, which the writer chose because, although it was Hannah who prayed to the Lord for Samuel in the sight of Eli, yet Eli might assume that the father, Elkanah, had shared the wishes of his pious wife. The apparent harshness disappears at once if we substitute the passive; whereas in Hebrew active constructions were always preferred to passive, wherever it was possible to employ them (Ewald, § 294, *b.*). The singular suffix attached to לִמְקוֹמוֹ after the plural הָלְכוּ may be explained on the simple ground, that a dwelling-place is determined by the husband, or master of the house.

1 Samuel 2:21. The particle כִּי, *"for"* (Jehovah visited), does not mean *if, as,* or *when,* nor is it to be regarded as a copyist's error. It is only necessary to supply the thought contained in the words, *"Eli blessed Elkanah,"* viz., that Eli's blessing was not an empty fruitless wish; and to understand the passage in some such way as this: Eli's word was fulfilled, or still more simply, *they went to their home blessed;* for *Jehovah visited Hannah,* blessed her with *"three sons and two daughters; but the boy Samuel grew up with the Lord,"* i.e., near to Him (at the sanctuary), and under His protection and blessing.

1 Samuel 2:22–26. *Eli's treatment of the sins of his sons.*—V. 22. The aged Eli reproved his sons with solemn warnings on account of their sins; but without his warnings being listened to. From the reproof itself we learn, that beside the sin noticed in vv. 12–17, they also committed the crime of lying with the women who served at the tabernacle (see at Ex. 38:8), and thus profaned the sanctuary with whoredom. But Eli, with the infirmities of his old age, did nothing further to prevent these abominations than to say to his sons, *"Why do ye according to the sayings which I hear, sayings about you*

which are evil, of this whole people." אֶת־דִּבְרֵיכֶם רָעִים is inserted to make the meaning clearer, and מֵאֵת כָּל־ה׳ is dependent upon שֹׁמֵעַ. *"This whole people"* signifies all the people that came to Shiloh, and heard and saw the wicked doings there.

1 Samuel 2:24. אַל בָּנַי, *"Not, my sons,"* i.e., do not such things, *"for the report which I hear is not good; they make the people of Jehovah to transgress."* מַעֲבִרִים is written without the pronoun אַתֶּם in an indefinite construction, like מְשַׁלְּחִים in 1 Samuel 6:3 (Maurer). Ewald's rendering as given by Thenius, "The report which I hear the people of God bring," is just as inadmissible as the one proposed by Böttcher, "The report which, as I hear, the people of God are spreading." The assertion made by Thenius, that הֶעֱבִיר, without any further definition, cannot mean to cause to sin or transgress, is correct enough no doubt; but it does not prove that this meaning is inadmissible in the passage before us, since the further definition is actually to be found in the context.

1 Samuel 2:25. *"If man sins against man, God judges him; but if a man sins against Jehovah, who can interpose with entreaty for him?"* In the use of פִּלְלוֹ and יִתְפַּלֶּל־לוֹ there is a paranomasia which cannot be reproduced in our language. פָּלַל signifies to decide or pass sentence (Gen. 48:11), then to arbitrate, to settle a dispute as arbitrator (Ezek. 16:52, Ps. 106:30), and in the *Hithpael* to act as mediator, hence to entreat. And these meanings are applicable here. In the case of one man's sin against another, God settles the dispute as arbitrator through the proper authorities; whereas, when a man sins against God, no one can interpose as arbitrator. Such a sin cannot be disposed of by intercession. But Eli's sons did not listen to this admonition, which was designed to reform daring sinners with mild words and representation; *"for,"* adds the historian, *"Jehovah was resolved to slay them."* The father's reproof made no impression upon them, because they were already given up to the judgment of hardening. (On hardening as a divine sentence, see the discussions at Ex. 4:21.)

1 Samuel 2:26. The youthful Samuel, on the other hand, continued to grow in stature, and in favour with God and man (see Lev. 2:52).

1 Samuel 2:27–36. *Announcement of the judgment upon Eli and his house.*—V. 27. Before the Lord interposed in judgment, He sent a prophet (a *"man of God,"* as in Judg. 13:6) to the aged Eli, to announce as a warning for all ages the judgment which was about to fall upon the worthless priests of his house. In order to arouse Eli's own conscience, he had pointed out to him, on the one hand, the grace manifested in the choice of his father's house, i.e., the house of Aaron, to keep His sanctuary (vv. 27*b* and 28), and, on the other hand, the desecration of the sanctuary by the wickedness of his sons (v. 29). Then follows the sentence: The choice of the family of Aaron still stood fast, but the deepest disgrace would come upon the despisers of the Lord (v. 30): the strength of his house would be broken; all the members of his house were to die early deaths. They were not, however, to be removed entirely from service at the altar, but to their sorrow were to survive the fall of the sanctuary (vv. 31–34). But the Lord would raise up a faithful priest, and cause him to walk before His anointed, and from him all that were left of the house of Eli would be obliged to beg their bread (vv. 35, 36). To arrive at the true interpretation of this announcement of punishment, we must picture to ourselves the historical circumstances that come into consideration here. Eli the high priest was a descendant of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron, as we may see from the fact that his great-grandson Ahimelech was "of the sons of Ithamar" (1 Chron. 24:3). In perfect agreement with this, Josephus (Ant. v. 11, 5) relates, that after the high priest Ozi of the family of Eleazar, Eli of the family of Ithamar received the high-priesthood. The circumstances which led to the transfer of this honour from the line of Eleazar to that of Ithamar are unknown. We cannot

imagine it to have been occasioned by an extinction of the line of Eleazar, for the simple reason that, in the time of David, Zadok the descendant of Eleazar is spoken of as high priest along with Abiathar and Ahimelech, the descendants of Eli (2 Samuel 8:17; 20:25). After the deposition of Abiathar he was reinstated by Solomon as sole high priest (1 Kings 2:27), and the dignity was transmitted to his descendants. This fact also overthrows the conjecture of Clericus, that the transfer of the high-priesthood to Eli took place by the command of God on account of the grievous sins of the high priests of the line of Eleazar; for in that case Zadok would not have received this office again in connection with Abiathar. We have, no doubt, to search for the true reason in the circumstances of the times of the later judges, namely in the fact that at the death of the last high priest of the family of Eleazar before the time of Eli, the remaining son was not equal to the occasion, either because he was still an infant, or at any rate because he was too young and inexperienced, so that he could not enter upon the office, and Eli, who was probably related by marriage to the high priest's family, and was no doubt a vigorous man, was compelled to take the oversight of the congregation; and, together with the supreme administration of the affairs of the nation as judge, received the post of high priest as well, and filled it till the time of his death, simply because in those troublous times there was not one of the descendants of Eleazar who was able to fill the supreme office of judge, which was combined with that of high priest. For we cannot possibly think of an unjust usurpation of the office of high priest on the part of Eli, since the very judgment denounced against him and his house presupposes that he had entered upon the office in a just and upright way, and that the wickedness of his sons was all that was brought against him. For a considerable time after the death of Eli the high-priesthood lost almost all its significance. All Israel turned to Samuel, whom the Lord established as His prophet by means of revelations, and whom He also chose as the deliverer of His people. The tabernacle at Shiloh, which ceased to be the scene of the gracious presence of God after the loss of the ark, was probably presided over first of all after Eli's death by his grandson Ahitub, the son of Phinehas, as his successor in the high-priesthood. He was followed in the time of Saul by his son Ahijah or Ahimelech, who gave David the shew-bread to eat at Nob, to which the tabernacle had been removed in the meantime, and was put to death by Saul in consequence, along with all the priests who were found there. His son Abiathar, however, escaped the massacre, and fled to David (1 Samuel 22:9–20; 23:6). In the reign of David he is mentioned as high priest along with Zadok; but he was afterwards deposed by Solomon (2 Samuel 15:24; 17:15; 19:12; 20:25; 1 Kings 2:27).

Different interpretations have been given of these verses. The majority of commentators understand them as signifying that the loss of the high-priesthood is here foretold to Eli, and also the institution of Zadok in the office. But such a view is too contracted, and does not exhaust the meaning of the words. The very introduction to the prophet's words points to something greater than this: *"Thus saith the Lord, Did I reveal myself to thy father's house, when they were in Egypt at the house of Pharaoh?"* The הֲ interrogative is not used for הֲלֹא (*nonne*), but is emphatic, as in Jer. 31:20. The question is an appeal to Eli's conscience, which he cannot deny, but is obliged to confirm. By Eli's father's house we are not to understand Ithamar and his family, but Aaron, from whom Eli was descended through Ithamar. God revealed himself to the tribe-father of Eli by appointing Aaron to be the spokesman of Moses before Pharaoh (Ex. 4:14ff. and 27), and still more by calling Aaron to the priesthood, for which the way was prepared by the fact that, from the very beginning, God made use of Aaron, in company with Moses, to carry out His purpose of delivering Israel out of Egypt, and entrusted Moses and Aaron with the arrangements for the celebration of the passover (Ex. 12:1, 43). This occurred when

they, the fathers of Eli, Aaron and his sons, were still in Egypt at the house of Pharaoh, i.e., still under Pharaoh's rule.

1 Samuel 2:28. *"And did I choose him out of all the tribes for a priest to myself."* The interrogative particle is not to be repeated before וּבָחוֹר, but the construction becomes affirmative with the inf. abs. instead of the perfect. *"Him"* refers back to *"thy father"* in v. 27, and signifies Aaron. The expression *"for a priest"* is still further defined by the clauses which follow: לַעֲלוֹת עַל מִזְבְּחִי, *"to ascend upon mine altar,"* i.e., to approach my altar of burnt-offering and perform the sacrificial worship; *"to kindle incense,"* i.e., to perform the service in the holy place, the principal feature in which was the daily kindling of the incense, which is mentioned *instar omnium; "to wear the ephod before me,"* i.e., to perform the service in the holy of holies, which the high priest could only enter when wearing the ephod to represent Israel before the Lord (Ex. 28:12). *"And have given to thy father's house all the firings of the children of Israel"* (see at Lev. 1:9). These words are to be understood, according to Deut. 18:1, as signifying that the Lord had given to the house of Aaron, i.e., to the priesthood, the sacrifices of Jehovah to eat in the place of any inheritance in the land, according to the portions appointed in the sacrificial law in Lev. 6–7, and Num. 18.

1 Samuel 2:29. With such distinction conferred upon the priesthood, and such careful provision made for it, the conduct of the priests under Eli was an inexcusable crime. *"Why do ye tread with your feet my slain-offerings and meat-offerings, which I have commanded in the dwelling-place?"* Slain-offering and meat-offering are general expressions embracing all the altar-sacrifices. מָעוֹן is an accusative (*"in the dwelling"*), like בַּיִת, in the house. *"The dwelling"* is the tabernacle. This reproof applied to the priests generally, including Eli, who had not vigorously resisted these abuses. The words which follow, *"and thou honourest thy sons more than me,"* relate to Eli himself, and any other high priest who like Eli should tolerate the abuses of the priests. *"To fatten yourselves with the first of every sacrificial gift of Israel, of my people."* לְעַמִּי serves as a periphrasis for the genitive, and is chosen for the purpose of giving greater prominence to the idea of עַמִּי (my people). רֵאשִׁית, the first of every sacrificial gift (*minchah,* as in v. 17), which Israel offered as the nation of Jehovah, ought to have been given up to its God in the altar-fire because it was the best; whereas, according to vv. 15, 16, the sons of Eli took away the best for themselves.

1 Samuel 2:30. For this reason, the saying of the Lord, *"Thy house* (i.e., the family of Eli) *and thy father's house* (Eli's relations in the other lines, i.e., the whole priesthood) *shall walk before me for ever"* (Num. 25:13), should henceforth run thus: *"This be far from me; but them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be despised."* The first declaration of the Lord is not to be referred to Eli particularly, as it is by C. a Lapide and others, and understood as signifying that the high-priesthood was thereby transferred from the family of Eleazar to that of Ithamar, and promised to Eli for his descendants for all time. This is decidedly at variance with the fact, that although "walking before the Lord" is not a general expression denoting a pious walk with God, as in Gen. 17:1, but refers to the service of the priests at the sanctuary as walking before the face of God, yet it cannot possibly be specially and exclusively restricted to the right of entering the most holy place, which was the prerogative of the high priest alone. These words of the Lord, therefore, applied to the whole priesthood, or the whole house of Aaron, to which the priesthood had been promised, *"for a perpetual statute"* (Ex. 29:9). This promise was afterwards renewed to Phinehas especially, on account of the zeal which he displayed for the honour of Jehovah in connection with the idolatry of the people at Shittim (Num. 25:13). But even this renewed promise only secured to him an eternal *priesthood* as a covenant of peace with the Lord, and not specially the high-priesthood, although

that was included as the culminating point of the priesthood. Consequently it was not abrogated by the temporary transfer of the high-priesthood from the descendants of Phinehas to the priestly line of Ithamar, because even then they still retained the priesthood. By the expression *"be it far from me,"* sc., to permit this to take place, God does not revoke His previous promise, but simply denounces a false trust therein as irreconcilable with His holiness. That promise would only be fulfilled so far as the priests themselves honoured the Lord in their office, whilst despisers of God who dishonoured Him by sin and presumptuous wickedness, would be themselves despised.

This contempt would speedily come upon the house of Eli.

1 Samuel 2:31. *"Behold, days come,"*—a formula with which prophets were accustomed to announce future events (see 2 Kings 20:17; Isa. 39:6; Amos 4:2; 8:11; 9:13; Jer. 7:32, etc.),—*"then will I cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall be no old man in thine house."* To cut off the arm means to destroy the strength either of a man or of a family (see Job 22:9; Ps. 37:17). The strength of a family, however, consists in the vital energy of its members, and shows itself in the fact that they reach a good old age, and do not pine away early and die. This strength was to vanish in Eli's house; no one would ever again preserve his life to old age.

1 Samuel 2:32. *"And thou wilt see oppression of the dwelling in all that He has shown of good to Israel."* The meaning of these words, which have been explained in very different ways, appears to be the following: In all the benefits which the lord would confer upon His people, Eli would see only distress for the dwelling of God, inasmuch as the tabernacle would fall more and more into decay. In the person of Eli, the high priest at that time, the high priest generally is addressed as the custodian of the sanctuary; so that what is said is not to be limited to him personally, but applies to all the high priests of his house. מָעוֹן is not Eli's dwelling-place, but the dwelling-place of God, i.e., the tabernacle, as in v. 29, and is a genitive dependent upon צַר. הֵיטִיב, in the sense of benefiting a person, doing him good, is construed with the accusative of the person, as in Deut. 28:63; 8:16; 30:5. The subject to the verb יֵיטִיב is *Jehovah,* and is not expressly mentioned, simply because it is so clearly implied in the words themselves. This threat began to be fulfilled even in Eli's own days. The distress or tribulation for the tabernacle began with the capture of the ark by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11), and continued during the time that the Lord was sending help and deliverance to His people through the medium of Samuel, in their spiritual and physical oppression. The ark of the covenant—the heart of the sanctuary—was not restored to the tabernacle in the time of Samuel; and the tabernacle itself was removed from Shiloh to Nob, probably in the time of war; and when Saul had had all the priests put to death (1 Samuel 21:2; 22:11ff.), it was removed to Gibeon, which necessarily caused it to fall more and more into neglect. Among the different explanations, the rendering given by Aquila (καὶ ἐπιβλέψει [? ἐπιβλέψῃς] ἀντίζηλον κατοικητηρίου) has met with the greatest approval, and has been followed by Jerome (*et videbis aemulum tuum*), Luther, and many others, including De Wette. According to this rendering, the words are either supposed to refer to the attitude of Samuel towards Eli, or to the deposition of Abiathar, and the institution of Zadok by Solomon in his place (1 Kings 2:27). But צַר does not mean the antagonist or rival, but simply the oppressor or enemy; and Samuel was not an enemy of Eli any more than Zadok was of Abiathar. Moreover, if this be adopted as the rendering of צַר, it is impossible to find any suitable meaning for the following clause. In the second half of the verse the threat of v. 31 is repeated with still greater emphasis. כָּל־הַיָּמִים, all the time, i.e., so long as thine house shall exist.

1 Samuel 2:33. *"And I will not cut off every one to thee from mine altar, that thine eyes may languish, and thy soul consume away; and all the increase of thine house shall die as men."* The two leading clauses of this verse correspond to the two principal thoughts of the previous verse, which are hereby more precisely defined and explained. Eli was to see the distress of the sanctuary; for to him, i.e., of his family, there would always be some one serving at the altar of God, that he might look upon the decay with his eyes, and pine away with grief in consequence. אִישׁ signifies every one, or any one, and is not to be restricted, as Thenius supposes, to Ahitub, the son of Phinehas, the brother of Ichabod; for it cannot be shown from 1 Samuel 14:3 and 22:20, that he was the only one that was left of the house of Eli. And secondly, there was to be no old man, no one advanced in life, in his house; but all the increase of the house was to die in the full bloom of manhood. אֲנָשִׁים, in contrast with זָקֵן, is used to denote men in the prime of life.

1 Samuel 2:34. *"And let this be the sign to thee, what shall happen to* (come upon) *thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall both die."* For the fulfilment of this, see 1 Samuel 4:11. This occurrence, which Eli lived to see, but did not long survive (1 Samuel 4:17ff.), was to be the sign to him that the predicted punishment would be carried out in its fullest extent.

1 Samuel 2:35. But the priesthood itself was not to fall with the fall of Eli's house and priesthood; on the contrary the Lord would raise up for himself a tried priest, who would act according to His heart. *"And I will build for him a lasting house, and he will walk before mine anointed for ever."*

1 Samuel 2:36. Whoever, on the other hand, should still remain of Eli's house, would come *"bowing before him* (to get) *a silver penny and a slice of bread,"* and would say, *"Put me, I pray, in one of the priests' offices, that I may get a piece of bread to eat."* אֲגוֹרָה, *that which is collected,* signifies some small coin, of which a collection was made by begging single coins.

Commentators are divided in their opinions as to the historical allusions contained in this prophecy. By the "tried priest," Ephraem Syrus understood both the prophet Samuel and the priest Zadok. "As for the facts themselves," he says, "it is evident that, when Eli died, Samuel succeeded him in the government, and that Zadok received the high-priesthood when it was taken from his family." Since his time, most of the commentators, including Theodoret and the Rabbins, have decided in favour of Zadok. Augustine, however, and in modern times Thenius and O. v. Gerlach, give the preference to Samuel. The fathers and earlier theologians also regarded Samuel and Zadok as the type of Christ, and supposed the passage to contain a prediction of the abrogation of the Aaronic priesthood by Jesus Christ.[7] This higher reference of the words is in any case to be retained; for the rabbinical interpretation, by which Grotius, Clericus, and others abide,—namely, that the transfer of the high-priesthood from the descendants of Eli to Zadok, the descendant of Eleazar, is all that is predicted, and that the prophecy was entirely fulfilled when Abiathar was deposed by Solomon (1 Kings 2:27),—is not in accordance with the words of the text. On the other hand, Theodoret and Augustine both clearly saw that the words of Jehovah, "I revealed myself to thy father's house in Egypt," and, "Thy house shall walk before me for ever," do not apply to Ithamar, but to Aaron. "Which of his fathers," says Augustine, "was in that Egyptian bondage, form which they were liberated when he was chosen to the priesthood, excepting Aaron? It is with reference to his posterity, therefore, that it is here affirmed that they would not be priests for ever; and this we see already fulfilled." The only thing that appears untenable is the manner in which the fathers combine this historical reference to Eli and Samuel, or Zadok, with the Messianic interpretation, viz., either by referring vv. 31–34 to Eli and his house, and then regarding the sentence pronounced upon Eli as simply a type of the Messianic fulfilment,

or by admitting the Messianic allusion simply as an allegory.

The true interpretation may be obtained from a correct insight into the relation in which the prophecy itself stands to its fulfilment. Just as, in the person of Eli and his sons, the threat announces deep degradation and even destruction to all the priests of the house of Aaron who should walk in the footsteps of the sons of Eli, and the death of the two sons of Eli in one day was to be merely a sign that the threatened punishment would be completely fulfilled upon the ungodly priests; so, on the other hand, the promise of the raising up of the tried priest, for whom God would build a lasting house, also refers to all the priests whom the Lord would raise up as faithful servants of His altar, and only receives its complete and final fulfilment in Christ, the true and eternal High Priest. But if we endeavour to determine more precisely from the history itself, which of the Old Testament priests are included, we must not exclude either Samuel or Zadok, but must certainly affirm that the prophecy was partially fulfilled in both. Samuel, as the prophet of the Lord, was placed at the head of the nation after the death of Eli; so that he not only stepped into Eli's place as judge, but stood forth as priest before the Lord and the nation, and "had the important and sacred duty to perform of going before the anointed, the king, whom Israel was to receive through him; whereas for a long time the Aaronic priesthood fell into such contempt, that, during the general decline of the worship of God, it was obliged to go begging for honour and support, and became dependent upon the new order of things that was introduced by Samuel" (O. v. Gerlach). Moreover, Samuel acquired a strong house in the numerous posterity that was given to him by God. The grandson of Samuel was Heman, "the king's seer in the words of God," who was placed by David over the choir at the house of God, and had fourteen sons and three daughters (1 Chron. 6:33; 25:4, 5). But the very fact that these descendants of Samuel did not follow their father in the priesthood, shows very clearly that a lasting house was not built to Samuel as a tried priest through them, and therefore that we have to seek for the further historical fulfilment of this promise in the priesthood of Zadok. As the word of the Lord concerning the house of Eli, even if it did not find its only fulfilment in the deposition of Abiathar (1 Kings 2:27), was at any rate partially fulfilled in that deposition; so the promise concerning the tried priest to be raised up received a new fulfilment in the fact that Zadok thereby became the sole high priest, and transmitted the office to his descendants, though this was neither its last nor its highest fulfilment. This final fulfilment is hinted at in the vision of the new temple, as seen by the prophet Ezekiel, in connection with which the sons of Zadok are named as the priests, who, because they had not fallen away with the children of Israel, were to draw near to the Lord, and perform His service in the new organization of the kingdom of God as set forth in that vision (Ezek. 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). This fulfilment is effected in connection with Christ and His kingdom. Consequently, the anointed of the Lord, before whom the tried priest would walk for ever, is not Solomon, but rather David, and the Son of David, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

1 Samuel 3

Samuel Called to Be a Prophet.—Ch. 3.

1 Samuel 3:1–9. At the time when Samuel served the Lord before Eli, both as a boy and as a young man (1 Samuel 2:11, 21, 26), the word of the Lord had become *dear,* i.e., rare, in Israel, and *"Prophecy was not spread."* נִפְרָץ, from פָּרַץ, to spread out strongly, to break through copiously (cf. Prov. 3:10). The *"word of the Lord"* is the word of God announced by prophets: the *"vision," "visio prophetica."* It is true that Jehovah had promised His people, that He would send prophets, who should make known His will and purpose at all times (Deut. 18:15ff.; cf. Num. 23:23); but as a revelation from God presupposed susceptibility on the part of men, the unbelief and disobedience of the people might restrain the fulfilment of this

and all similar promises, and God might even withdraw His word to punish the idolatrous nation. Such a time as this, when revelations from God were universally rare, and had now arisen under Eli, in whose days, as the conduct of his sons sufficiently proves, the priesthood had fallen into very deep corruption.

1 Samuel 3:2–4. The word of the Lord was then issued for the first time to Samuel. Vv. 2–4 form one period. The clause, *"it came to pass at that time"* (v. 2*a*), is continued in v. 4*a, "that the Lord called,"* etc. The intervening clauses from וְעֵלִי to אֲרוֹן אֱלֹהִים are circumstantial clauses, intended to throw light upon the situation. The clause, *"Eli was laid down in his place,"* etc., may be connected logically with *"at that time"* by the insertion of *"when"* (as in the English version: Tr.). The dimness of Eli's eyes is mentioned, to explain Samuel's behaviour, as afterwards described. Under these circumstances, for example, when Samuel heard his own name called out in sleep, he might easily suppose that Eli was calling him to render some assistance. The *"lamp of God"* is the light of the candlestick in the tabernacle, the seven lamps of which were put up and lighted every evening, and burned through the night till all the oil was consumed (see Ex. 30:8, Lev. 24:2, 2 Chron. 13:11, and the explanation given at Ex. 27:21). The statement that this light was not yet extinguished, is equivalent to "before the morning dawn." *"And Samuel was lying* (sleeping) *in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was."* הֵיכָל does not mean the holy place, as distinguished from the "most holy," as in 1 Kings 6:5; 7:50, [8] but the whole tabernacle, the tent with its court, as the palace of the God-king, as in 1 Samuel 1:9, Ps. 11:4. Samuel neither slept in the holy place by the side of the candlestick and table of shew-bread, nor in the most holy place in front of the ark of the covenant, but in the court, where cells were built for the priests and Levites to live in when serving at the sanctuary (see at v. 15). *"The ark of God,* i.e., the ark of the covenant, is mentioned as the throne of the divine presence, from which the call to Samuel proceeded.

1 Samuel 3:5–9. As soon as Samuel heard his name called out, he hastened to Eli to receive his commands. But Eli bade him lie down again, as he had not called him. At first, no doubt, he thought the call which Samuel had heard was nothing more than a false impression of the youth, who had been fast asleep. But the same thing was repeated a second and a third time; for, as the historian explains in v. 6, *"Samuel had not yet known Jehovah, and* (for) *the word of Jehovah was not yet revealed to him."* (The perfect יָדַע after טֶרֶם, though very rare, is fully supported by Ps. 90:2 and Prov. 8:25, and therefore is not to be altered into יֵדַע, as Dietrich and Böttcher propose.) He therefore imagined again that Eli had called him. But when he came to Eli after the third call, Eli perceived that the Lord was calling, and directed Samuel, if the call were repeated, to answer, *"Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth."*

1 Samuel 3:10–18. When Samuel had lain down again, *"Jehovah came and stood,"* sc., before Samuel. These words show that the revelation of God was an objectively real affair, and not a mere dream of Samuel's. *"And he called to him as at other times"* (see Num. 24:1; Judg. 16:20), etc.). When Samuel replied in accordance with Eli's instructions, the Lord announced to him that He would carry out the judgment that had been threatened against the house of Eli (vv. 11–14). *"Behold, I do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle,"* sc., with horror (see 2 Kings 21:12; Jer. 19:3; Hab. 1:5).

1 Samuel 3:12. *On that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house* (see 1 Samuel 2:30ff.), *beginning and finishing it,"* i.e., completely. הֲקִים אֶת־אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר, to set up the word spoken, i.e., to carry it out, or accomplish it. In v. 13 this word is communicated to Samuel, so far as its essential contents are concerned. God would judge *"the house of Eli for ever because of the iniquity, that he knew his sons were preparing a curse for themselves and did not prevent them."* To judge on account of a crime, is the same as to punish

it. עַד־עוֹלָם, i.e., without the punishment being ever stopped or removed. מְקַלְלִים לָהֶם, cursing themselves, i.e., bringing a curse upon themselves. *"Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of the house of Eli shall not* (אִם, a particle used in an oath, equivalent to assuredly not) *be expiated by slain-offerings and meat-offerings* (through any kind of sacrifice) *for ever."* The oath makes the sentence irrevocable. (On the facts themselves, see the commentary on 1 Samuel 2:27–36.)

1 Samuel 3:15. Samuel then slept till the morning; and when he opened the doors of the house of Jehovah, he was afraid to tell Eli of the revelation which he had received. Opening the doors of the house of God appears to have been part of Samuel's duty. We have not to think of doors opening into the holy place, however, but of doors leading into the court. Originally, when the tabernacle was simply a tent, travelling with the people from place to place, it had only curtains at the entrance to the holy place and court. But when Israel had become possessed of fixed houses in the land of Canaan, and the dwelling-place of God was permanently erected at Shiloh, instead of the tents that were pitched for the priests and Levites, who encamped round about during the journey through the desert, there were erected fixed houses, which were built against or inside the court, and not only served as dwelling-places for the priests and Levites who were officiating, but were also used for the reception and custody of the gifts that were brought as offerings to the sanctuary. These buildings in all probability supplanted entirely the original tent-like enclosure around the court; so that instead of the curtains at the entrance, there were folding doors, which were shut in the evening and opened again in the morning. It is true that nothing is said about the erection of these buildings in our historical books, but the fact itself is not to be denied on that account. In the case of Solomon's temple, notwithstanding the elaborate description that has been given of it, there is nothing said about the arrangement or erection of the buildings in the court; and yet here and there, principally in Jeremiah, the existence of such buildings is evidently assumed. מַרְאָה, *visio,* a sign or vision. This expression is applied to the word of God which came to Samuel, because it was revealed to him through the medium of an inward sight or intuition.

1 Samuel 3:16–18. When Samuel was called by Eli and asked concerning the divine revelation that he had received, he told him all the words, without concealing anything; whereupon Eli bowed in quiet resignation to the purpose of God: *"It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good."* Samuel's communication, however, simply confirmed to the aged Eli what God had already made known to him through a prophet, But his reply proves that, with all his weakness and criminal indulgence towards his wicked sons, Eli was thoroughly devoted to the Lord in his heart. And Samuel, on the other hand, through his unreserved and candid communication of the terribly solemn word of God with regard to the man, whom he certainly venerated with filial affection, not only as high priest, but also as his own parental guardian, proved himself to be a man possessing the courage and the power to proclaim the word of the Lord without fear to the people of Israel.

1 Samuel 3:19–21. Thus Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground, i.e., left no word unfulfilled which He spoke through Samuel. (On הִפִּיל, see Josh. 21:45; 23:14, 1 Kings 8:56.) By this all Israel from Dan to Beersheba (see at Judg. 20:1) perceived that Samuel was found trustworthy, or approved (see Num. 12:7) as a prophet of Jehovah. And the Lord continued to appear at Shiloh; for He revealed himself there to Samuel *"in the word of Jehovah,"* i.e., through a prophetic announcement of His word. These three verses form the transition from the call of Samuel to the following account of his prophetic labours in Israel. At the close of v. 21, the LXX have appended a general remark concerning Eli and his sons, which, regarded as a deduction from the context, answers no doubt to the paraphrastic treatment of our book in

that version, but in a critical aspect is utterly worthless.

1 Samuel 4

War with the Philistines. Loss of the Ark. Death of Eli and His Sons.—Ch. 4.

1 Samuel 4. At Samuel's word, the Israelites attacked the Philistines, and were beaten (vv. 1, 2). They then fetched the ark of the covenant into the camp according to the advice of the elders, that they might thereby make sure of the help of the almighty covenant God; but in the engagement which followed they suffered a still greater defeat, in which Eli's sons fell and the ark was taken by the Philistines (vv. 3–11). The aged Eli, terrified at such a loss, fell from his seat and broke his neck (vv. 12–18); and his daughter-in-law was taken in labour, and died after giving birth to a son (vv. 19–22). With these occurrences the judgment began to burst upon the house of Eli. But the disastrous result of the war was also to be a source of deep humiliation to all the Israelites. Not only were the people to learn that the Lord had departed from them, but Samuel also was to make the discovery that the deliverance of Israel from the oppression and dominion of its foes was absolutely impossible without its inward conversion to its God.

1 Samuel 4:1, 2. The two clauses, *"The word of Samuel came to all Israel,"* and *"Israel went out,"* etc., are to be logically connected together in the following sense: "At the word or instigation of Samuel, Israel went out against the Philistines to battle." The Philistines were ruling over Israel at that time. This is evident, apart from our previous remarks concerning the connection between the commencement of this book and the close of the book of Judges (see pp. 204ff.), from the simple fact that the land of Israel was the scene of the war, and that nothing is said about an invasion on the part of the Philistines. The Israelites encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines were encamped at Aphek. The name *Ebenezer* ("the stone of help") was not given to the place so designated till a later period, when Samuel set up a memorial stone there to commemorate a victory that was gained over the Philistines upon the same chosen battle-field after the lapse of twenty years (1 Samuel 7:12). According to this passage, the stone was set up between *Mizpeh* and *Shen.* The former was not the Mizpeh in the lowlands of Judah (Josh. 15:38), but the *Mizpeh* of Benjamin (Josh. 18:26), i.e., according to Robinson, the present *Neby Samwil,* two hours to the north-west of Jerusalem, and half an hour to the south of Gibeon (see at Josh. 18:26). The situation of *Aphek* has not been discovered. It cannot have been far from Mizpeh and Ebenezer, however, and was probably the same place as the Canaanitish capital mentioned in Josh. 12:18, and is certainly different from the *Aphekah* upon the mountains of Judah (Josh. 15:53); for this was on the south or south-west of Jerusalem, since, according to the book of Joshua, it belonged to the towns that were situated in the district of Gibeon.

1 Samuel 4:2. When the battle was fought, the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines, and in battle-array four thousand men were smitten upon the field. עָרֵךְ, sc., מִלְחָמָה, as in Judg. 20:20, 22, etc. בַּמַּעֲרָכָה, in battle-array, i.e., upon the field of battle, not in flight. *"In the field,"* i.e., the open field where the battle was fought.

1 Samuel 4:3–11. On the return of the people to the camp, the elders held a council of war as to the cause of the defeat they had suffered. *"Why hath Jehovah smitten us to-day before the Philistines?"* As they had entered upon the war by the word and advice of Samuel, they were convinced that Jehovah had smitten them. The question presupposes at the same time that the Israelites felt strong enough to enter upon the war with their enemies, and that the reason for their defeat could only be that the Lord, their covenant God, had withdrawn His help. This was no doubt a correct conclusion; but the means which they adopted to secure the help of their God in continuing the war were altogether wrong. Instead of feeling remorse and seeking the help of the Lord their God by a sincere repentance and confession of their apostasy from Him, they resolved to fetch the ark of the

covenant out of the tabernacle at Shiloh into the camp, with the delusive idea that God had so inseparably bound up His gracious presence in the midst of His people with this holy ark, which He had selected as the throne of His gracious appearance, that He would of necessity come with it into the camp and smite the foe. In v. 4, the ark is called *"the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of hosts, who is enthroned above the cherubim,"* partly to show the reason why the people had the ark fetched, and partly to indicate the hope which they founded upon the presence of this sacred object. (See the commentary on Ex. 25:20–22). The remark introduced here, *"and the two sons of Eli were there with the ark of the covenant of God,"* is not merely intended to show who the guardians of the ark were, viz., priests who had hitherto disgraced the sanctuary, but also to point forward at the very outset to the result of the measures adopted.

1 Samuel 4:5. On the arrival of the ark in the camp, the people raised so great a shout of joy that the earth rang again. This was probably the first time since the settlement of Israel in Canaan, that the ark had been brought into the camp, and therefore the people no doubt anticipated from its presence a renewal of the marvellous victories gained by Israel under Moses and Joshua, and for that reason raised such a shout when it arrived.

1 Samuel 4:6–8. When the Philistines heard the noise, and learned on inquiry that the ark of Jehovah had come into the camp, they were thrown into alarm, for *"they thought* (*lit.* said), *God* (*Elohim*) *is come into the camp, and said, 'Woe unto us! For such a thing has not happened yesterday and the day before* (i.e., never till now). *Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the very gods that smote Egypt with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness.' "* The Philistines spoke of the God of Israel in the plural., הָאֱלֹהִים הָאַדִּירִים, as heathen who only knew of *gods,* and not of one Almighty God. Just as all the heathen feared the might of the gods of other nations in a certain degree, so the Philistines also were alarmed at the might of the God of the Israelites, and that all the more because the report of His deeds in the olden time had reached their ears (see Ex. 15:14, 15). The expression *"in the wilderness"* does not compel us to refer the words "smote with all the plagues" exclusively to the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:23ff.). *"All the plagues"* include the rest of the plagues which God inflicted upon Egypt, without there being any necessity to supply the copula ו before בַּמִּדְבָּר, as in the LXX and Syriac. By this addition an antithesis is introduced into the words, which, if it really were intended, would require to be indicated by a previous בָּאָרֶץ or בְּאַרְצָם. According to the notions of the Philistines, all the wonders of God for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt took place in the desert, because even when Israel was in Goshen they dwelt on the border of the desert, and were conducted thence to Canaan.

1 Samuel 4:9. But instead of despairing, they encouraged one another, saying, *"Show yourselves strong, and be men, O Philistines, that we may not be obliged to serve the Hebrews, as they have served you; be men, and fight!"*

1 Samuel 4:10, 11. Stimulated in this way, they fought and smote Israel, so that every one fled home ("to his tent," see at Josh. 22:8), and 30,000 men of Israel fell. The ark also was taken, and the two sons of Eli died, i.e., were slain when the ark was taken,—a practical proof to the degenerate nation, that Jehovah, who was enthroned above the cherubim, had departed from them, i.e., had withdrawn His gracious presence.[9]

1 Samuel 4:12–22. The tidings of this calamity were brought by a Benjaminite, who came as a messenger of evil tidings, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head—a sign of the deepest mourning (see Josh. 7:6)—to Shiloh, where the aged Eli was sitting upon a seat by the side (יַד is a copyist's error for יַד) of the way watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God, which had been taken from the sanctuary into the camp without the command of God. At these tidings

the whole city cried out with terror, so that Eli heard the sound of the cry, and asked the reason of this loud noise (or tumult), whilst the messenger was hurrying towards him with the news.

1 Samuel 4:15. Eli was ninety-eight years old, and *"his eyes stood,"* i.e., were stiff, so that he could no more see (vid., 1 Kings 14:4). This is a description of the so-called black cataract (*amaurosis*), which generally occurs at a very great age from paralysis of the optic nerves.

1 Samuel 4:16ff. When the messenger informed him of the defeat of the Israelites, the death of his sons, and the capture of the ark, at the last news Eli fell back from his seat by the side of the gate, and broke his neck, and died. The loss of the ark was to him the most dreadful of all—more dreadful than the death of his two sons. Eli had judged Israel forty years. The reading *twenty* in the Septuagint does not deserve the slightest notice, if only because it is perfectly incredible that Eli should have been appointed judge of the nation in his seventy-eight year.

1 Samuel 4:19–22. The judgment which fell upon Eli through this stroke extended still further. His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was with child (near) to be delivered. לָלַת, contracted from לָלֶדֶת (from יָלַד: see Ges. § 69, 3, note 1; Ewald, § 238, *c.*). When she heard the tidings of the capture (אֶל־הִלָּקַח, *"with regard to the being taken away"*) of the ark of God, and the death of her father-in-law and husband, she fell upon her knees and was delivered, for her pains had fallen upon her (*lit.* had turned against her), and died in consequence. Her death, however, was but a subordinate matter to the historian. He simply refers to it casually in the words, *"and about the time of her death,"* for the purpose of giving her last words, in which she gave utterance to her grief at the loss of the ark, as a matter of greater importance in relation to his object. As she lay dying, the women who stood round sought to comfort her, by telling her that she had brought forth a son; but *"she did not answer, and took no notice* (שׂוּם לֵב = שׂוּת לֵב, *animum advertere;* cf. Ps. 62:11), *but called to the boy* (i.e., named him), *Ichabod* (אִי כָבוֹד, no glory), *saying, The glory of Israel is departed,"* referring to the capture of the ark of God, and also to her father-in-law and husband. She then said again, *"Gone* (גָּלָה, wandered away, carried off) *is the glory of Israel, for the ark of God is taken."* The repetition of these words shows how deeply the wife of the godless Phinehas had taken to heart the carrying off of the ark, and how in her estimation the glory of Israel had departed with it. Israel could not be brought lower. With the surrender of the earthly throne of His glory, the Lord appeared to have abolished His covenant of grace with Israel; for the ark, with the tables of the law and the capporeth, was the visible pledge of the covenant of grace which Jehovah had made with Israel.

1 Samuel 5

Humiliation of the Philistines by Means of the Ark of the Covenant.—Ch. 5–7:1.

1 Samuel 5–7:1. Whilst the Israelites were mourning over the loss of the ark of God, the Philistines were also to derive no pleasure from their booty, but rather to learn that the God of Israel, who had given up to them His greatest sanctuary to humble His own degenerate nation, was the only true God, beside Whom there were no other gods. Not only was the principal deity of the Philistines thrown down into the dust and dashed to pieces by the glory of Jehovah; but the Philistines themselves were so smitten, that their princes were compelled to send back the ark into the land of Israel, together with a trespass-offering, to appease the wrath of God, which pressed so heavily upon them.

1 Samuel 5. The Ark in the Land of the Philistines.—Vv. 1–6. The Philistines carried the ark from Ebenezer, where they had captured it, into their capital, *Ashdod* (*Esdud;* see at Josh. 13:3), and placed it there in the temple of Dagon, by the side of the idol Dagon, evidently as a dedicatory offering to this god of

theirs, by whose help they imagined that they had obtained the victory over both the Israelites and their God. With regard to the image of *Dagon,* compounded of man and fish, i.e., of a human body, with head and hands, and a fish's tail, see, in addition to Judg. 16:23, Stark's *Gaza,* pp. 248ff., 308ff., and Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains,* pp. 466–7, where there is a bas-relief from Khorsabad, in which "a figure is seen swimming in the sea, with the upper part of the body resembling a bearded man, wearing the ordinary conical tiara of royalty, adorned with elephants' tusks, and the lower part resembling the body of a fish. It has the hand lifted up, as if in astonishment or fear, and is surrounded by fishes, crabs, and other marine animals" (Stark, p. 308). As this bas-relief represents, according to Layard, the war of an Assyrian king with the inhabitants of the coast of Syria, most probably of Sargon, who had to carry on a long conflict with the Philistian towns, more especially with Ashdod, there can hardly be any doubt that we have a representation of the Philistian Dagon here. This deity was a personification of the generative and vivifying principle of nature, for which the fish with its innumerable multiplication was specially adapted, and set forth the idea of the giver of all earthly good.

1 Samuel 5:3. The next morning the Ashdodites found Dagon lying on his face upon the ground before the ark of Jehovah, and restored him to his place again, evidently supposing that the idol had fallen or been thrown down by some accident.

1 Samuel 5:4. But they were obliged to give up this notion when they found the god lying on his face upon the ground again the next morning in front of the ark of Jehovah, and in fact broken to pieces, so that Dagon's head and the two hollow hands of his arms lay severed upon the threshold, and nothing was left but the trunk of the fish (דָּגוֹן). The word *Dagon,* in this last clause, is used in an appellative sense, viz., the fishy part, or fish's shape, from דָּג, a fish. הַמִּפְתָּן is no doubt the threshold of the door of the recess in which the image was set up. We cannot infer from this, however, as Thenius has done, that with the small dimensions of the recesses in the ancient temples, if the image fell forward, the pieces named might easily fall upon the threshold. This naturalistic interpretation of the miracle is not only proved to be untenable by the word כְּרֻתוֹת, since כָּרוּת means *cut off,* and not broken off, but is also precluded by the improbability, not to say impossibility, of the thing itself. For if the image of Dagon, which was standing by the side of the ark, was thrown down towards the ark, so as to lie upon its face in front of it, the pieces that were broken off, viz., the head and hands, could not have fallen sideways, so as to lie upon the threshold. Even the first fall of the image of Dagon was a miracle. From the fact that their god Dagon lay upon its face before the ark of Jehovah, i.e., lay prostrate upon the earth, as though worshipping before the God of Israel, the Philistines were to learn, that even their supreme deity had been obliged to fall down before the majesty of Jehovah, the God of the Israelites. But as they did not discern the meaning of this miraculous sign, the second miracle was to show them the annihilation of their idol through the God of Israel, in such a way as to preclude every thought of accident. The disgrace attending the annihilation of their idol was probably to be heightened by the fact, that the pieces of Dagon that were smitten off were lying upon the threshold, inasmuch as what lay upon the threshold was easily trodden upon by any one who entered the house. This is intimated in the custom referred to in v. 5, that in consequence of this occurrence, the priests of Dagon, and all who entered the temple of Dagon at Ashdod, down to the time of the historian himself, would not step upon the threshold of Dagon, i.e., the threshold where Dagon's head and hands had lain, but stepped over the threshold (not "leaped over," as many commentators assume on the ground of Zeph. 1:5, which has nothing to do with the matter), that they might not touch with their feet, and so defile, the place where the pieces of their god had lain.

1 Samuel 5:6. The visitation of God was not restricted to the demolition of the statue of Dagon, but affected the people of Ashdod as well. *"The hand of Jehovah was heavy upon the Ashdodites, and laid them waste."* הֵשִׁם, from שָׁמֵם, when applied to men, as in Micah 6:13, signifies to make desolate not only by diseases, but also by the withdrawal or diminution of the means of subsistence, the devastation of the fields, and such like. That the latter is included here, is evident from the dedicatory offerings with which the Philistines sought to mitigate the wrath of the God of the Israelites (1 Samuel 6:4, 5, 11, 18), although the verse before us simply mentions the diseases with which God visited them.[10] *"And He smote them with* עֳפָלִים, i.e., *boils:"* according to the Rabbins, swellings on the anus, *mariscae* (see at Deut. 28:27). For עפלים the Masoretes have invariably substituted טְחֹרִים, which is used in 1 Samuel 6:11, 17, and was probably regarded as more decorous. *Ashdod* is a more precise definition of the word *them,* viz., Ashdod, i.e., the inhabitants of Ashdod and its territory.

1 Samuel 5:7–12. *"When the Ashdodites saw that it was so,"* they were unwilling to keep the ark of the God of Israel any longer, because the hand of Jehovah lay heavy upon them and their god Dagon; whereupon the princes of the Philistines (סַרְנֵי, as in Josh. 13:3, etc.) assembled together, and came to the resolution to *"let the ark of the God of Israel turn* (i.e., be taken) *to Gath"* (v. 8). The princes of the Philistines probably imagined that the calamity which the Ashdodites attributed to the ark of God, either did not proceed from the ark, i.e., from the God of Israel, or if actually connected with the presence of the ark, simply arose from the fact that the city itself was hateful to the God of the Israelites, or that the Dagon of Ashdod was weaker than the Jehovah of Israel: they therefore resolved to let the ark be taken to Gath in order to pacify the Ashdodites. According to our account, the city of *Gath* seems to have stood between Ashdod and Akron (see at Josh. 13:3).

1 Samuel 5:9. But when the ark was brought to Gath, the hand of Jehovah came upon that city also with very great alarm. מְהוּמָה גְּדוֹלָה is subordinated to the main sentence either adverbially or in the accusative. Jehovah smote the people of the city, small and great, so that boils broke out upon their hinder parts.

1 Samuel 5:10–12. They therefore sent the ark of God to *Ekron,* i.e., *Akir,* the north-western city of the Philistines (see at Josh. 13:3). But the Ekronites, who had been informed of what had taken place in Ashdod and Gath, cried out, when the ark came into their city, *"They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to me, to slay me and my people"* (these words are to be regarded as spoken by the whole town); and they said to all the princes of the Philistines whom they had called together, *"Send away the ark of the God of Israel, that it may return to its place, and not slay me and my people. For deadly alarm* (מְהוּמַת מָוֶת, *confusion of death,* i.e., alarm produced by many sudden deaths) *ruled in the whole city; very heavy was the hand of God there. The people who did not die were smitten with boils, and the cry of the city ascended to heaven."* From this description, which simply indicates briefly the particulars of the plagues that God inflicted upon Ekron, we may see very clearly that Ekron was visited even more severely than Ashdod and Gath. This was naturally the case. The longer the Philistines resisted and refused to recognise the chastening hand of the living God in the plagues inflicted upon them, the more severely would they necessarily be punished, that they might be brought at last to see that the God of Israel, whose sanctuary they still wanted to keep as a trophy of their victory over that nation, was the omnipotent God, who was able to destroy His foes.

1 Samuel 6

1 Samuel 6:1–7:1. The Ark of God Sent Back.—Vv. 1–3. The ark of Jehovah was in the land (*lit.* the fields, as in Ruth 1:2) of the Philistines for seven months, and had brought destruction to all the towns to which it had been taken. At length the Philistines resolved to send it back to

the Israelites, and therefore called their priests and diviners (see at Num. 23:23) to ask them, *"What shall we do with regard to the ark of God; tell us, with what shall we send it to its place?" "Its place"* is the land of Israel, and בַּמֶּה does not mean "in what manner" (*quomodo:* Vulgate, Thenius), but *with what, wherewith* (as in Micah 6:6). There is no force in the objection brought by Thenius, that if the question had implied with what presents, the priests would not have answered, *"Do not send it without a present;"* for the priests did not confine themselves to this answer, in which they gave a general assent, but proceeded at once to define the present more minutely. They replied, *"If they send away the ark of the God of Israel* (מְשַׁלְּחִים is to be taken as the third person in an indefinite address, as in 1 Samuel 2:24, and not to be construed with אַתֶּם supplied), *do not send it away empty* (i.e., without an expiatory offering), *but return Him* (i.e., the God of Israel) *a trespass-offering."* אָשָׁם, *lit.* guilt, then the gift presented as compensation for a fault, the trespass-offering (see at Lev. 5:14–26). The gifts appointed by the Philistines as an *asham* were to serve as a compensation and satisfaction to be rendered to the God of Israel for the robbery committed upon Him by the removal of the ark of the covenant, and were therefore called *asham,* although in their nature they were only expiatory offerings. For the same reason the verb הֵשִׁיב, to return or repay, is used to denote the presentation of these gifts, being the technical expression for the payment of compensation for a fault in Num. 5:7, and in Lev. 5:23 for compensation for anything belonging to another, that had been unjustly appropriated. *"Are ye healed then, it will show you why His hand is not removed from you,"* sc., so long as ye keep back the ark. The words אָז תֵּרָפְאוּ are to be understood as conditional, even without אִם, which the rules of the language allow (see Ewald, § 357, *b.*); this is required by the context. For, according to v. 9, the Philistine priests still thought it a possible thing that any misfortune which had befallen the Philistines might be only an accidental circumstance. With this view, they could not look upon a cure as certain to result from the sending back of the ark, but only as possible; consequently they could only speak conditionally, and with this the words *"we shall know"* agree.

1 Samuel 6:4–6. The trespass-offering was to correspond to the number of the princes of the Philistines. מִסְפַּר is an accusative employed to determine either measure or number (see Ewald, § 204, *a.*), lit., *"the number of their princes:"* the compensations were to be the same in number as the princes. *"Five golden boils, and five golden mice,"* i.e., according to v. 5, images resembling their boils, and the field-mice which overran the land; the same gifts, therefore, for them all, *"for one plague is to all and to your princes,"* i.e., the same plague has fallen upon all the people and their princes. The change of person in the two words, לְכֻלָּם, *"all of them,"* i.e., the whole nation of the Philistines, and לְסַרְנֵיכֶם, *"your princes,"* appears very strange to us with our modes of thought and speech, but it is by no means unusual in Hebrew. The selection of this peculiar kind of expiatory present was quite in accordance with a custom, which was not only widely spread among the heathen but was even adopted in the Christian church, viz., that after recovery from an illness, or rescue from any danger or calamity, a representation of the member healed or the danger passed through was placed as an offering in the temple of the deity, to whom the person had prayed for deliverance;[11] and it also perfectly agrees with a custom which has prevailed in India, according to Tavernier (Ros. *A. u. N. Morgenland* iii. p. 77), from time immemorial down to the present day, viz., that when a pilgrim takes a journey to a pagoda to be cured of a disease, he offers to the idol a present either in gold, silver, or copper, according to his ability, of the shape of the diseased or injured member, and then sings a hymn. Such a present passed as a practical acknowledgement that the god had inflicted the suffering or evil. If offered after recovery or

deliverance, it was a public expression of thanksgiving. In the case before us, however, in which it was offered before deliverance, the presentation of the images of the things with which they had been chastised was probably a kind of fine or compensation for the fault that had been committed against the Deity, to mitigate His wrath and obtain a deliverance from the evils with which they had been smitten. This is contained in the words, "Give glory unto the God of Israel! peradventure He will lighten His (punishing) hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land." The expression is a pregnant one for "make His heavy hand light and withdraw it," i.e., take away the punishment. In the allusion to the representations of the field-mice, the words "that devastate the land" are added, because in the description given of the plagues in 1 Samuel 5 the devastation of the land by mice is not expressly mentioned. The introduction of this clause after עַכְבְּרֵיכֶם, when contrasted with the omission of any such explanation after עָפְלֵיכֶם, is a proof that the plague of mice had not been described before, and therefore that the references made to these in the Septuagint at 1 Samuel 5:3, 6, and 1 Samuel 6:1, are nothing more than explanatory glosses. It is a well-known fact that field-mice, with their enormous rate of increase and their great voracity, do extraordinary damage to the fields. In southern lands they sometimes destroy entire harvests in a very short space of time (Aristot. *Animal.* vi. 37; Plin. *h. n.* x. c. 65; Strabo, iii. p. 165; Aelian, etc., in Bochart, *Hieroz.* ii. p. 429, ed. Ros.).

1 Samuel 6:6. *"Wherefore,"* continued the priests, *"will ye harden your heart, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?* (Ex. 7:13ff.) *Was it not the case, that when He* (Jehovah) *had let out His power upon them* (הִתְעַלֵּל בְּ, as in Ex. 10:2), *they* (the Egyptians) *let them* (the Israelites) *go, and they departed?"* There is nothing strange in this reference, on the part of the Philistian priests, to the hardening of the Egyptians, and its results, since the report of those occurrences had spread among all the neighbouring nations (see at 1 Samuel 4:8). And the warning is not at variance with the fact that, according to v. 9, the priests still entertained some doubt whether the plagues really did come from Jehovah at all: for their doubts did not preclude the possibility of its being so; and even the possibility might be sufficient to make it seem advisable to do everything that could be done to mitigate the wrath of the God of the Israelites, of whom, under existing circumstances, the heathen stood not only no less, but even more, in dread, than of the wrath of their own gods.

1 Samuel 6:7–12. Accordingly they arranged the sending back in such a manner as to manifest the reverence which ought to be shown to the God of Israel was a powerful deity (vv. 7–9). The Philistines were to take a new cart and make it ready (עָשָׂה), and to yoke two milch cows to the cart upon which no yoke had ever come, and to take away their young ones (calves) from them into the house, i.e., into the stall, and then to put the ark upon the cart, along with the golden things to be presented as a trespass-offering, which were to be in a small chest by the side of the ark, and to send it (i.e., the ark) away, that it might go, viz., without the cows being either driven or guided. From the result of these arrangements, they were to learn whether the plague had been sent by the God of Israel, or had arisen accidentally. *"If it* (the ark) *goeth up by the way to its border towards Bethshemesh, He* (Jehovah) *hath done us this great evil; but if not, we perceive that His hand hath not touched us. It came to us by chance,"* i.e., the evil came upon us merely by accident. In עֲלֵיהֶם, בְּנֵיהֶם, and מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם (v. 7), the masculine is used in the place of the more definite feminine, as being the more general form. This is frequently the case, and occurs again in vv. 10 and 12. אַרְגָּז, which only occurs again in vv. 8, 11, and 15, signifies, according to the context and the ancient versions, a chest or little case. The suffix to אֹתוֹ refers to the ark, which is also the subject to יַעֲלֶה (v. 9). גְּבוּלוֹ, the territory of the ark, is the land of Israel, where it had its home. מִקָּרֶה is used adverbially: by

chance, or accidentally. The new cart and the young cows, which had never worn a yoke, corresponded to the holiness of the ark of God. To place it upon an old cart, which had already been used for all kinds of earthly purposes, would have been an offence against the holy thing; and it would have been just the same to yoke to the cart animals that had already been used for drawing, and had had their strength impaired by the yoke (see Deut. 21:3). The reason for selecting cows, however, instead of male oxen, was no doubt to be found in the further object which they hoped to attain. It was certainly to be expected, that if suckling cows, whose calves had been kept back from them, followed their own instincts, without any drivers, they would not go away, but would come back to their young ones in the stall. And if the very opposite should take place, this would be a sure sign that they were driven and guided by a divine power, and in fact by the God whose ark they were to draw into His own land. From this they would be able to draw the conclusion, that the plagues which had fallen upon the Philistines were also sent by this God. There was no special sagacity in this advice of the priests; it was nothing more than a cleverly devised attempt to put the power of the God of the Israelites to the text, though they thereby unconsciously and against their will furnished the occasion for the living God to display His divine glory before those who did not know Him.

1 Samuel 6:10–12. The God of Israel actually did what the idolatrous priests hardly considered possible. When the Philistines, in accordance with the advice given them by their priests, had placed the ark of the covenant and the expiatory gifts upon the cart to which the two cows were harnessed, *"the cows went straight forward on the way to Bethshemesh; they went along a road going and lowing* (i.e., lowing the whole time), *and turned not to the right or to the left; and the princes of the Philistines went behind them to the territory of Bethshemesh."* יִשַּׁרְנָה בַּדֶּרֶךְ, lit., *"they were straight in the way,"* i.e., they went straight along the road. The form יִשַּׁרְנָה for יִישַׁרְנָה is the imperf. *Kal,* third pers. plur. fem., with the preformative י instead of ת, as in Gen. 30:38 (see Ges. § 47, Anm. 3; Ewald, § 191, *b.*). *Bethshemesh,* the present *Ain-shems,* was a priests' city on the border of Judah and Dan (see at Josh. 15:10).

1 Samuel 6:13–18. The inhabitants of Bethshemesh were busy with the wheat-harvest in the valley (in front of the town), when they unexpectedly saw the ark of the covenant coming, and rejoiced to see it. The cart had arrived at the field of Joshua, a Bethshemeshite, and there it stood still before a large stone. And they (the inhabitants of Bethshemesh) chopped up the wood of the cart, and offered the cows to the Lord as a burnt-offering. In the meantime the Levites had taken off the ark, with the chest of golden presents, and placed it upon the large stone; and the people of Bethshemesh offered burnt-offerings and slain-offerings that day to the Lord. The princes of the Philistines stood looking at this, and then returned the same day to Ekron. That the Bethshemeshites, and not the Philistines, are the subject to וַיִּבְקְעוּ, is evident from the correct interpretation of the clauses; viz., from the fact that in v. 14*a* the words from וְהָעֲגָלָה to אֶבֶן גְּדוֹלָה are circumstantial clauses introduced into the main clause, and that וַיְבַקְּעוּ is attached to וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ לִרְאוֹת, and carries on the principal clause.

1 Samuel 6:15a. V. 15*a* contains a supplementary remark, therefore הוֹרִידוּ is to be translated as a pluperfect. After sacrificing the cart, with the cows, as a burnt-offering to the Lord, the inhabitants of Bethshemesh gave a further practical expression to their joy at the return of the ark, by offering burnt-offerings and slain-offerings in praise of God. In the burnt-offerings they consecrated themselves afresh, with all their members, to the service of the Lord; and in the slain-offerings, which culminated in the sacrificial meals, they sealed anew their living fellowship with the Lord. The

offering of these sacrifices at Bethshemesh was no offence against the commandment, to sacrifice to the Lord at the place of His sanctuary alone. The ark of the covenant was the throne of the gracious presence of God, before which the sacrifices were really offered at the tabernacle. The Lord had sanctified the ark afresh as the throne of His presence, by the miracle which He had wrought in bringing it back again.—In vv. 17 and 18 the different atoning presents, which the Philistines sent to Jehovah as compensation, are enumerated once more: viz., five golden boils, one for each of their five principal towns (see at Josh. 13:3), and *"golden mice, according to the number of all the Philistian towns of the five princes, from the fortified city to the village of the inhabitants of the level land"* (*perazi;* see at Deut. 3:5). The priests had only proposed that five golden mice should be sent as compensation, as well as five boils (v. 4). But the Philistines offered as many images of mice as there were towns and villages in their five states, no doubt because the plague of mice had spread over the whole land, whereas the plague of boils had only fallen upon the inhabitants of those towns to which the ark of the covenant had come. In this way the apparent discrepancy between v. 4 and v. 18 is very simply removed. The words which follow, viz., אֲשֶׁר הִנִּיחוּ עָלֶיהָ וגו׳, *"upon which they had set down the ark,"* show unmistakeably, when compared with vv. 14 and 15, that we are to understand by אֶבֶל הַגְּדוֹלָה the great stone upon which the ark was placed when it was taken off the cart. The conjecture of Kimchi, that this stone was called *Abel* (*luctus*), on account of the mourning which took place there (see v. 19), is extremely unnatural. Consequently there is no other course left than to regard אבל as an error in writing for אֶבֶן, according to the reading, or at all events the rendering, adopted by the LXX and *Targum.* But וְעַד (even unto) is quite unsuitable here, as no further local definition is required after the foregoing וְעַד כֹּפֶר הַפְּרָזִי, and it is impossible to suppose that the Philistines offered a golden mouse as a trespass-offering for the great stone upon which the ark was placed. We must therefore alter וְעַד into וָעֵד: *"And the great stone is witness* (for וְעֵד in this sense, see Gen. 31:52) *to this day in the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite,"* sc., of the fact just described.

1 Samuel 6:19–7:1. Disposal of the Ark of God.—V. 19. As the ark had brought evil upon the Philistines, so the inhabitants of Bethshemesh were also to be taught that they could not stand in their unholiness before the holy God: *"And He* (God) *smote among the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked at the ark of Jehovah, and smote among the people seventy men, fifty thousand men."* In this statement of numbers we are not only struck by the fact that the 70 stands before the 50,000, which is very unusual, but even more by the omission of the copula ו before the second number, which is altogether unparalleled. When, in addition to this, we notice that 50,000 men could not possibly live either in or round Bethshemesh, and that we cannot conceive of any extraordinary gathering having taken place out of the whole land, or even from the immediate neighbourhood; and also that the words חֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף אִישׁ are wanting in several Hebrew MSS, and that Josephus, in his account of the occurrence, only speaks of *seventy* as having been killed (Ant. vi. 1, 4); we cannot come to any other conclusion than that the number 50,000 is neither correct nor genuine, but a gloss which has crept into the text through some oversight, though it is of great antiquity, since the number stood in the text employed by the Septuagint and Chaldee translators, who attempted to explain them in two different ways, but both extremely forced. Apart from this number, however, the verse does not contain anything either in form or substance that could furnish occasion for well-founded objections to its integrity. The repetition of וַיַּךְ simply resumes the thought that had been broken off by the parenthetical clause כִּי רָאוּ בַּאֲרוֹן יי׳; and בָּעָם is only a general

expression for בְּאַנְשֵׁי ב׳ שׁ׳. The stroke which fell upon the people of Bethshemesh is sufficiently accounted for in the words, *"because they had looked,"* etc. There is no necessity to understand these words, however, as many Rabbins do, as signifying "they looked *into* the ark," i.e., opened it and looked in; for if this had been the meaning, the opening would certainly not have been passed over without notice. רָאָה with ב means to look *upon* or *at* a thing with lust or malicious pleasure; and here it no doubt signifies a foolish staring, which was incompatible with the holiness of the ark of God, and was punished with death, according to the warning expressed in Num. 4:20. This severe judgment so alarmed the people of Bethshemesh, that they exclaimed, *"Who is able to stand before Jehovah, this holy God!"* Consequently the Bethshemeshites discerned correctly enough that the cause of the fatal stroke, which had fallen upon them, was the unholiness of their own nature, and not any special crime which had been committed by the persons slain. They felt that they were none of them any better than those who had fallen, and that sinners could not approach the holy God. Inspired with this feeling, they added, *"and to whom shall He go away from us?"* The subject to יַעֲלֶה is not the ark, but Jehovah who had chosen the ark as the dwelling-place of His name. In order to avert still further judgments, they sought to remove the ark from their town. They therefore sent messengers to Kirjath-jearim to announce to the inhabitants the fact that the ark had been sent back by the Philistines, and to entreat them to fetch it away.

1 Samuel 7

1 Samuel 7:1. The inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim complied with this request, and brought the ark into the house of Abinadab upon the height, and sanctified Abinadab's son Eleazar to be the keeper of the ark. *Kirjath-jearim,* the present *Kuryet el Enab* (see at Josh. 9:17), was neither a priestly nor a Levitical city. The reason why the ark was taken there, is to be sought for, therefore, in the situation of the town, i.e., in the fact that Kirjath-jearim was the nearest large town on the road from Bethshemesh to Shiloh. We have no definite information, however, as to the reason why it was not taken on to Shiloh, to be placed in the tabernacle, but was allowed to remain in the house of Abinadab at Kirjath-jearim, where a keeper was expressly appointed to take charge of it; so that we can only confine ourselves to conjectures. Ewald's opinion (*Gesch.* ii. 540), that the Philistines had conquered Shiloh after the victory described in 1 Samuel 4, and had destroyed the ancient sanctuary there, i.e., the tabernacle, is at variance with the accounts given in 1 Samuel 21:6, 1 Kings 3:4, 2 Chron. 1:3, respecting the continuance of worship in the tabernacle at Nob and Gibeon. There is much more to be said in support of the conjecture, that the carrying away of the ark by the Philistines was regarded as a judgment upon the sanctuary, which had been desecrated by the reckless conduct of the sons of Eli, and consequently, that even when the ark itself was recovered, they would not take it back without an express declaration of the will of God, but were satisfied, as a temporary arrangement, to leave the ark in Kirjath-jearim, which was farther removed from the cities of the Philistines. And there it remained, because no declaration of the divine will followed respecting its removal into the tabernacle, and the tabernacle itself had to be removed from Shiloh to Nob, and eventually to Gibeon, until David had effected the conquest of the citadel of Zion, and chosen Jerusalem as his capital, when it was removed from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6). It is not stated that Abinadab was a Levites; but this is very probable, because otherwise they would hardly have consecrated his son to be the keeper of the ark, but would have chosen a Levite for the office.

Conversion of Israel to the Lord by Samuel. Victory Over the Philistines. Samuel as Judge of Israel.—Ch. 7:2–17.

1 Samuel 7:2–4. *Purification of Israel from idolatry.*—Twenty years passed away from that time forward, while the ark remained at

Kirjath-jearim, and all Israel mourned after Jehovah. Then Samuel said to them, *"If ye turn to the Lord with all your heart, put away the strange gods from the midst of you, and the Astartes, and direct your heart firmly upon the Lord, and serve Him only, that He may save you out of the hand of the Philistines."* And the Israelites listened to this appeal. The single clauses of vv. 2 and 3 are connected together by *vav consec.,* and are not to be separated from one another. There is no gap between these verses; but they contain the same closely and logically connected thought,[12] which may be arranged in one period in the following manner: "And it came to pass, when the days multiplied from the time that the ark remained at Kirjath-jearim, and grew to twenty years, and the whole house of Israel mourned after Jehovah, that Samuel said," etc. The verbs וַיִּרְבּוּ, וַיִּהְיוּ, and וַיִּנָּהוּ, are merely continuations of the infinitive שֶׁבֶת, and the main sentence is resumed in the words וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל. The contents of the verses require that the clauses should be combined in this manner. The statement that twenty years had passed can only be understood on the supposition that some kind of turning-point ensued at the close of that time. The complaining of the people after Jehovah was no such turning-point, but became one simply from the fact that this complaining was followed by some result. This result is described in v. 3. It consisted in the fact that Samuel exhorted the people to put away the strange gods (v. 3); and that when the people listened to his exhortation (v. 4), he helped them to gain a victory over the Philistines (vv. 5ff.). יִנָּהוּ, from נָהָה, to lament or complain (Micah 2:4; Ezek. 32:18). "The phrase, *to lament after God,* is taken from human affairs, when one person follows another with earnest solicitations and complaints, until he at length assents. We have an example of this in the Syrophenician woman in Matt. 15." (Seb. Schmidt). The meaning "to assemble together," which is the one adopted by Gesenius, is forced upon the word from the Chaldee אִתְנְהִי, and it cannot be shown that the word was ever used in this sense in Hebrew. Samuel's appeal in v. 3 recalls to mind Josh. 24:14, and Gen. 35:2; but the words, *"If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts,"* assume that the turning of the people to the Lord their God had already inwardly commenced, and indeed, as the participle שָׁבִים expresses duration, had commenced as a permanent thing, and simply demand that the inward turning of the heart to God should be manifested outwardly as well, by the putting away of all their idols, and should thus be carried out to completion. The "strange gods" (see Gen. 35:2) are described in v. 4 as *"Baalim."* On *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth,* see at Judg. 2:11, 13. הָכִין לֵב, to direct the heart firmly: see Ps. 78:8; 2 Chron. 30:19.

1 Samuel 7:5–14. *Victory obtained over the Philistines through Samuel's prayer.*—Vv. 5, 6. When Israel had turned to the Lord with all its heart, and had put away all its idols, Samuel gathered together all the people at Mizpeh, to prepare them for fighting against the Philistines by a solemn day for penitence and prayer. For it is very evident that the object of calling all the people to Mizpeh was that the religious act performed there might serve as a consecration for battle, not only from the circumstance that, according to v. 7, when the Philistines heard of the meeting, they drew near to make war upon Israel, but also from the contents of v. 5: *"Samuel said* (sc., to the heads or representatives of the nation), *Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord."* His intention could not possibly have been any other than to put the people into the right relation to their God, and thus to prepare the way for their deliverance out of the bondage of the Philistines. Samuel appointed *Mizpeh,* i.e., *Nebi Samwil,* on the western boundary of the tribe of Benjamin (see at Josh. 18:26), as the place of meeting, partly no doubt on historical grounds, viz., because it was there that the tribes had formerly held their consultations respecting the wickedness of the inhabitants of Gibeah, and had resolved to make war upon Benjamin (Judg. 20:1ff.), but still more no

doubt, because Mizpeh, on the western border of the mountains, was the most suitable place for commencing the conflict with the Philistines.

1 Samuel 7:6. When they had assembled together here, *"they drew water and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord."* Drawing water and pouring it out before Jehovah was a symbolical act, which has been thus correctly explained by the Chaldee, on the whole: "They poured out their heart like water in penitence before the Lord." This is evident from the figurative expressions, "poured out like water," in Ps. 22:15, and "pour out thy heart like water," in Lam. 2:19, which are used to denote inward dissolution through pain, misery, and distress (see 2 Samuel 14:14). Hence the pouring out of water before God was a symbolical representation of the temporal and spiritual distress in which they were at the time,—a practical confession before God, "Behold, we are before Thee like water that has been poured out;" and as it was their own sin and rebellion against God that had brought this distress upon them, it was at the same time a confession of their misery, and an act of the deepest humiliation before the Lord. They gave a still further practical expression to this humiliation by fasting (צוּם), as a sign of their inward distress of mind on account of their sin, and an oral confession of their sin against the Lord. By the word שָׁם, which is added to וַיֹּאמְרוּ, "they said *"there,"* i.e., at Mizpeh, the oral confession of their sin is formally separated from the two symbolical acts of humiliation before God, though by this very separation it is practically placed on a par with them. What they did symbolically by the pouring out of water and fasting, they explained and confirmed by their verbal confession. שָׁם is never an adverb of time signifying *"then;"* neither in Ps. 14:5; 132:17, nor Judg. 5:11. *"And thus Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpeh."* וַיִּשְׁפֹּט does not mean "he became judge" (Mich. and others), any more than "he punished every one according to his iniquity" (Thenius, after David Kimchi). Judging the people neither consisted in a censure pronounced by Samuel afterwards, nor in absolution granted to the penitent after they had made a confession of their sin, but in the fact that Samuel summoned the nation to Mizpeh to humble itself before Jehovah, and there secured for it, through his intercession, the forgiveness of its sin, and a renewal of the favour of its God, and thus restored the proper relation between Israel and its God, so that the Lord could proceed to vindicate His people's rights against their foes.

When the Philistines heard of the gathering of the Israelites at Mizpeh (vv. 7, 8), their princes went up against Israel to make war upon it; and the Israelites, in their fear of the Philistines, entreated Samuel, *"Do not cease to cry for us to the Lord our God, that He may save us out of the hand of the Philistines."* V. 9. *"And Samuel took a milk-lamb* (a lamb that was still sucking, probably, according to Lev. 22:27, a lamb seven days old), *and offered it whole as a burnt-offering to the Lord."* כָּלִיל is used adverbially, according to its original meaning as an adverb, *"whole."* The Chaldee has not given the word at all, probably because the translators regarded it as pleonastic, since every burnt-offering was consumed upon the altar whole, and consequently the word כָּלִיל was sometimes used in a substantive sense, as synonymous with עוֹלָה (Deut. 33:10; Ps. 51:21). But in the passage before us, כָּלִיל is not synonymous with עוֹלָה, but simply affirms that the lamb was offered upon the altar without being cut up or divided. Samuel selected a young lamb for the burnt-offering, not "as being the purest and most innocent kind of sacrificial animal,"—for it cannot possibly be shown that very young animals were regarded as purer than those that were full-grown,—but as being the most suitable to represent the nation that had wakened up to new life through its conversion to the Lord, and was, as it were, new-born. For the burnt-offering represented the man, who

consecrated therein his life and labour to the Lord. The sacrifice was the substratum for prayer. When Samuel offered it, he cried to the Lord for the children of Israel; and the Lord *"answered,"* i.e., granted, his prayer.

1 Samuel 7:10. When the Philistines advanced during the offering of the sacrifice to fight against Israel, *"Jehovah thundered with a great noise,"* i.e., with loud peals, against the Philistines, and threw them into confusion, so that they were smitten before Israel. The thunder, which alarmed the Philistines and threw them into confusion (יְהֻמֵּם, as in Josh. 10:10), was the answer of God to Samuel's crying to the Lord.

1 Samuel 7:11. As soon as they took to flight, the Israelites advanced from Mizpeh, and pursued and smote them to below *Beth-car.* The situation of this town or locality, which is only mentioned here, has not yet been discovered. Josephus (Ant. vi. 2, 2) has μέχρι Κορρ́αίων.

1 Samuel 7:12. As a memorial of this victory, Samuel placed a stone between Mizpeh and Shen, to which he gave the name of *Eben-ha-ezer,* i.e., stone of help, as a standing memorial that the Lord had thus far helped His people. The situation of *Shen* is also not known. The name *Shen* (i.e., tooth) seems to indicate a projecting point of rock (see 1 Samuel 14:4), but may also signify a place situated upon such a point.

1 Samuel 7:13. Through this victory which was obtained by the miraculous help of God, the Philistines were so humbled, that they no more invaded the territory of Israel, i.e., with lasting success, as they had done before. This limitation of the words *"they came no more"* (*lit.* "they did not add again to come into the border of Israel"), is implied in the context; for the words which immediately follow, *"and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel,"* show that they made attempts to recover their lost supremacy, but that so long as Samuel lived they were unable to effect anything against Israel. This is also manifest from the successful battles fought by Saul (1 Samuel 13 and 14), when the Philistines had made fresh attempts to subjugate Israel during his reign. The defeats inflicted upon them by Saul also belong to the days of Samuel, who died but a very few years before Saul himself. Because of these battles which Saul fought with the Philistines, Lyra and Brentius understand the expression "all the days of Samuel" as referring not to the lifetime of Samuel, but simply to the duration of his official life as judge, viz., till the commencement of Saul's reign. But this is at variance with v. 15, where Samuel is said to have judged Israel all the days of his life. Seb. Schmidt has given, on the whole, the correct explanation of v. 13: "They came no more so as to obtain a victory and subdue the Israelites as before; yet they did return, so that the hand of the Lord was against them, i.e., so that they were repulsed with great slaughter, although they were not actually expelled, or the Israelites delivered from tribute and the presence of military garrisons, and that all the days that the judicial life of Samuel lasted, in fact all his life, since they were also smitten by Saul."

1 Samuel 7:14. In consequence of the defeat at Ebenezer, the Philistines were obliged to restore to the Israelites the cities which they had taken from them, *"from Ekron to Gath."* This definition of the limits is probably to be understood as *exclusive,* i.e., as signifying that the Israelites received back their cities up to the very borders of the Philistines, measuring these borders from Ekron to Gath, and not that the Israelites received Ekron and Gath also. For although these chief cities of the Philistines had been allotted to the tribes of Judah and Dan in the time of Joshua (Josh. 13:3, 4; 15:45, 46), yet, notwithstanding the fact that Judah and Simeon conquered Ekron, together with Gaza and Askelon, after the death of Joshua (Judg. 1:18), the Israelites did not obtain any permanent possession. *"And their territory"* (coasts), i.e., the territory of the towns that were given back to Israel, not that of Ekron and Gath, *"did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites;"* i.e., the Canaanitish tribes also kept peace with Israel after this victory of the

Israelites over the Philistines, and during the time of Samuel. The Amorites are mentioned, as in Josh. 10:6, as being the most powerful of the Canaanitish tribes, who had forced the Danites out of the plain into the mountains (Judg. 1:34, 35).

1 Samuel 7:15–17. *Samuel's judicial labours.*—With the calling of the people to Mizpeh, and the victory at Ebenezer that had been obtained through his prayer, Samuel had assumed the government of the whole nation; so that his office as judge dates from his period, although he had laboured as prophet among the people from the death of Eli, and had thereby prepared the way for the conversion of Israel to the Lord. As his prophetic labours were described in general terms in 1 Samuel 3:19–21, so are his labours as judge in the verses before us: viz., in v. 15 their duration,—*"all the days of his life,"* as his activity during Saul's reign and the anointing of David (1 Samuel 15–16) sufficiently prove; and then in vv. 16, 17 their general character,—*"he went round from year to year"* (וְסָבַב serves as a more precise definition of וְהָלַךְ, he went and travelled round) *to Bethel,* i.e., Beitin (see at Josh. 7:2), *Gilgal, and Mizpeh* (see at. v. 5), and judged Israel at all these places. Which Gilgal is meant, whether the one situated in the valley of the Jordan (Josh. 4:19), or the *Jiljilia* on the higher ground to the south-west of Shiloh (see at Josh. 8:35), cannot be determined with perfect certainty. The latter is favoured partly by the order in which the three places visited by Samuel on his circuits occur, since according to this he probably went first of all from Ramah to Bethel, which was to the north-east, then farther north or north-west to Jiljilia, and then turning back went towards the south-east to Mizpeh, and returning thence to Ramah performed a complete circuit; whereas, if the Gilgal in the valley of the Jordan had been the place referred to, we should expect him to go there first of all from Ramah, and then towards the north-east to Bethel, and from that to the south-west to Mizpeh; and partly also by the circumstance that, according to 2 Kings 2:1 and 4:38, there was a school of the prophets at Jiljilia in the time of Elijah and Elisha, the founding of which probably dated as far back as the days of Samuel. If this conjecture were really a well-founded one, it would furnish a strong proof that it was in this place, and not in the Gilgal in the valley of the Jordan, that Samuel judged the people. But as this conjecture cannot be raised into a certainty, the evidence in favour of Jiljilia is not so conclusive as I myself formerly supposed (see also the remarks on 1 Samuel 9:14). אֵת כָּל־הַמְּקוֹמוֹת is grammatically considered an accusative, and is in apposition to אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל, lit., *Israel,* viz., all the places named, i.e., Israel which inhabited all these places, and was to be found there. *"And this return was to Ramah;"* i.e., after finishing the annual circuit he returned to Ramah, where he had his house. There he judged Israel, and also built an altar to conduct the religious affairs of the nation. Up to the death of Eli, Samuel lived and laboured at Shiloh (1 Samuel 3:21). But when the ark was carried away by the Philistines, and consequently the tabernacle at Shiloh lost what was most essential to it as a sanctuary, and ceased at once to be the scene of the gracious presence of God, Samuel went to his native town Ramah, and there built an altar as the place of sacrifice for Jehovah, who had manifested himself to him. The building of the altar at Ramah would naturally be suggested to the prophet by these extraordinary circumstances, even if it had not been expressly commanded by Jehovah.

1 Samuel 8

The Monarchy of Saul from His Election Till His Ultimate Rejection. Ch. 8–15.

1 Samuel 8–15. The earthly monarchy in Israel was established in the time of Samuel, and through his mediation. At the pressing desire of the people, Samuel installed the Benjaminite Saul as king, according to the command of God. The reign of Saul may be divided into two essentially different periods: viz., (1) the establishment and vigorous development of his regal supremacy (1 Samuel 8–15); (2) the

decline and gradual overthrow of his monarchy (1 Samuel 16–31). The establishment of the monarchy is introduced by the negotiations of the elders of Israel with Samuel concerning the appointment of a king (1 Samuel 8). This is followed by (1) the account of the anointing of Saul as king (1 Samuel 9:1–10:16), of his election by lot, and of his victory over the Ammonites and the confirmation of his monarchy at Gilgal (1 Samuel 10:17–11:15), together with Samuel's final address to the nation (1 Samuel 12); (2) the history of Saul's reign, of which only his earliest victories over the Philistines are given at all elaborately (1 Samuel 13:1–14:46), his other wars and family history being disposed of very summarily (1 Samuel 14:47–52); (3) the account of his disobedience to the command of God in the war against the Amalekites, and the rejection on the part of God with which Samuel threatened him in consequence (1 Samuel 15). The brevity with which the history of his actual reign is treated, in contrast with the elaborate account of his election and confirmation as king, may be accounted for from the significance and importance of Saul's monarchy in relation to the kingdom of God in Israel.

The people of Israel traced the cause of the oppression and distress, from which they had suffered more and more in the time of the judges, to the defects of their own political constitution. They wished to have a king, like all the heathen nations, to conduct their wars and conquer their enemies. Now, although the desire to be ruled by a king, which had existed in the nation even from the time of Gideon, was not in itself at variance with the appointment of Israel as a kingdom of God, yet the motive which led the people to desire it was both wrong and hostile to God, since the source of all the evils and misfortunes from which Israel suffered was to be found in the apostasy of the nation from its God, and its coquetting with the gods of the heathen. Consequently their self-willed obstinacy in demanding a king, notwithstanding the warnings of Samuel, was an actual rejection of the sovereignty of Jehovah, since He had always manifested himself to His people as their king by delivering them out of the power of their foes, as soon as they returned to Him with simple penitence of heart. Samuel pointed this out to the elders of Israel, when they laid their petition before him that he would choose them a king. But Jehovah fulfilled their desires. He directed Samuel to appoint them a king, who possessed all the qualifications that were necessary to secure for the nation what it looked for from a king, and who therefore might have established the monarchy in Israel as foreseen and foretold by Jehovah, if he had not presumed upon his own power, but had submitted humbly to the will of God as made known to him by the prophet. Saul, who was chosen from Benjamin, the smallest but yet the most warlike of all the tribes, a man in the full vigour of youth, and surpassing all the rest of the people in beauty of form as well as bodily strength, not only possessed "warlike bravery and talent, unbroken courage that could overcome opposition of every kind, a stedfast desire for the well-being of the nation in the face of its many and mighty foes, and zeal and pertinacity in the execution of his plans" (Ewald), but also a pious heart, and an earnest zeal for the maintenance of the provisions of the law, and the promotion of the religious life of the nation. He would not commence the conflict with the Philistines until sacrifice had been offered (1 Samuel 13:9ff.); in the midst of the hot pursuit of the foe he opposed the sin committed by the people in eating flesh with the blood (1 Samuel 14:32, 33); he banished the wizards and necromancers out of the land (1 Samuel 28:3, 9); and in general he appears to have kept a strict watch over the observance of the Mosaic law in his kingdom. But the consciousness of his own power, coupled with the energy of his character, led his astray into an incautious disregard of the commands of God; his zeal in the prosecution of his plans hurried him on to reckless and violent measures; and success in his undertakings heightened his ambition into a haughty rebellion against the Lord, the God-king of Israel. These errors come out very conspicuously in the three great events of his

reign which are the most circumstantially described. When Saul was preparing for war against the Philistines, and Samuel did not appear at once on the day appointed, he presumptuously disregarded the prohibition of the prophet, and offered the sacrifice himself without waiting for Samuel to arrive (1 Samuel 13:7ff.). In the engagement with the Philistines, he attempted to force on the annihilation of the foe by pronouncing the ban upon any one in his army who should eat bread before the evening, or till he had avenged himself upon his foes. Consequently, he not only diminished the strength of the people, so that the overthrow of the enemy was not great, but he also prepared humiliation for himself, inasmuch as he was not able to carry out his vow (1 Samuel 14:24ff.). But he sinned still more grievously in the war with the Amalekites, when he violated the express command of the Lord by only executing the ban upon that nation as far as he himself thought well, and thus by such utterly unpardonable conduct altogether renounced the obedience which he owed to the Lord his God (1 Samuel 15). All these acts of transgression manifest an attempt to secure the unconditional gratification of his own self-will, and a growing disregard of the government of Jehovah in Israel; and the consequence of the whole was simply this, that Saul not only failed to accomplish that deliverance of the nation out of the power of its foes which the Israelites had anticipated from their king, and was unable to inflict any lasting humiliation upon the Philistines, but that he undermined the stability of his monarchy, and brought about his own rejection on the part of God.

From all this we may see very clearly, that the reason why the occurrences connected with the election of Saul as king as fully described on the one hand, and on the other only such incidents connected with his enterprises after he began to reign as served to bring out the faults and crimes of his monarchy, was, that Israel might learn from this, that royalty itself could never secure the salvation it expected, unless the occupant of the throne submitted altogether to the will of the Lord. Of the other acts of Saul, the wars with the different nations round about are only briefly mentioned, but with this remark, that he displayed his strength and gained the victory in whatever direction he turned (1 Samuel 14:47), simply because this statement was sufficient to bring out the brighter side of his reign, inasmuch as this clearly showed that it might have been a source of blessing to the people of God, if the king had only studied how to govern his people in the power and according to the will of Jehovah. If we examine the history of Saul's reign from this point of view, all the different points connected with it exhibit the greatest harmony. Modern critics, however, have discovered irreconcilable contradictions in the history, simply because, instead of studying it for the purpose of fathoming the plan and purpose which lie at the foundation, they have entered upon the inquiry with a twofold assumption: viz., (1) that the government of Jehovah over Israel was only a subjective idea of the Israelitish nation, without any objective reality; and (2) that the human monarchy was irreconcilably opposed to the government of God. Governed by these axioms, which are derived not from the Scriptures, but from the philosophical views of modern times, the critics have found it impossible to explain the different accounts in any other way than by the purely external hypothesis, that the history contained in this book has been compiled from two different sources, in one of which the establishment of the earthly monarchy was treated as a violation of the supremacy of God, whilst the other took a more favourable view. From the first source, 1 Samuel 8, 10:17–27, 11, 12, and 15 are said to have been derived; and 1 Samuel 9–10:17, 13, and 14 from the second.

Israel's Prayer for a King.—Ch. 8.

1 Samuel 8. As Samuel had appointed his sons as judges in his old age, and they had perverted justice, the elders of Israel entreated him to appoint them a king after the manner of all the nations (vv. 1–5). This desire not only displeased Samuel, but Jehovah also saw in it a rejection of His government; nevertheless He commanded the prophet to fulfil the desire of

the people, but at the same time to set before them as a warning the prerogatives of a king (vv. 6–9). This answer from God, Samuel made known to the people, describing to them the prerogatives which the king would assume to himself above the rest of the people (vv. 10–18). As the people, however, persisted in their wish, Samuel promised them, according to the direction of God, that their wishes should be gratified (vv. 19–22).

1 Samuel 8:1–5. The reason assigned for the appointment of Samuel's sons as judges is his own advanced age. The inference which we might draw from this alone, namely, that they were simply to support their father in the administration of justice, and that Samuel had no intention of laying down his office, and still less of making the supreme office of judge hereditary in his family, is still more apparent from the fact that they were stationed as judges of the nation in Beersheba, which was on the southern border of Canaan (Judg. 20:1, etc.; see at Gen. 21:31). The sons are also mentioned again in 1 Chron. 6:13, though the name of the elder has either been dropped out of the Masoretic text or has become corrupt.

1 Samuel 8:3. The sons, however, did not walk in the ways of their father, but set their hearts upon gain, took bribes, and perverted justice, in opposition to the command of God (see Ex. 23:6, 8; Deut. 16:19).

1 Samuel 8:4, 5. These circumstances (viz., Samuel's age and the degeneracy of his sons) furnished the elders of Israel with the opportunity to apply to Samuel with this request: *"Appoint us a king to judge us, as all the nations"* (the heathen), sc., have kings. This request resembles so completely the law of the king in Deut. 17:14 (observe, for example, the expression כְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם), that the distinct allusion to it is unmistakeable. The custom of expressly quoting the book of the law is met with for the first time in the writings of the period of the captivity. The elders simply desired what Jehovah had foretold through His servant Moses, as a thing that would take place in the future and for which He had even made provision.

1 Samuel 8:6–9. Nevertheless *"the thing displeased Samuel when they said,"* etc. This serves to explain הַדָּבָר, and precludes the supposition that Samuel's displeasure had reference to what they had said concerning his own age and the conduct of his sons. At the same time, the reason why the petition for a king displeased the prophet, was not that he regarded the earthly monarchy as irreconcilable with the sovereignty of God, or even as untimely; for in both these cases he would not have entered into the question at all, but would simply have refused the request as ungodly or unseasonable. But *"Samuel prayed to the Lord,"* i.e., he laid the matter before the Lord in prayer, and the Lord said (v. 7): *"Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee."* This clearly implies, that not only in Samuel's opinion, but also according to the counsel of God, the time had really come for the establishment of the earthly sovereignty in Israel. In this respect the request of the elders for a king to reign over them was perfectly justifiable; and there is no reason to say, with Calvin, "they ought to have had regard to the times and conditions prescribed by God, and it would no doubt have come to pass that the regal power would have grown up in the nation. Although, therefore, it had not yet been established, they ought to have waited patiently for the time appointed by God, and not to have given way to their own reasons and counsels apart from the will of God." For God had not only appointed no particular time for the establishment of the monarchy; but in the introduction to the law for the king, "When thou shalt say, I will set a king over me," He had ceded the right to the representatives of the nation to deliberate upon the matter. Nor did they err in this respect, that while Samuel was still living, it was not the proper time to make use of the permission that they had received; for they assigned as the reason for their application, that Samuel had grown old: consequently they did not petition for a king

instead of the prophet who had been appointed and so gloriously accredited by God, but simply that Samuel himself would give them a king in consideration of his own age, in order that when he should become feeble or die, they might have a judge and leader of the nation. Nevertheless the Lord declared, *"They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. As they have always done from the day that I brought them up out of Egypt unto this day, that they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also unto thee."* This verdict on the part of God refers not so much to the desire expressed, as to the feelings from which it had sprung. Externally regarded, the elders of Israel had a perfect right to present the request; the wrong was in their hearts.[13] They not only declared to the prophet their confidence in his administration of his office, but they implicitly declared him incapable of any further superintendence of their civil and political affairs. This mistrust was founded upon mistrust in the Lord and His guidance. In the person of Samuel they rejected the Lord and His rule. They wanted a king, because they imagined that Jehovah their God-king was not able to secure their constant prosperity. Instead of seeking for the cause of the misfortunes which had hitherto befallen them in their own sin and want of fidelity towards Jehovah, they searched for it in the faulty constitution of the nation itself. In such a state of mind as this, their desire for a king was a contempt and rejection of the kingly government of Jehovah, and was nothing more than forsaking Jehovah to serve other gods. (See 1 Samuel 10:18, 19, and 1 Samuel 12:7ff., where Samuel points out to the people still more fully the wrong that they have committed.)

1 Samuel 8:9. In order to show them wherein they were wrong, Samuel was instructed to bear witness against them, by proclaiming the right of the king who would rule over them. הָעֵד תָּעִיד בָּהֶם neither means "warn them earnestly" (De Wette), nor "explain and solemnly expound to them" (Thenius). הֵעִיד בְּ means *to bear witness,* or give testimony against a person, i.e., to point out to him his wrong. The following words, וְהִגַּדְתָּ וגו׳, are to be understood as explanatory, in the sense of *"by proclaiming to them." "The manner* (*mishpat*) *of the king"* is the *right* or *prerogative* which the king would claim, namely, such a king as was possessed by all the other nations, and such an one as Israel desired in the place of its own God-king, i.e., a king who would rule over his people with arbitrary and absolute power.

1 Samuel 8:10–18. In accordance with the instructions of God, Samuel told the people all the words of Jehovah, i.e., all that God had said to him, as related in vv. 7–9, and then proclaimed to them the right of the king.

1 Samuel 8:11. *"He will take your sons, and set them for himself upon his chariots, and upon his saddle-horses, and they will run before his chariot;"* i.e., he will make the sons of the people his retainers at court, his charioteers, riders, and runners. The singular suffix attached to בְּמֶרְכַּבְתּוֹ is not to be altered, as Thenius suggests, into the plural form, according to the LXX, Chald., and Syr., since the word refers, not to war-chariots, but to the king's state-carriage; and פָּרָשׁ does not mean a rider, but a saddle-horse, as in 2 Samuel 1:6, 1 Kings 5:6, etc.

1 Samuel 8:12. *"And to make himself chiefs over thousands and over fifties;"*—the greatest and smallest military officers are mentioned, instead of all the soldiers and officers (comp. Num. 31:14, 2 Kings 1:9ff., with Ex. 18:21, 25). וְלָשׂוּם is also dependent upon יִקַּח (v. 11),—*"and to plough his field* (חָרִישׁ, *lit.* the ploughed), *and reap his harvest, and make his instruments of war and instruments of his chariots."*

1 Samuel 8:13. *"Your daughters he will take as preparers of ointments, cooks, and bakers,"* sc., for his court.

1 Samuel 8:14ff. All their possessions he would also take to himself: the good (i.e., the best) fields, vineyards, and olive-gardens, he would take away, and give to his servants; he would tithe the sowings and vineyards (i.e., the

produce which they yielded), and give them to his courtiers and servants. סָרִיס, *lit.* the eunuch; here it is used in a wider sense for the *royal chamberlains.* Even their *slaves* (men-servants and maid-servants) and their *beasts of draught and burden* he would take and use for his own work, and *raise the tithe of the flock.* The word בַּחוּרֵיכֶם, between the slaves (men-servants and maid-servants) and the asses, is very striking and altogether unsuitable; and in all probability it is only an ancient copyist's error for בְּקָרֵיכֶם, your oxen, as we may see from the LXX rendering, τὰ βουκόλια. The servants and maids, oxen and asses, answer in that case to one another; whilst the young men are included among the sons in vv. 11, 12. In this way the king would make all the people into his servants or slaves. This is the meaning of the second clause of v. 17; for the whole are evidently summed up in conclusion in the expression, *"and ye shall be his servants."*

1 Samuel 8:18. Israel would then cry out to God because of its king, but the Lord would not hear it then. This description, which contains a fearful picture of the tyranny of the king, is drawn from the despotic conduct of the heathen kings, and does not presuppose, as many have maintained, the times of the later kings, which were so full of painful experiences.

1 Samuel 8:19–22. With such a description of the *"right of the king"* as this, Samuel had pointed out to the elders the dangers connected with a monarchy in so alarming a manner, that they ought to have been brought to reflection, and to have desisted from their demand. *"But the people refused to hearken to the voice of Samuel."* They repeated their demand, *"We will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and conduct our battles."*

1 Samuel 8:21, 22. These words of the people were laid by Samuel before the Lord, and the Lord commanded him to give the people a king. With this answer Samuel sent the men of Israel, i.e., the elders, away. This is implied in the words, *"Go ye every man unto his city,"* since we may easily supply from the context, "till I shall call you again, to appoint you the king you desire."

1 Samuel 9

Anointing of Saul as King.—Ch. 9–10:16.

1 Samuel 9:1–10:16. When the Lord had instructed Samuel to appoint a king over the nation, in accordance with its own desire, He very speedily proceeded to show him the man whom He had chosen. Saul the Benjaminite came to Samuel, to consult him as a seer about his father's she-asses, which had been lost, and for which he had been seeking in all directions in vain (1 Samuel 9:1–14). And the Lord had already revealed to the prophet the day before, that He would send him the man who had been set apart by Him as the king of Israel; and when Samuel met with Saul, He pointed him out as the man to whom He had referred (vv. 15–17). Accordingly, Samuel invited Saul to be his guest at a sacrificial meal, which he was about to celebrate (vv. 18–24). After the meal he made known to him the purpose of God, anointed him as king (vv. 25–27, 1 Samuel 10:1), and sent him away, with an announcement of three signs, which would serve to confirm his election on the part of God (1 Samuel 10:2–16). This occurrence is related very circumstantially, to bring out distinctly the miraculous interposition of God, and to show that Saul did not aspire to the throne; and also that Samuel did not appoint of his own accord the man whom he was afterwards obliged to reject, but that Saul was elected by God to be king over His people, without any interference on the part of either Samuel or himself.[14]

1 Samuel 9:1–10. *Saul searches for his father's asses.*—Vv. 1, 2. The elaborate genealogy of the Benjaminite Kish, and the minute description of the figure of his son Saul, are intended to indicate at the very outset the importance to which Saul attained in relation to the people of Israel, *Kish* was the son of *Abiel:* this is in harmony with 1 Samuel 14:51. But when, on the other hand, it is stated in 1 Chron. 8:33; 9:39, that *Ner* begat *Kish,* the difference may be

reconciled in the simplest manner, on the assumption that the *Ner* mentioned there is not the father, but the grandfather, or a still more remote ancestor of *Kish,* as the intervening members are frequently passed over in the genealogies. The other ancestors of *Kish* are never mentioned again. גִּבּוֹר חַיִל refers to *Kish,* and signifies not a brave man, but a man of property, as in Ruth 2:1. This son *Saul* (i.e., *"prayed for:"* for this meaning of the word, comp. 1 Samuel 1:17, 27) was *"young and beautiful."* It is true that even at that time Saul had a son grown up (viz., Jonathan), according to 1 Samuel 13:2; but still, in contrast with his father, he was "a young man," i.e., in the full vigour of youth, probably about forty or forty-five years old. There is no necessity, therefore, to follow the Vulgate rendering *electus.* No one equalled him in beauty. *"From his shoulder upwards he was higher than any of the people."* Such a figure as this was well adapted to commend him to the people as their king (cf. 1 Samuel 10:24), since size and beauty were highly valued in rulers, as signs of manly strength (see Herod. iii. 20, vii. 187; Aristot. *Polit.* iv. c. 24).

1 Samuel 9:3–5. Having been sent out by his father to search for his she-asses which had strayed, Saul went with his servant through the mountains of Ephraim, which ran southwards into the tribe-territory of Benjamin (see at 1 Samuel 1:1), then through the land of Shalishah and the land of Shaalim, and after that through the land of Benjamin, without finding the asses; and at length, when he had reached the land of Zuph, he determined to return, because he was afraid that his father might turn his mind from the asses, and trouble himself about them (the son and servant). חָדֵל מִן, to desist from a thing, to give it up or renounce it.

As Saul started in any case from Gibeah of Benjamin, his own home (1 Samuel 10:10ff., 26, 11:4; 15:34; 23:19; 26:1), i.e., the present *Tuleil el Phul,* which was an hour or an hour and a half to the north of Jerusalem (see at Josh. 18:28), and went thence into the mountains of Ephraim, he no doubt took a north-westerly direction, so that he crossed the boundary of Benjamin somewhere between Bireh and Atarah, and passing through the crest of the mountains of Ephraim, on the west of Gophnah (Jifna), came out into the land of Shalishah. *Shalishah* is unquestionably the country round (or of) *Baal- shalishah* (2 Kings 4:42), which was situated, according to Eusebius (*Onom. s.v.* Βαιθσαρισάθ: *Beth-sarisa* or *Beth-salisa*), *in regione Thamnitica,* fifteen Roman miles to the north of Diospolis (Lydda), and was therefore probably the country to the west of Jiljilia, where three different wadys run into one large wady, called Kurawa; and according to the probable conjecture of Thenius, it was from this fact that the district received the name of *Shalishah,* or *Three-land.* They proceeded thence in their search to the land of *Shaalim:* according to the *Onom.* (*s.v.*), "a village seven miles off, *in finibus Eleutheropoleos contra occidentem."* But this is hardly correct, and is most likely connected with the mistake made in transposing the town of Samuel to the neighbourhood of Diospolis (see at 1 Samuel 1:1). For since they went on from Shaalim into the land of Benjamin, and then still further into the land of Zuph, on the south-west of Benjamin, they probably turned eastwards from Shalishah, into the country where we find *Beni Mussah* and *Beni Salem* marked upon Robinson's and v. de Velde's maps, and where we must therefore look for the land of *Shaalim,* that they might proceed thence to explore the land of Benjamin from the north-east to the south-west. If, on the contrary, they had gone from Shaalim in a southerly or south-westerly direction, to the district of Eleutheropolis, they would only have entered the land of Benjamin at the south-west corner, and would have had to go all the way back again in order to go thence to the land of Zuph. For we may infer with certainty that the land of Zuph was on the south-west of the tribe-territory of Benjamin, from the fact that, according to 1 Samuel 10:2, Saul and his companion passed Rachel's tomb on their return thence to their own home, and then came to the border of Benjamin. On the name *Zuph,* see at 1 Samuel 1:1.

1 Samuel 9:6. When Saul proposed to return home from the land of Zuph, his servant said to him, *"Behold, in this city* (*'this,'* referring to the town which stood in front of them upon a hill) *is a man of God, much honoured; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now we will go thither; perhaps he will tell us our way that we have to go"* (*lit.* have gone, and still go, sc., to attain the object of our journey, viz., to find the asses). The name of this town is not mentioned either here or in the further course of this history. Nearly all the commentators suppose it to have been Ramah, Samuel's home. But this assumption has no foundation at all in the text, and is irreconcilable with the statements respecting the return in 1 Samuel 10:2–5. The servant did not say there *dwells* in this city, but there is in this city (v. 6; comp. with this v. 10, "They went into the city where the man of God was," not "dwelt"). It is still more evident, from the answer given by the drawers of water, when Saul asked them, *"Is the seer here?"* (v. 11),—viz., *"He came to-day to the city, for the people have a great sacrifice upon the high place"* (v. 12),—that the seer (Samuel) did not live in the town, but had only come thither to a sacrificial festival. Moreover, "every impartial man will admit, that the fact of Samuel's having honoured Saul as his guest at the sacrificial meal of those who participated in the sacrifice, and of their having slept under the same roof, cannot possibly weaken the impression that Samuel was only there in his peculiar and official capacity. It could not be otherwise than that the presidency should be assigned to him at the feast itself as priest and prophet, and therefore that the appointments mentioned should proceed from him. And it is but natural to assume that he had a house at his command for any repetition of such sacrifices, which we find from 2 Kings 4 to have been the case in the history of Elisha" (Valentiner). And lastly, the sacrificial festival itself does not point to Ramah; for although Samuel had built an altar to the Lord at Ramah (1 Samuel 7:17), this was by no means the only place of sacrifice in the nation. If Samuel offered sacrifice at Mizpeh and Gilgal (1 Samuel 7:9; 10:8; 13:8ff.), he could also do the same at other places. What the town really was in which Saul met with him, cannot indeed be determined, since all that we can gather from 1 Samuel 10:2, is, that it was situated on the south-west of Bethlehem.

1 Samuel 9:7–10. Saul's objection, that they had no present to bring to the man of God, as the bread was gone from their vessels, was met by the servant with the remark, that he had a quarter of a shekel which he would give.

1 Samuel 9:9. Before proceeding with the further progress of the affair, the historian introduces a notice, which was required to throw light upon what follows; namely, that beforetime, if any one wished to inquire of God, i.e., to apply to a prophet for counsel from God upon any matter, it was customary in Israel to say, We will go to the seer, because *"he that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer."* After this parenthetical remark, the account is continued in v. 10. Saul declared himself satisfied with the answer of the servant; and they both went into the town, to ask the man of God about the asses that were lost.

1 Samuel 9:11–17. As they were going up to the high place of the town, they met maidens coming out of the town to draw water; and on asking them whether the seer was there, they received this answer: *"Yes; behold, he is before thee: make haste, now, for he has come into the town to-day; for the people have a sacrifice to-day upon the high place." Bamah* (in the singular) does not mean the height or hill generally; but throughout it signifies *the high place,* as a place of sacrifice or prayer.

1 Samuel 9:13. *"When ye come into the city, ye will find him directly before he goes up to the high place to eat."* כֵּן not only introduces the apodosis, but corresponds to דְּ, *as, so:* here, however, it is used with reference to time, in the sense of our "immediately." *"For the people are not accustomed to eat till he comes, for he blesses the sacrifice,"* etc. בֵּרַךְ, like εὐλογεῖν, refers to the thanksgiving prayer offered before the sacrificial meal. *"Go now for him; yet will meet him even to-day."* The first אֹתוֹ is placed at

the beginning for the sake of emphasis, and then repeated at the close. כְּהַיּוֹם, *"Even to-day."*

1 Samuel 9:14. When they went into the town, Samuel met them on his way out to go to the high place of sacrifice. Before the meeting itself is described, the statement is introduced in vv. 15–17, that the day before Jehovah had foretold to Samuel that the man was coming to him whom he was to anoint as captain over his people. גָּלָה אֹזֶן, to *open any one's ear,* equivalent to *reveal* something to him (1 Samuel 20:12; 2 Samuel 7:27, etc.). אֶשְׁלַח, *I will send thee,* i.e., "I will so direct his way in my overruling providence, that he shall come to thee" (J. H. Mich.). The words, *"that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon my people, for their cry is come unto me,"* are not at all at variance with 1 Samuel 7:13. In that passage there is simply the assertion, that there was no more any permanent oppression on the part of the Philistines in the days of Samuel, such as had taken place before; but an attempt to recover their supremacy over Israel is not only not precluded, but is even indirectly affirmed (see the comm. on 1 Samuel 7:13). The words before us simply show that the Philistines had then begun to make a fresh attempt to contend for dominion over the Israelites. *"I have looked upon my people:"* this is to be explained like the similar passage in Ex. 2:25, "God looked upon the children of Israel," and Ex. 3:7, "I have looked upon the misery of my people." God's looking was not a quiet, inactive looking on, but an energetic look, which brought help in trouble. *"Their cry is come unto me:"* this is word for word the same as in Ex. 3:9. As the Philistines wanted to tread in the footsteps of the Egyptians, it was necessary that Jehovah should also send His people a deliverer from these new oppressors, by giving them a king. The reason here assigned for the establishment of a monarchy is by no means at variance with the displeasure which God had expressed to Samuel at the desire of the people for a king (1 Samuel 8:7ff.); since this displeasure had reference to the state of heart from which the desire had sprung.

1 Samuel 9:17. When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord answered him, sc., in reply to the tacit inquiry, *'Is this he?' "Behold, this is the man of whom I spake to thee."* עצר, *coercere imperio.*

1 Samuel 9:18–24. The thread of the narrative, which was broken off in v. 15, is resumed in v. 18. Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and asked him for the seer's house. The expression בְּתוֹךְ הַשַּׁעַר is used to define more precisely the general phrase in v. 14, בָּאִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר; and there is no necessity to alter הָעִיר in v. 14 into הַשַּׁעַר, as Thenius proposes, for בּוֹא בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר does not mean to go (or be) in the middle of the town, as he imagines, but to *go into,* or enter, *the town;* and the entrance to the town was through the gate.

1 Samuel 9:19. Samuel replied, *"I am the seer: go up before me to the high place, and eat with me to-day; and to-morrow I will send thee away, and make known to thee all that is in thy heart."* Letting a person go in front was a sign of great esteem. The change from the singular עֲלֵה to the plural אֱכַלְתֶּם may be explained on the ground that, whilst Samuel only spoke to Saul, he intended expressly to invite his servant to the meal as well as himself. *"All that is in thine heart"* does not mean "all that thou hast upon thy heart," i.e., all that troubles thee, for Samuel relieved him of all anxiety about the asses at once by telling him that they were found; but simply the thoughts of thy heart generally. Samuel would make these known to him, to prove to him that he was a prophet. He then first of all satisfied him respecting the asses (v. 20): *"As for the asses that were lost to thee to-day three days* (three days ago), *do not set thy heart upon them* (i.e., do not trouble thyself about them), *for they are found."* After this quieting announcement, by which he had convinced Saul of his seer's gift, Samuel directed Saul's thoughts to that higher thing which Jehovah had appointed for him: *"And to whom does all that is worth desiring of Israel*

belong? Is it not to thee, and to all thy father's house?" "The desire of Israel" (*optima quaeque Israel,* Vulg.; "the best in Israel," Luther) is not all that Israel desires, but all that Israel possesses of what is precious or *worth desiring* (see Hag. 2:7). "The antithesis here is between the asses and every desirable thing" (Seb. Schmidt). Notwithstanding the indefinite character of the words, they held up such glorious things as in prospect for Saul, that he replied in amazement (v. 21), *"Am not I a Benjaminite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family is the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin* (שִׁבְטֵי בן׳ is unquestionably a copyist's error for שֵׁבֶט בן׳); *and how speakest thou such a word to me?"* Samuel made no reply to this, as he simply wanted first of all to awaken the expectation in Saul's mind of things that he had never dreamt of before.

1 Samuel 9:22. When they arrived at the high place, he conducted Saul and his servant into the cell (the apartment prepared for the sacrificial meal), and gave them (the servant as well as Saul, according to the simple customs of antiquity, as being also his guest) a place at the upper end among those who had been invited. There were about thirty persons present, no doubt the most distinguished men of the city, whilst the rest of the people probably encamped in the open air.

1 Samuel 9:23, 24. He then ordered the cook to bring the piece which he had directed him to set aside, and to place it before Saul, namely the leg and הֶעָלֶיהָ (the article in the place of the relative; see Ewald, § 331, *b.*)*;* i.e., not what was over it, viz., the broth poured upon it (Dathe and Maurer), but what was attached to it (Luther). The reference, however, is not to the kidney as the choicest portion (Thenius), for the kidneys were burned upon the altar in the case of all the slain sacrifices (Lev. 3:4), and only the flesh of the animals offered in sacrifice was applied to the sacrificial meal. What was attached to the leg, therefore, can only have been such of the fat upon the flesh as was not intended for the altar. Whether the right or left leg, is not stated: the earlier commentators decide in favour of the left, because the right leg fell to the share of the priests (Lev. 7:32ff.). But as Samuel conducted the whole of the sacrificial ceremony, he may also have offered the sacrifice itself by virtue of his prophetic calling, so that the right leg would fall to his share, and he might have it reserved for his guest. In any case, however, the leg, as the largest and best portion, was to be a piece of honour for Saul (see Gen. 43:34). There is no reason to seek for any further symbolical meaning in it. The fact that it was Samuel's intention to distinguish and honour Saul above all his other guests, is evident enough from what he said to Saul when the cook had brought the leg: *"Behold, that which is reserved is set before thee* (שִׂים is the passive participle, as in Num. 24:21); *for unto this time hath it been kept for thee, as I said I have invited the people."* לְמוֹעֵד is either *"to the appointed time of thy coming,"* or possibly, *"for the* (this) *meeting together."* Samuel mentions this to give Saul his guest to understand that he had foreseen his coming in a supernatural way. לֵאמֹר, *saying,* i.e., as I said (to the cook).

1 Samuel 9:25–27. When the sacrificial meal was over, Samuel and Saul went down from the high place into the town, and he (Samuel) talked with him upon the roof (of the house into which Samuel had entered). The flat roofs of the East were used as placed of retirement for private conversation (see at Deut. 22:8). This conversation did not refer of course to the call of Samuel to the royal dignity, for that was not made known to him as a word of Jehovah till the following day (v. 27); but it was intended to prepare him for that announcement: so that O. v. Gerlach's conjecture is probably the correct one, viz., that Samuel "talked with Saul concerning the deep religious and political degradation of the people of God, the oppression of the heathen, the causes of the inability of the Israelites to stand against these foes, the necessity for a conversion of the people, and the want of a leader who was entirely devoted to the Lord."[15]

1 Samuel 9:26. *"And they rose up early in the morning: namely, when the morning dawn arose, Samuel called to Saul upon the roof* (i.e., he called from below within the house up to the roof, where Saul was probably sleeping upon the balcony; cf. 2 Kings 4:10), *Get up, I will conduct thee."* As soon as Saul had risen, *"they both* (*both Samuel and Saul*) *went out* (into the street)." And when they had gone down to the extremity of the town, *Samuel said to Saul, "Let the servant pass on before us* (*and he did so*), *and do thou remain here for the present; I will show thee a word of God."*

1 Samuel 10

1 Samuel 10:1. Samuel then took the oil-flask, poured it upon his (Saul's) head, kissed him, and said, *"Hath not Jehovah* (equivalent to 'Jehovah assuredly hath') *anointed thee to be captain over His inheritance?"* הֲלוֹא, as an expression of lively assurance, receives the force of an independent clause through the following כִּי, *"is it not so?"* i.e., "yea, it is so, that," etc., just as it does before אִם in Gen. 4:7. נַחֲלָתוֹ, (His (Jehovah's) possession, was the nation of Israel, which Jehovah had acquired as the people of His own possession through their deliverance out of Egypt (Deut. 4:20; 9:26, etc.). Anointing with oil as a symbol of endowment with the Spirit of God; as the oil itself, by virtue of the strength which it gives to the vital spirits, was a symbol of the Spirit of God as the principle of divine and spiritual power (see at Lev. 8:12). Hitherto there had been no other anointing among the people of God than that of the priests and sanctuary (Ex. 30:23ff.; Lev. 8:10ff.). When Saul, therefore, was consecrated as king by anointing, the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution, standing on a par with the priesthood; through which henceforth the Lord would also bestow upon His people the gifts of His Spirit for the building up of His kingdom. As the priests were consecrated by anointing to be the media of the ethical blessings of divine grace for Israel, so the king was consecrated by anointing to be the vehicle and medium of all the blessings of grace which the Lord, as the God-king, would confer upon His people through the institution of a civil government. Through this anointing, which was performed by Samuel under the direction of God, the king was set apart from the rest of the nation as "anointed of the Lord" (cf. 1 Samuel 12:3, 5, etc.), and sanctified as the נָגִיד, i.e., its captain, its leader and commander. *Kissing* was probably not a sign of homage or reverence towards the anointed of the Lord, so much as "a kiss of affection, with which the grace of God itself was sealed" (Seb. Schmidt).[16]

1 Samuel 10:2–7. To confirm the consecration of Saul as king over Israel, which had been effected through the anointing, Samuel gave him three more signs which would occur on his journey home, and would be a pledge to him that Jehovah would accompany his undertakings with His divine help, and practically accredit him as His anointed. These signs, therefore, stand in the closest relation to the calling conveyed to Saul through his anointing.

1 Samuel 10:2. *The first sign: "When thou goest away from me to-day* (i.e., now), *thou wilst meet two men at Rachel's sepulchre, on the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses of thy father, which thou wentest to seek, are found. Behold, they father hath given up* אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הָעֲתֹנוֹת, *the words* (i.e., talking) *about the asses, and troubleth himself about you, saying, What shall I do about my son?"* According to Gen. 35:16ff., Rachel's sepulchre was on the way from Bethel to Bethlehem, only a short distance from the latter place, and therefore undoubtedly on the spot which tradition has assigned to it since the time of Jerome, viz., on the site of the *Kubbet Rahil,* half an hour to the north-west of Bethlehem, on the left of the road to Jerusalem, about an hour and a half from the city (see at Gen. 35:20). This suits the passage before us very well, if we give up the groundless assumption that Saul came to Samuel at Ramah and was anointed by him there, and assume that the place of meeting, which is not more fully defined in 1 Samuel 9, was situated to the south-west of Bethlehem.[17]

The expression "in the border of Benjamin" is not at variance with this. It is true that *Kubbet Rahil* is about an hour and a quarter from the southern boundary of Benjamin, which ran past the *Rogel* spring, through the valley of Ben-Hinnom (Josh. 18:16); but the expression עִם קְבוּרָה must not be so pressed as to be restricted to the actual site of the grave, since otherwise the further definition *"at Zelzah"* would be superfluous, as Rachel's tomb was unquestionably a well-known locality at that time. If we suppose the place called Zelzah, the situation of which has not yet been discovered,[18] to have been about mid-way between Rachel's tomb and the *Rogel* spring, Samuel could very well describe the spot where Saul would meet the two men in the way that he has done. This sign, by confirming the information which Samuel had given to Saul with reference to the asses, was to furnish him with a practical proof that what Samuel had said to him with regard to the monarchy would quite as certainly come to pass, and therefore not only to deliver him from all anxiety as to the lost animals of his father, but also to direct his thoughts to the higher destiny to which God had called him through Samuel's anointing.

1 Samuel 10:3, 4. *The second sign* (vv. 3, 4): *"Then thou shalt go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the terebinth of Tabor; and there shall meet thee there three men going up to God to Bethel, carrying one three kinds, one three loaves of bread, and one a bottle of wine. They will ask thee after thy welfare, and give thee two loaves; receive them at their hands."* The terebinth of *Tabor* is not mentioned anywhere else, and nothing further can be determined concerning it, than that it stood by the road leading from Rachel's tomb to Gibeah.[19] The fact that the three men were going up to God at Bethel, shows that there was still a place of sacrifice consecrated to the Lord at Bethel, where Abraham and Jacob had erected altars to the Lord who had appeared to them there (Gen. 12:8; 13:3, 4; 28:18, 19; 35:7); for the kids and loaves and wine were sacrificial gifts which they were about to offer. שָׁאַל לְשָׁלוֹם, to ask after one's welfare, i.e., to greet in a friendly manner (cf. Judg. 18:15; Gen. 43:27). The meaning of this double sign consisted in the fact that these men gave Saul two loaves from their sacrificial offerings. In this he was to discern a homage paid to the anointed of the Lord; and he was therefore to accept the gift in this sense at their hand.

1 Samuel 10:5, 6. *The third sign* (vv. 5, 6) Saul was to receive at Gibeah of God, where posts of the Philistines were stationed. *Gibeath ha-Elohim* is not an appellative, signifying a high place of God, i.e., a high place dedicated to God, but a proper name referring to *Gibeah* of Benjamin, the native place of Saul, which was called *Gibeah of Saul* from the time when Saul resided there as king (v. 16: cf. 1 Samuel 11:4; 15:34; 2 Samuel 21:6; Isa. 10:29). This is very apparent from the fact that, according to vv. 10ff., all the people of Gibeah had known Saul of old, and therefore could not comprehend how he had all at once come to be among the prophets. The name *Gibeah of God* is here given to the town on account of a *bamah* or sacrificial height which rose within or near the town (v. 13), and which may possibly have been renowned above other such heights, as the seat of a society of prophets. נְצִבֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים are not bailiffs of the Philistines, still less columns erected as signs of their supremacy (Thenius), but military posts of the Philistines, as 1 Samuel 13:3, 4, and 2 Samuel 8:6, 14, clearly show. The allusion here to the posts of the Philistines at Gibeah is connected with what was about to happen to Saul there. At the place where the Philistines, those severe oppressors of Israel, had set up military posts, the Spirit of God was to come upon Saul, and endow him with the divine power that was required for his regal office. *"And it shall come to pass, when thou comest to the town there, thou wilt light upon a company of prophets coming down from the high place* (*bamah,* the sacrificial height), *before them lyre and tambourin, and flute, and harp, and they prophesying."* חֶבֶל signifies a rope or cord, then a *band* or *company* of men. It does not follow that because this band of prophets

was coming down from the high place, the high place at Gibeah must have been the seat of a school of the prophets. They might have been upon a pilgrimage to Gibeah. The fact that they were preceded by musicians playing, seems to indicate a festal procession. *Nebel* and *Kinnor* are stringed instruments which were used after David's time in connection with the psalmody of divine worship (1 Chron. 13:8; 15:20; Ps. 33:2; 43:4, etc.). The *nebel* was an instrument resembling a *lyre,* the *kinnor* was more like a *guitar* than a harp. *Toph:* the *tambourin,* which was played by Miriam at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:20). *Chalil:* the *flute;* see my *Bibl. Archaeology,* ii. § 137. By the prophesying of these prophets we are to understand an ecstatic utterance of religious feelings to the praise of God, as in the case of the seventy elders in the time of Moses (Num. 11:25). Whether it took the form of a song or of an enthusiastic discourse, cannot be determined; in any case it was connected with a very energetic action indicative of the highest state of mental excitement. (For further remarks on these societies of prophets, see at 1 Samuel 19:18ff.)

1 Samuel 10:6. *"And the Spirit of Jehovah will come upon thee, and thou wilt prophesy with them, and be changed into another man."* "Ecstatic states," says Tholuck (*die Propheten,* p. 53), "have something infectious about them. The excitement spreads involuntarily, as in the American revivals and the preaching mania in Sweden, even to persons in whose state of mind there is no affinity with anything of the kind." But in the instance before us there was something more than psychical infection. The Spirit of Jehovah, which manifested itself in the prophesying of the prophets, was to pass over to Saul, so that he would prophesy along with them (הִתְנַבִּיתָ formed like a verb ל״ה for התנבאת; so again in v. 13), and was entirely to transform him. This transformation is not to be regarded indeed as regeneration in the Christian sense, but as a change resembling regeneration, which affected the entire disposition of mind, and by which Saul was lifted out of his former modes of thought and feeling, which were confined within a narrow earthly sphere, into the far higher sphere of his new royal calling, was filled with kingly thoughts in relation to the service of God, and received *"another heart"* (v. 9). *Heart* is used in the ordinary scriptural sense, as the centre of the whole mental and psychical life of will, desire, thought, perception, and feeling (see Delitzsch, *Bibl. Psychol.* pp. 248ff., ed. 2). Through this sign his anointing as king was to be inwardly sealed.

1 Samuel 10:7. *"When these signs are come unto thee* (the *Kethibh* תבאינה is to be read תְּבֹאֶינָה, as in Ps. 45:16 and Esther 4:4; and the *Keri* תָּבֹאנָה is a needless emendation), *do to thee what thy hand findeth,* i.e., act according to the circumstances (for this formula, see Judg. 9:33); *for God will be with thee."* The occurrence of the signs mentioned was to assure him of the certainty that God would assist him in all that he undertook as king. The first opportunity for action was afforded him by the Ammonite Nahash, who besieged Jabesh-gilead (1 Samuel 11).

1 Samuel 10:8. In conclusion, Samuel gave him an important hint with regard to his future attitude: *"And goest thou before me down to Gilgal; and, behold, I am coming down to thee, to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice peace-offerings: thou shalt wait seven days, till I come to thee, that I may show thee what thou art to do."* The infinitive clause לְהַעֲלוֹת וגו׳ is undoubtedly dependent upon the main clause וְיָרַדְתָּ, and not upon the circumstantial clause which is introduced as a parenthesis. The thought therefore is the following: If Saul went down to Gilgal to offer sacrifice there, he was to wait till Samuel arrived. The construction of the main clause itself, however, is doubtful, since, grammatically considered, יָרַדְתָּ can either be a continuation of the imperative עֲשֵׂה (v. 7), or can be regarded as independent, and in fact conditional. The latter view, according to which יָרַדְתָּ supposes his going down as a possible thing that may take place at a future time, is the one required by the circumstantial clause

which follows, and which is introduced by וְהִנֵּה; for if וְיָרַדְתָּ were intended to be a continuation of the imperative which precedes it, so that Samuel commanded Saul to go down to Gilgal before him, he would have simply announced his coming, that is to say, he would either have said וְיָרַדְתִּי or וַאֲנִי אֵרֵד. The circumstantial clause *"and behold I am coming down to thee"* evidently presupposes Saul's going down as a possible occurrence, in the event of which Samuel prescribes the course he is to pursue. But the conditional interpretation of וְיָרַדְתָּ is still more decidedly required by the context. For instance, when Samuel said to Saul that after the occurrence of the three signs he was to do what came to his hand, he could hardly command him immediately afterwards to go to Gilgal, since the performance of what came to his hand might prevent him from going to Gilgal. If, however, Samuel meant that after Saul had finished what came to his hand he was to go down to Gilgal, he would have said, "And after thou hast done this, go down to Gilgal," etc. But as he does not express himself in this manner, he can only have referred to Saul's going to Gilgal as an occurrence which, as he foresaw, would take place at some time or other. And to Saul himself this must not only have presented itself as a possible occurrence, but under the existing circumstances as one that was sure to take place; so that the whole thing was not so obscure to him as it is to us, who are only able to form our conclusions from the brief account which lies before us. If we suppose that in the conversation which Samuel had with Saul upon the roof (1 Samuel 9:25), he also spoke about the manner in which the Philistines, who had pushed their outposts as far as Gibeah, could be successfully attacked, he might also have mentioned that Gilgal was the most suitable place for gathering an army together, and for making the necessary preparations for a successful engagement with their foes. If we just glance at the events narrated in the following chapters, for the purpose of getting a clear idea of the thing which Samuel had in view; we find that the three signs announced by Samuel took place on Saul's return to Gibeah (vv. 9–16). Samuel then summoned the people to Mizpeh, where Saul was elected king by lot (vv. 17–27); but Saul returned to Gibeah to his own house even after this solemn election, and was engaged in ploughing the field, when messengers came from Jabesh with the account of the siege of that town by the Ammonites. On receiving this intelligence the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, so that he summoned the whole nation with energy and without delay to come to battle, and proceeded to Jabesh with the assembled army, and smote the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11:1–11). Thereupon Samuel summoned the people to come to Gilgal and renew the monarchy there (1 Samuel 11:12–15); and at the same time he renewed his office of supreme judge (1 Samuel 12), so that now for the first time Saul actually commenced his reign, and began the war against the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:1), in which, as soon as the latter advanced to Michmash with a powerful army after Jonathan's victorious engagement, he summoned the people to Gilgal to battle, and after waiting there seven days for Samuel in vain, had the sacrifices offered, on which account as soon as Samuel arrived he announced to him that his rule would not last (1 Samuel 13:13ff.).

Now, it cannot have been the first of these two gatherings at Gilgal that Samuel had in his mind, but must have been the second. The first is precluded by the simple fact that Samuel summoned the people to go to Gilgal for the purpose of renewing the monarchy; and therefore, as the words "come and let us go to Gilgal" (1 Samuel 11:14) unquestionably imply, he must have gone thither himself along with the people and the king, so that Saul was never in a position to have to wait for Samuel's arrival. The second occurrence at Gilgal, on the other hand, is clearly indicated in the words of 1 Samuel 13:8, *"Saul tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed,"* in which there is almost an express allusion to the instructions given to Saul in the verse before us. But whilst we cannot but

regard this as the only true explanation, we cannot agree with Seb. Schmidt, who looks upon the instructions given to Saul in this verse as "a rule to be observed throughout the whole of Samuel's life," that is to say, who interprets יָרַדְתָּ in the sense of "as often as thou goest down to Gilgal." For this view cannot be grammatically sustained, although it is founded upon the correct idea, that Samuel's instructions cannot have been intended as a solitary and arbitrary command, by which Saul was to be kept in a condition of dependence. According to our explanation, however, this is not the case; but there was an inward necessity for them, so far as the government of Saul was concerned. Placed as he was by Jehovah as king over His people, for the purpose of rescuing them out of the power of those who were at that time its most dangerous foes, Saul was not at liberty to enter upon the war against these foes simply by his own will, but was directed to wait till Samuel, the accredited prophet of Jehovah, had completed the consecration through the offering of a solemn sacrifice, and had communicated to him the requisite instructions from God, even though he should have to wait for seven days.[20]

1 Samuel 10:9–16. When Saul went away from Samuel, to return to Gibeah, *"God changed to him another heart,"*—a pregnant expression for "God changed him, and gave him another heart" (see at v. 6); and all these signs (the signs mentioned by Samuel) happened on that very day. As he left Samuel early in the morning, Saul could easily reach Gibeah in one day, even if the town where he had met with Samuel was situated to the south-west of Rachel's tomb, as the distance from that tomb to Gibeah was not more than three and a half or four hours.

1 Samuel 10:10. The third sign is the only one which is minutely described, because this caused a great sensation at Gibeah, Saul's home. *"And they* (Saul and his attendant) *came thither to Gibeah." "Thither"* points back to "thither to the city" in v. 5, and is defined by the further expression "to Gibeah" (Eng. version, "to the hill:" Tr.). The rendering ἔκειθεν (LXX) does not warrant us in changing שָׁם into מִשָּׁם; for the latter would be quite superfluous, as it was self-evident that they came to Gibeah from the place where they had been in the company of Samuel.

1 Samuel 10:11. When those who had known Saul of old saw that he prophesied with the prophets, the people said one to another, *"What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"* This expression presupposes that Saul's previous life was altogether different from that of the disciples of the prophets.

1 Samuel 10:12. And one from thence (i.e., from Gibeah, or from the crowd that was gathered round the prophets) answered, *"And who is their father?"* i.e., not "who is their president?" which would be a very gratuitous question; but, "is *their* father a prophet then?" i.e., according to the explanation given by Oehler (Herzog's *Real. Enc.* xii. p. 216), "have they the prophetic spirit by virtue of their birth?" Understood in this way, the retort forms a very appropriate "answer" to the expression of surprise and the inquiry, how it came to pass that Saul was among the prophets. If those prophets had not obtained the gift of prophecy by inheritance, but as a free gift of the Lord, it was equally possible for the Lord to communicate the same gift to Saul. On the other hand, the alteration of the text from אֲבִיהֶם (their father) into אָבִיהוּ (his father), according to the LXX, Vulg., Syr., and Arab., which is favoured by Ewald, Thenius, and others, must be rejected, for the simple reason that the question, Who is his father? in the mouth of one of the inhabitants of Gibeah, to whom Saul's father was so well known that they called Saul the son of Kish at once, would have no sense whatever. From this the proverb arose, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"—a proverb which was used to express astonishment at the appearance of any man in a sphere of life which had hitherto been altogether strange to him.

1 Samuel 10:13ff. When Saul had left off prophesying, and came to Bamah, his uncle asked him and his attendant where they had

been; and Saul told him, that as they had not found the asses anywhere, they had gone to Samuel, and had learned from him that the asses were found. But he did not relate the words which had been spoken by Samuel concerning the monarchy, from unambitious humility (cf. vv. 22, 23) and not because he was afraid of unbelief and envy, as Thenius follows Josephus in supposing. From the expression "he came to Bamah" (Eng. ver. "to the high place"), we must conclude, that not only Saul's uncle, but his father also, lived in Bamah, as we find Saul immediately afterwards in his own family circle (see vv. 14ff.).

Saul Elected King. His Election Confirmed.—Ch. 10:17–11:15.

1 Samuel 10:17–27. Saul's Election by Lot.—After Samuel had secretly anointed Saul king by the command of God, it was his duty to make provision for a recognition of the man whom God had chosen on the part of the people also. To this end he summoned the people to Mizpeh, and there instructed the tribes to choose a king by lot. As the result of the lot was regarded as a divine decision, not only was Saul to be accredited by this act in the sight of the whole nation as the king appointed by the Lord, but he himself was also to be more fully assured of the certainty of his own election on the part of God.—[21]

1 Samuel 10:17. הָעָם is the nation in its heads and representatives. *Samuel* selected *Mizpeh* for this purpose, because it was there that he had once before obtained for the people, by prayer, a great victory over the Philistines (1 Samuel 7:5ff.).

1 Samuel 10:18, 19. "But before proceeding to the election itself, Samuel once more charged the people with their sin in rejecting God, who had brought them out of Egypt, and delivered them out of the hand of all their oppressors, by their demand for a king, that he might show them how dangerous was the way which they were taking now, and how bitterly they would perhaps repent of what they had now desired" (O. v. Gerlach; see the commentary on 1 Samuel 8). The masculine הַלֹּחֲצִים is construed *ad sensum* with הַמַּמְלָכוֹת. In וַתֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ the early translators have taken לוֹ for לֹא, which is the actual reading in some of the Codices. But although this reading is decidedly favoured by the parallel passages, 1 Samuel 8:19; 12:12, it is not necessary; since כִּי is used to introduce a direct statement, even in a declaration of the opposite, in the sense of our *"no but"* (e.g., in Ruth 1:10, where לָהּ precedes). There is, therefore, no reason for exchanging לוֹ for לֹא.

1 Samuel 10:20, 21. After this warning, Samuel directed the assembled Israelites to come before Jehovah (i.e., before the altar of Jehovah which stood at Mizpeh, according to 1 Samuel 7:9) according to their tribes and families (*alaphim:* see at Num. 1:16); *"and there was taken* (by lot) *the tribe of Benjamin."* הִלָּכֵד, *lit.* to be snatched out by Jehovah, namely, through the lot (see Josh. 7:14, 16). He then directed the tribe of Benjamin to draw near according to its families, i.e., he directed the heads of the families of this tribe to come before the altar of the Lord and draw lots; and *the family of Matri was taken.* Lastly, when the heads of the households in this family came, and after that the different individuals in the household which had been taken, the lot fell upon *Saul the son of Kish.* In the words, *"Saul the son of Kish was taken,"* the historian proceeds at once to the final result of the casting of the lots, without describing the intermediate steps any further.[22] When the lot fell upon Saul, they sought him, and he could not be found.

1 Samuel 10:22. Then they inquired of Jehovah, *"Is any one else come hither?"* and Jehovah replied, *"Behold, he* (whom ye are seeking) *is hidden among the things."* The inquiry was made through the high priest, by means of the Urim and Thummim, for which שְׁאַל בַּיהוָה was the technical expression, according to Num. 27:21 (see Judg. 20:27, 28; 1:1, etc.). There can be no doubt, that in a gathering of the people for so important a purpose as the election of a king, the high priest

would also be present, even though this is not expressly stated. Samuel presided over the meeting as the prophet of the Lord. The answer given by God, *"Behold, he is hidden,"* etc., appears to have no relation to the question, *"Is any one else come?"* The Sept. and Vulg. have therefore altered the question into ει᾽ ἔτι ἔρχεται ὁ ἀνήρ, *utrumnam venturus esset;* and Thenius would adopt this as an emendation. But he is wrong in doing so; for there was no necessity to ask whether Saul would still come: they might at once have sent to fetch him. What they asked was rather, whether any one else had come besides those who were present, as Saul was not to be found among them, that they might know where they were to look for Saul, whether at home or anywhere else. And to this question God gave the answer, "He is present, only hidden among the things." By כֵּלִים (the *things* or *vessels,* Eng. ver. the stuff) we are to understand the *travelling baggage* of the people who had assembled at Mizpeh. Saul could neither have wished to avoid accepting the monarchy, nor have imagined that the lot would not fall upon him if he hid himself. For he knew that God had chosen him; and Samuel had anointed him already. He did it therefore simply from humility and modesty. "In order that he might not appear to have either the hope or desire for anything of the kind, he preferred to be absent when the lots were cast" (Seb. Schmidt).

1 Samuel 10:23, 24. He was speedily fetched, and brought into the midst of the (assembled) people; and when he came, he was a head taller than all the people (see 1 Samuel 9:2). And Samuel said to all the people, *"Behold ye whom the Lord hath chosen! for there is none like him in all the nation."* Then all the people shouted aloud, and cried, *"Let the king live!"* Saul's bodily stature won the favour of the people (see the remarks on 1 Samuel 9:2).

Samuel then communicated to the people the right of the monarchy, and laid it down before Jehovah. *"The right of the monarchy"* (*meluchah*) is not to be identified with the right of the king (*melech*), which is described in 1 Samuel 8:11 and sets forth the right or prerogative which a despotic king would assume over the people; but it is the right which regulated the attitude of the earthly monarchy in the theocracy, and determined the duties and rights of the human king in relation to Jehovah the divine King on the one hand, and to the nation on the other. This right could only be laid down by a prophet like Samuel, to raise a wholesome barrier at the very outset against all excesses on the part of the king. Samuel therefore wrote it in a document which was laid down before Jehovah, i.e., in the sanctuary of Jehovah; though certainly not in the sanctuary at Bamah in Gibeah, as Thenius supposes, for nothing is known respecting any such sanctuary. It was no doubt placed in the tabernacle, where the law of Moses was also deposited, by the side of the fundamental law of the divine state in Israel. When the business was all completed, Samuel sent the people away to their own home.

1 Samuel 10:26. Saul also returned to his house at Gibeah, and there went with him the crowd of the men whose hearts God had touched, sc., to give him a royal escort, and show their readiness to serve him. הַחַיִל is not to be altered into בְּנֵי הַחַיִל, according to the free rendering of the LXX, but is used as in Ex. 14:28; with this difference, however, that here it does not signify a large military force, but a crowd of brave men, who formed Saul's escort of honour.

1 Samuel 10:27. But as it generally happens that, where a person is suddenly lifted up to exalted honours or office, there are sure to be envious people found, so was it here: there were בְּנֵי בְלִיַּעַל, *worthless people,* even among the assembled Israelites, who spoke disparagingly of Saul, saying, *"How will this man help us?"* and who brought him no present. *Minchah:* the present which from time immemorial every one has been expected to bring when entering the presence of the king; so that the refusal to bring a present was almost equivalent to rebellion. But Saul was *"as being deaf,"* i.e., he acted as if

he had not heard. The objection which Thenius brings against this view, viz., that in that case it would read וְהוּא הָיָה כְּמֵ֫, exhibits a want of acquaintance with the Hebrew construction of a sentence. There is no more reason for touching וַיְהִי than וַיֵּלְכוּ in v. 26. In both cases the apodosis is attached to the protasis, which precedes it in the form of a circumstantial clause, by the *imperfect,* with *vav consec.* According to the genius of our language, these protases would be expressed by the conjunction *when,* viz.: *"when Saul also went home, … there went with him,"* etc.; and *"when loose* (or idle) *people said, etc., he was as deaf."*

1 Samuel 11

1 Samuel 11:1. Saul's Victory over the Ammonites.—Even after the election by lot at Mizpeh, Saul did not seize upon the reins of government at once, but returned to his father's house in Gibeah, and to his former agricultural occupation; not, however, merely from personal humility and want of ambition, but rather from a correct estimate of the circumstances. The monarchy was something so new in Israel, that the king could not expect a general and voluntary recognition of his regal dignity and authority, especially after the conduct of the worthless people mentioned in 1 Samuel 10:27, until he had answered their expectations from a king (1 Samuel 8:6, 20), and proved himself a deliverer of Israel from its foes by a victorious campaign. But as Jehovah had chosen him ruler over his people without any seeking on his part, he would wait for higher instructions to act, before he entered upon the government. The opportunity was soon given him.

1 Samuel 11:1–5. Nahash, the king of the Ammonites (cf. 1 Samuel 12:12; 2 Samuel 10:2), attacked the tribes on the east of the Jordan, no doubt with the intention of enforcing the claim to part of Gilead asserted by his ancestor in the time of Jephthah (Judg. 11:13), and besieged *Jabesh* in Gilead,[23]—according to Josephus the metropolis of Gilead, and probably situated by the Wady Jabes (see at Judg. 21:8); from which we may see that he must have penetrated very far into the territory of the Israelites. The inhabitants of Jabesh petitioned the Ammonites in their distress, *"Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee;"* i.e., grant us favourable terms, and we will submit.

1 Samuel 11:2. But Nahash replied, *"On this condition* (בְּזֹאת, *lit.* at this price, ב *pretii*) *will I make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and so bring a reproach upon all Israel."* From the fact that the infinitive נָקוֹר is continued with וְשַׂמְתִּי, it is evident that the subject to נָקוֹר is Nahash, and not the Israelites, as the Syriac, Arabic, and others have rendered it. The suffix to שַׂמְתִּיהָ is neuter, and refers to the previous clause: *"it,"* i.e., the putting out of the right eye. This answer on the part of Nahash shows unmistakeably that he sought to avenge upon the people of Israel the shame of the defeat which Jephthah had inflicted upon the Ammonites.

1 Samuel 11:3. The elders of Jabesh replied: *"Leave us seven days, that we may send messengers into all the territory of Israel; and if there is no one who saves us, we will come out to thee,"* i.e., will surrender to thee. This request was granted by Nahash, because he was not in a condition to take the town at once by storm, and also probably because, in the state of internal dissolution into which Israel had fallen at that time, he had no expectation that any vigorous help would come to the inhabitants of Jabesh. From the fact that the messengers were to be sent into all the territory of Israel, we may conclude that the Israelites had no central government at that time, and that neither Nahash nor the Jabeshites had heard anything of the election that had taken place; and this is still more apparent from the fact that, according to v. 4, their messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, and laid their business before the people generally, without applying at once to Saul.

1 Samuel 11:5. Saul indeed did not hear of the matter will he came (returned home) from the field behind the oxen, and found the people weeping and lamenting at these mournful

tidings. *"Behind the oxen,"* i.e., judging from the expression "yoke of oxen" in v. 7, the pair of oxen with which he had been ploughing.

1 Samuel 11:6–11. When the report of the messengers had been communicated to him, *"the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and his anger was kindled greatly,"* sc., at the shame which the Ammonites had resolved to bring upon all Israel.

1 Samuel 11:7. He took a yoke of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent (the pieces) into every possession of Israel by messengers, and said, *"Whoever cometh not forth after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen."* The introduction of Samuel's name after that of Saul, is a proof that Saul even as king still recognised the authority which Samuel possessed in Israel as the prophet of Jehovah. This symbolical act, like the cutting up of the woman in Judg. 19:29, made a deep impression. *"The fear of Jehovah fell upon the people, so that they went out as one man."* By "the fear of Jehovah" we are not to understand δεῖμα πανικόν (Thenius and Böttcher), for *Jehovah* is not equivalent to *Elohim,* nor the fear of Jehovah in the sense of fear of His punishment, but a fear inspired by Jehovah. In Saul's energetic appeal the people discerned the power of Jehovah, which inspired them with fear, and impelled them to immediate obedience.

1 Samuel 11:8. Saul held a muster of the people of war, who had gathered together at (or near) *Bezek,* a place which was situated, according to the *Onom.* (*s. v. Bezek*), about seven hours to the north of Nabulus towards Beisan (see at Judg. 1:4). The number assembled were 300,000 men of Israel, and 30,000 of Judah. These numbers will not appear too large, if we bear in mind that the allusion is not to a regular army, but that Saul had summoned all the people to a general levy. In the distinction drawn between the children of Judah and the children of Israel we may already discern a trace of that separation of Judah from the rest of the tribes, which eventually led to a formal secession on the part of the latter.

1 Samuel 11:9. The messengers from Jabesh, who had been waiting to see the result of Saul's appeal, were now despatched with this message to their fellow-citizens: *"To-morrow you will have help, when the sun shines hot,"* i.e., about noon.

1 Samuel 11:10. After receiving these joyful news, the Jabeshites announced to the Ammonites: *"To-morrow we will come out to you, and ye may do to us what seemeth good to you,"*—an untruth by which they hoped to assure the besiegers, so that they might be fallen upon unexpectedly by the advancing army of Saul, and thoroughly beaten.

1 Samuel 11:11. The next day Saul arranged the people in three divisions (רָאשִׁים, as in Judg. 7:16), who forced their way into the camp of the foe from three different sides, in the morning watch (between three and six o'clock in the morning), smote the Ammonites *"till the heat of the day,"* and routed them so completely, that those who remained were all scattered, and there were not two men left together.

1 Samuel 11:12–15. Renewal of the Monarchy.—Saul had so thoroughly acted the part of a king in gaining this victory, and the people were so enthusiastic in his favour, that they said to Samuel, viz., after their return from the battle, *"Who is he that said, Saul should reign over us!"* The clause שָׁאוּל יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ contains a question, though it is indicated simply by the tone, and there is no necessity to alter שָׁאוּל into הַשָּׁאוּל. These words refer to the exclamation of the worthless people in 1 Samuel 10:27. *"Bring the men* (who spoke in this manner), *that we may put them to death."* But Saul said, *"There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day Jehovah hath wrought salvation in Israel;"* and proved thereby not only his magnanimity, but also his genuine piety.[24]

1 Samuel 11:14. Samuel turned this victory to account, by calling upon the people to go with him to Gilgal, and there renew the monarchy. In what the renewal consisted is not clearly stated; but it is simply recorded in v. 15 that *"they* (the whole people) *made Saul king there*

before the Lord in Gilgal." Many commentators have supposed that he was anointed afresh, and appeal to David's second anointing (2 Samuel 2:4 and 5:3). But David's example merely proves as Seb. Schmidt has correctly observed, that the anointing could be repeated under certain circumstances; but it does not prove that it was repeated, or must have been repeated, in the case of Saul. If the ceremony of anointing had been performed, it would no doubt have been mentioned, just as it is in 2 Samuel 2:4 and 5:3. But יַמְלִכוּ does not mean "they anointed," although the LXX have rendered it ἔχρισε Σαμουήλ, according to their own subjective interpretation. The renewal of the monarchy may very well have consisted in nothing more than a solemn confirmation of the election that had taken place at Mizpeh, in which Samuel once more laid before both king and people the right of the monarchy, receiving from both parties in the presence of the Lord the promise to observe this right, and sealing the vow by a solemn sacrifice. The only sacrifices mentioned are *zebachim shelamim,* i.e., peace- offerings. These were thank-offerings, which were always connected with a sacrificial meal, and when presented on joyous occasions, formed a feast of rejoicing for those who took part, since the sacrificial meal shadowed forth a living and peaceful fellowship with the Lord. *Gilgal* is in all probability the place where Samuel judged the people every year (1 Samuel 7:16). But whether it was the Gilgal in the plain of the Jordan, or Jiljilia on higher ground to the south-west of Shiloh, it is by no means easy to determine. The latter is favoured, apart from the fact that Samuel did not say "Let us go down," but simply "Let us go" (cf. 1 Samuel 10:8), by the circumstance that the solemn ceremony took place after the return from the war at Jabesh; since it is hardly likely that the people would have gone down into the valley of the Jordan to Gilgal, whereas Jiljilia was close by the road from Jabesh to Gibeah and Ramah.

1 Samuel 12

Samuel's Address at the Renewal of the Monarchy.—Ch. 12.

1 Samuel 12. Samuel closed this solemn confirmation of Saul as king with an address to all Israel, in which he handed over the office of judge, which he had hitherto filled, to the king, who had been appointed by God and joyfully recognised by the people. The good, however, which Israel expected from the king depended entirely upon both the people and their king maintaining that proper attitude towards the Lord with which the prosperity of Israel was ever connected. This truth the prophet felt impelled to impress most earnestly upon the hearts of all the people on this occasion. To this end he reminded them, that neither he himself, in the administration of his office, nor the Lord in His guidance of Israel thus far, had given the people any reason for asking a king when the Ammonites invaded the land (vv. 1–12). Nevertheless the Lord had given them a king, and would not withdraw His hand from them, if they would only fear Him and confess their sin (vv. 13–15). This address was then confirmed by the Lord at Samuel's desire, through a miraculous sign (vv. 16–18); whereupon Samuel gave to the people, who were terrified by the miracle and acknowledged their sin, the comforting promise that the Lord would not forsake His people for His great name's sake, and then closed his address with the assurance of his continued intercession, and a renewed appeal to them to serve the Lord with faithfulness (vv. 19–25). With this address Samuel laid down his office as judge, but without therefore ceasing as prophet to represent the people before God, and to maintain the rights of God in relation to the king. In this capacity he continued to support the king with his advice, until he was compelled to announce his rejection on account of his repeated rebellion against the commands of the Lord, and to anoint David as his successor.

1 Samuel 12:1–6. The time and place of the following address are not given. But it is

evident from the connection with the preceding chapter implied in the expression וַיֹּאמֶר, and still more from the introduction (vv. 1, 2) and the entire contents of the address, that it was delivered on the renewal of the monarchy at Gilgal.

1 Samuel 12:1, 2. Samuel starts with the fact, that he had given the people a king in accordance with their own desire, who would now walk before them. הִנֵּה with the participle expresses what is happening, and will happen still. הִתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי must not be restricted to going at the head in war, but signifies the general direction and government of the nation, which had been in the hands of Samuel as judge before the election of Saul as king. *"And I have grown old and grey* (שַׂבְתִּי from שִׂיב); *and my sons, behold, they are with you."* With this allusion to his sons, Samuel simply intended to confirm what he had said about his own age. By the further remark, *"and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day,"* he prepares the way for the following appeal to the people to bear witness concerning his conduct in office.

1 Samuel 12:3. *"Bear witness against me before the Lord,"* i.e., looking up to the Lord, the omnipotent and righteous God-king, *"and before His anointed,"* the visible administrator of His divine government, whether I have committed any injustice in my office of judge, by appropriating another's property, or by oppression and violence (רָצַץ, to pound or crush in pieces, when used to denote an act of violence, is stronger than אָשַׁק, with which it is connected here and in many other passages, e.g., Deut. 28:33; Amos 4:1), or by taking atonement money (כֹּפֶר, redemption or atonement money, is used, as in Ex. 21:30 and Num. 35:31, to denote a payment made by a man to redeem himself from capital punishment), *"so that I had covered my eyes with it,"* viz., to exempt from punishment a man who was worthy of death. The בּוֹ, which is construed with הֶעֱלִים, is the ב *instrumenti,* and refers to כֹּפֶר; consequently it is not to be confounded with מִן, "to hide from," which would be quite unsuitable here. The thought is not that the judge covers his eyes from the *copher,* that he may not see the bribe, but that he covers his eyes with the money offered him as a bribe, so as not to see and not to punish the crime committed.

1 Samuel 12:4. The people answered Samuel, that he had not done them any kind of injustice.

1 Samuel 12:5. To confirm this declaration on the part of the people, he then called Jehovah and His anointed as witnesses against the people, and they accepted these witnesses. כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל is the subject to וַיֹּאמֶר; and the *Keri* וַיֹּאמְרוּ, though more simple, is by no means necessary. Samuel said, *"Jehovah be witness against you,"* because with the declaration which the people had made concerning Samuel's judicial labours they had condemned themselves, inasmuch as they had thereby acknowledged on oath that there was no ground for their dissatisfaction with Samuel's administration, and consequently no well-founded reason for their request for a king.

1 Samuel 12:6. But in order to bring the people to a still more thorough acknowledgment of their sin, Samuel strengthened still more their assent to his solemn appeal to God, as expressed in the words *"He is witness,"* by saying, *"Jehovah* (i.e., yea, the witness is Jehovah), *who made Moses and Aaron, and brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt."* The context itself is sufficient to show that the expression "is witness" is understood; and there is no reason, therefore, to assume that the word has dropped out of the text through a copyist's error. עָשָׂה, to make, in a moral and historical sense, i.e., to make a person what he is to be; it has no connection, therefore, with his physical birth, but simply relates to his introduction upon the stage of history, like ποιεῖν, Heb. 3:2. But if Jehovah, who redeemed Israel out of Egypt by the hands of Moses and

Aaron, and exalted it into His own nation, was witness of the unselfishness and impartiality of Samuel's conduct in his office of judge, then Israel had grievously sinned by demanding a king. In the person of Samuel they had rejected Jehovah their God, who had given them their rulers (see 1 Samuel 8:7). Samuel proves this still further to the people from the following history.

1 Samuel 12:7–12. *"And now come hither, and I will reason with you before the Lord with regard to all the righteous acts which He has shown to you and your fathers."* צְדָקוֹת, righteous acts, is the expression used to denote the benefits which Jehovah had conferred upon His people, as being the results of His covenant fidelity, or as acts which attested the righteousness of the Lord in the fulfilment of the covenant grace which He had promised to His people.

1 Samuel 12:8. The first proof of this was furnished by the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their safe guidance into Canaan (*"this place"* is the land of Canaan). The second was to be found in the deliverance of the people out of the power of their foes, to whom the Lord had been obliged to give them up on account of their apostasy from Him, through the judges whom He had raised up for them, as often as they turned to Him with penitence and cried to Him for help. Of the hostile oppressions which overtook the Israelites during this period of the judges, the following are singled out in v. 9: (1) that by Sisera, the commander-in-chief of Hazor, i.e., that of the Canaanitish king Jabin of Hazor (Judg. 4:2ff.); (2) that of the Philistines, by which we are to understand not so much the hostilities of that nation described in Judg. 3:31, as the forty years' oppression mentioned in Judg. 10:2 and 13:1; and (3) the Moabitish oppression under Eglon (Judg. 3:12ff.). The first half of v. 10 agrees almost word for word with Judg. 10:10, except that, according to Judg. 10:6, the Ashtaroth are added to the Baalim (see at 1 Samuel 7:4 and Judg. 2:13). Of the judges whom God sent to the people as deliverers, the following are named, viz., Jerubbaal (see at Judg. 6:32), i.e., Gideon (Judg. 6), and Bedan, and Jephthah (see Judg. 11), and Samuel. There is no judge named *Bedan* mentioned either in the book of Judges or anywhere else. The name *Bedan* only occurs again in 1 Chron. 7:17, among the descendants of Machir the Manassite: consequently some of the commentators suppose *Jair* of Gilead to be the judge intended. But such a supposition is perfectly arbitrary, as it is not rendered probable by any identity in the two names, and Jair is not described as having delivered Israel from any hostile oppression. Moreover, it is extremely improbable that Samuel should have mentioned a judge here, who had been passed over in the book of Judges on account of his comparative insignificance. There is also just as little ground for rendering *Bedan* as an appellative, e.g., the Danite (*ben-Dan*), as Kimchi suggests, or *corpulentus* as Böttcher maintains, and so connecting the name with Samson. There is no other course left, therefore, than to regard *Bedan* as an old copyist's error for *Barak* (Judg. 4), as the LXX, Syriac, and Arabic have done,—a conclusion which is favoured by the circumstance that Barak was one of the most celebrated of the judges, and is placed by the side of Gideon and Jephthah in Heb. 11:32. The Syriac, Arabic, and one Greek MS (see Kennicott in the *Addenda* to his *Dissert. Gener.*), have the name of *Samson* instead of *Samuel.* But as the LXX, Chald., and Vulg. all agree with the Hebrew text, there is no critical ground for rejecting Samuel, the more especially as the objection raised to it, viz., that Samuel would not have mentioned himself, is far too trivial to overthrow the reading supported by the most ancient versions; and the assertion made by Thenius, that Samuel does not come down to his own times until the following verse, is altogether unfounded. Samuel could very well class himself with the deliverers of Israel, for the simple reason that it was by him that the people were delivered from the forty years' tyranny of the Philistines, whilst Samson merely commenced their deliverance and did not bring it to completion. Samuel appears to have deliberately mentioned his

own name along with those of the other judges who were sent by God, that he might show the people in the most striking manner (v. 12) that they had no reason whatever for saying to him, *"Nay, but a king shall reign over us,"* as soon as the Ammonites invaded Gilead. *"As Jehovah your God is your king,"* i.e., has ever proved himself to be your King by sending judges to deliver you.

1 Samuel 12:13–18a. After the prophet had thus held up before the people their sin against the Lord, he bade them still further consider, that the king would only procure for them the anticipated deliverance if they would fear the Lord, and give up their rebellion against God.

1 Samuel 12:13. *"But now behold the king whom ye have chosen, whom ye have asked for! behold, Jehovah hath set a king over you."* By the second וְהִנֵּה, the thought is brought out still more strongly, that Jehovah had fulfilled the desire of the people. Although the request of the people had been an act of hostility to God, yet Jehovah had fulfilled it. The word בְּחַרְתֶּם, relating to the choice by lot (1 Samuel 10:17ff.), is placed before אֲשֶׁר שְׁאֶלְתֶּם, to show that the demand was the strongest act that the people could perform. They had not only chosen the king with the consent or by the direction of Samuel; they had even demanded a king of their own self-will.

1 Samuel 12:14. Still, since the Lord had given them a king, the further welfare of the nation would depend upon whether they would follow the Lord from that time forward, or whether they would rebel against Him again. *"If ye will only fear the Lord, and serve Him, … and ye as well as the king who rules over you will be after Jehovah your God."* אִם, in the sense of *modo,* if only, does not require any apodosis, as it is virtually equivalent to the wish, *"O that ye would only!"* for which אִם with the imperfect is commonly used (vid., 2 Kings 20:19; Prov. 24:11, etc.; and Ewald, § 329, *b.*). There is also nothing to be supplied to וְהְיִתֶם … אַחַר יְהוָֹה, since הָיָה אַחַר, to be after or behind a person, is good Hebrew, and is frequently met with, particularly in the sense of attaching one's self to the king, or holding to him (vid., 2 Samuel 2:10; 1 Kings 12:20; 16:21, 22). This meaning is also at the foundation of the present passage, as Jehovah was the God-king of Israel.

1 Samuel 12:15. *"But if ye do not hearken to the voice of Jehovah, and strive against His commandment, the hand of Jehovah will be heavy upon you, as upon your fathers."* וְ in the sense of *as,* i.e., used in a comparative sense, is most frequently placed before whole sentences (see Ewald, § 340, *b.*); and the use of it here may be explained, on the ground that בַּאֲבֹתֵיכֶם contains the force of an entire sentence: *"as it was upon your fathers."* The allusion to the fathers is very suitable here, because the people were looking to the king for the removal of all the calamities, which had fallen upon them from time immemorial. The paraphrase of this word, which is adopted in the Septuagint, ἐπὶ τὸν βασιλέα ὑμῶν, is a very unhappy conjecture, although Thenius proposes to alter the text to suit it.

1 Samuel 12:16. In order to give still greater emphasis to his words, and to secure their lasting, salutary effect upon the people, Samuel added still further: Even now ye may see that ye have acted very wickedly in the sight of Jehovah, in demanding a king. This chain of thought is very clearly indicated by the words גַּם־עַתָּה, *"yea, even now." "Even now come hither, and see this great thing which Jehovah does before your eyes."* The words גַּם־עַתָּה, which are placed first, belong, so far as the sense is concerned, to רְאוּ אֶת־הַדָּ֫בָר; and הִתְיַצְּבוּ (*"place yourselves,"* i.e., make yourselves ready) is merely inserted between, to fix the attention of the people more closely upon the following miracle, as an event of great importance, and one which they ought to lay to heart. *"Is it not now wheat harvest? I will call to Jehovah, that He may give thunder* (קֹלוֹת, as in Ex. 9:23, etc.) *and rain. Then perceive and see, that the evil is great which ye have done in the eyes of Jehovah, to*

demand a king." The wheat harvest occurs in Palestine between the middle of May and the middle of June (see by *Bibl. Arch.* i. § 118). And during this time it scarcely ever rains. Thus Jerome affirms (*ad Am.* c. 4): *"Nunquam in fine mensis Junii aut in Julio in his provinciis maximeque in Judaea pluvias vidimus."* And Robinson also says in his *Palestine* (ii. p. 98): "In ordinary seasons, from the cessation of the showers in spring until their commencement in October and November, rain never falls, and the sky is usually serene" (see my *Arch.* i. § 10). So that when God sent thunder and rain on that day in answer to Samuel's appeal to him, this was a miracle of divine omnipotence, intended to show to the people that the judgments of God might fall upon the sinners at any time. Thunderings, as "the voice of God" (Ex. 9:28), are harbingers of judgment.

1 Samuel 12:18–25. This miracle therefore inspired the people with a salutary terror. *"All the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel,"* and entreated the prophet, *"Pray for thy servants to the Lord thy God, that we die not, because we have added to all our sins the evil thing, to ask us a king."*

1 Samuel 12:20, 21. Samuel thereupon announced to them first of all, that the Lord would not forsake His people for His great name's sake, if they would only serve Him with uprightness. In order, however, to give no encouragement to any false trust in the covenant faithfulness of the Lord, after the comforting words, *"Fear not,"* he told them again very decidedly that they had done wrong, but that now they were not to turn away from the Lord, but to serve Him with all their heart, and not go after vain idols. To strengthen this admonition, he repeats the לֹא תָסוּרוּ in v. 21, with the explanation, that in turning from the Lord they would fall away to idols, which could not bring them either help or deliverance. To the כִּי after תָסוּרוּ the same verb must be supplied from the context: *"Do not turn aside* (from the Lord), *for* (ye turn aside) *after that which is vain."* הַתֹּהוּ, the vain, worthless thing, signifies the *false gods.* This will explain the construction with a plural: *"which do not profit and do not save, because they are emptiness"* (*tohu*), i.e., worthless beings (*elilim,* Lev. 19:4; cf. Isa. 44:9 and Jer. 16:19).

1 Samuel 12:22. *"For* (כִּי gives the reason for the main thought of the previous verse, 'Fear not, but serve the Lord,' etc.) *the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake; for it hath pleased the Lord* (for הוֹאִיל, see at Deut. 1:5) *to make you His people."* The emphasis lies upon *His.* This the Israelites could only be, when they proved themselves to be the people of God, by serving Jehovah with all their heart. *"For His great name's sake,"* i.e., for the great name which He had acquired in the sight of all the nations, by the marvellous guidance of Israel thus far, to preserve it against misapprehension and blasphemy (see at Josh. 7:9).

1 Samuel 12:23. Samuel then promised the people his constant intercession: *"Far be it from me to sin against the Lord, that I should cease to pray for you, and to instruct you in the good and right way,"* i.e., to work as prophet for your good. "In this he sets a glorious example to all rulers, showing them that they should not be led astray by the ingratitude of their subordinates or subjects, and give up on that account all interest in their welfare, but should rather persevere all the more in their anxiety for them" (*Berleb. Bible*).

1 Samuel 12:24, 25. Lastly, he repeats once more his admonition, that they would continue stedfast in the fear of God, threatening at the same time the destruction of both king and people if they should do wrong (on v. 24*a*, see 1 Samuel 7:3 and Josh. 24:14, where the form יִרְאוּ is also found). *"For see what great things He has done for you"* (shown to you), not by causing it to thunder and rain at Samuel's prayer, but by giving them a king. הִגְדִּיל עִם, as in Gen. 19:19.

1 Samuel 13

Saul's Reign, and His Unseasonable Sacrifice in the War Against the Philistines.—Ch. 13.

1 Samuel 13. The history of the reign of Saul commences with this chapter;[25] and according to the standing custom in the history of the kings, it opens with a statement of the age of the king when he began to reign, and the number of years that his reign lasted. If, for example, we compare the form and contents of this verse with 2 Samuel 2:10; 5:4, 1 Kings 14:21; 22:42, 2 Kings 8:26, and other passages, where the age is given at which Ishbosheth, David, and many of the kings of Judah began to reign, and also the number of years that their reign lasted, there can be no doubt that our verse was also intended to give the same account concerning Saul, and therefore that every attempt to connect this verse with the one which follows is opposed to the uniform historical usage. Moreover, even if, as a matter of necessity, the second clause of v. 1 could be combined with v. 2 in the following manner: He was two years king over Israel, then Saul chose 3000 men, etc.; the first half of the verse would give no reasonable sense, according to the Masoretic text that has come down to us. בֶּן־שָׁנָה שָׁאוּל בְּמָלְכוֹ cannot possibly be rendered *"jam per annum regnaverat Saul,"* "Saul had been king for a year," or "Saul reigned one year," but can only mean *"Saul was a year old when he became king."* This is the way in which the words have been correctly rendered by the Sept. and Jerome; and so also in the Chaldee paraphrase ("Saul was an innocent child when he began to reign") this is the way in which the text has been understood.

It is true that this statement as to his age is obviously false; but all that follows from that is, that there is an error in the text, namely, that between בֶּן and שָׁנָה the age has fallen out,—a thing which could easily take place, as there are many traces to show that originally the numbers were not written in words, but only in letters that were used as numerals. This gap in the text is older than the Septuagint version, as our present text is given there. There is, it is true, an *anonymus* in the *hexapla,* in which we find the reading υἱὸς τριάκοντα ἐτῶν Σαούλ; but this is certainly not according to ancient MSS, but simply according to a private conjecture, and that an incorrect one. For since Saul already had a son, Jonathan, who commanded a division of the army in the very first years of his reign, and therefore must have been at least twenty years of age, if not older, Saul himself cannot have been less than forty years old when he began to reign. Moreover, in the second half of the verse also, the number given is evidently a wrong one, and the text therefore equally corrupt; for the rendering *"when he had reigned two years over Israel"* is opposed both by the parallel passages already quoted, and also by the introduction of the name Saul as the subject in v. 2*a,* which shows very clearly that v. 2 commences a fresh sentence, and is not merely the apodosis to v. 1*b.* But Saul's reign must have lasted longer than two years, even if, in opposition to all analogies to be found elsewhere, we should understand the two years as merely denoting the length of his reign up to the time of his rejection (1 Samuel 15), and not till the time of his death. Even then he reigned longer than that; for he could not possibly have carried on all the wars mentioned in 1 Samuel 14:47, with Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah and the Philistines, in the space of two years. Consequently a numeral, say ד, twenty, must also have dropped out before שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים (two years); since there are cogent reasons for assuming that his reign lasted as long as twenty or twenty-two years, reckoning to the time of his death. We have given the reasons themselves in connection with the chronology of the period of the judges (pp. 206f.).[26]

1 Samuel 13:2–7. *The war with the Philistines* (1 Samuel 13–14) certainly falls, at least so far as the commencement is concerned, in the very earliest part of Saul's reign. This we must infer partly from the fact, that at the very time when Saul was seeking for his father's asses, there was a military post of the Philistines at Gibeah

(1 Samuel 10:5), and therefore the Philistines had already occupied certain places in the land; and partly also from the fact, that according to this chapter Saul selected an army of 3000 men out of the whole nation, took up his post at Michmash with 2000 of them, placing the other thousand at Gibeah under his son Jonathan, and sent the rest of the people home (v. 2), because his first intention was simply to check the further advance of the Philistines. The dismission of the rest of the people to their own homes presupposes that the whole of the fighting men of the nation were assembled together. But as no other summoning together of the people has been mentioned before, except to the war upon the Ammonites at Jabesh (1 Samuel 11:6, 7), where all Israel gathered together, and at the close of which Samuel had called the people and their king to Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:14), the assumption is a very probable one, that it was there at Gilgal, after the renewal of the monarchy, that Saul formed the resolution at once to make war upon the Philistines, and selected 3000 fighting men for the purpose out of the whole number that were collected together, and then dismissed the remainder to their homes. In all probability Saul did not consider that either he or the Israelites were sufficiently prepared as yet to undertake a war upon the Philistines generally, and therefore resolved, in the first place, only to attack the outpost of the Philistines, which was advanced as far as Gibeah, with a small number of picked soldiers. According to this simple view of affairs, the war here described took place at the very commencement of Saul's reign; and the chapter before us is closely connected with the preceding one.

1 Samuel 13:2. Saul posted himself at Michmash and on the mount of Bethel with his two thousand men. *Michmash,* the present *Mukhmas,* a village in ruins upon the northern ridge of the Wady *Suweinit,* according to the *Onom.* (*s. v. Machmas*), was only nine Roman miles to the north of Jerusalem, whereas it took Robinson three hours and a half to go from one to the other (*Pal.* ii. p. 117). *Bethel* (*Beitin;* see at Josh. 7:2) is to the north-west of this, at a distance of two hours' journey, if you take the road past Deir-Diwan. The mountain (הָר) of Bethel cannot be precisely determined. Bethel itself was situated upon very high ground; and the ruins of Beitin are completely surrounded by heights (Rob. ii. p. 126; and v. Raumer, *Pal.* pp. 178–9). Jonathan stationed himself with his thousand men at (by) Gibeah of Benjamin, the native place and capital of Saul, which was situated upon *Tell el Phul* (see at Josh. 18:28), about an hour and a half form Michmas.

1 Samuel 13:3. *"And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba,"* probably the military post mentioned in 1 Samuel 10:5, which had been advanced in the meantime as far as Geba. For *Geba* is not to be confounded with *Gibeah,* from which it is clearly distinguished in v. 16 as compared with v. 15, but is the modern *Jeba,* between the Wady *Suweinit* and Wady *Fara,* to the north-west of Ramah *(er-Râm;* see at Josh. 18:24). *"The Philistines heard this. And Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the whole land, and proclamation made: let the Hebrews hear it."* לֵאמֹר after תָּקַע בַּשּׁוֹפָר points out the proclamation that was made after the alarm given by the *shophar* (see 2 Samuel 20:1; 1 Kings 1:34, 39, etc.). The object to "let them hear" may be easily supplied from the context, viz., Jonathan's feat of arms. Saul had this trumpeted in the whole land, not only as a joyful message for the Hebrews, but also as an indirect summons to the whole nation to rise and make war upon the Philistines. In the word שָׁמַע (hear), there is often involved the idea of observing, laying to heart that which is heard. If we understand יִשְׁמְעוּ in this sense here, and the next verse decidedly hints at it, there is no ground whatever for the objection which Thenius, who follows the LXX, has raised to יִשְׁמְעוּ הָעִבְרִים. He proposes this emendation, יִפְּשְׁעוּ הָעִבְרִים, "let the Hebrews fall away," according to the Alex. text ἠθετήκασιν οἱ δοῦλοι, without reflecting that the very expression οἱ δοῦλοι is sufficient to render the Alex. reading

suspicious, and that Saul could not have summoned the people in *all* the land to fall away from the Philistines, since they had not yet conquered and taken possession of the whole. Moreover, the correctness of יִשְׁמְעוּ is confirmed by וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁמְעוּ in v. 4. *"All Israel heard,"* not the call to fall away, but the news, *"Saul has smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and Israel has also made itself stinking with the Philistines,"* i.e., hated in consequence of the bold and successful attack made by Jonathan, which proved that the Israelites would no longer allow themselves to be oppressed by the Philistines. *"And the people let themselves be called together after Saul to Gilgal."* הִצָּעֵק, to permit to summon to war (as in Judg. 7:23, 24). The words are incorrectly rendered by the Vulgate, *"clamavit ergo populus post Saul,"* and by Luther, "Then the people cried after Saul to Gilgal." Saul drew back to Gilgal, when the Philistines advanced with a large army, to make preparations for the further conflict (see at v. 13).

1 Samuel 13:5. The Philistines also did not delay to avenge the defeat at Geba. They collected an innumerable army: 30,000 chariots, 6000 horsemen, and people, i.e., foot-soldiers, without number (as the sand by the sea-shore; cf. Judg. 7:12, Josh. 11:4, etc.). רֶכֶב by the side of פָּרָשִׁים can only mean war chariots. 30,000 war chariots, however, bear no proportion whatever to 6000 horsemen, not only because the number of war chariots is invariably smaller than that of the horsemen (cf. 2 Samuel 10:18; 1 Kings 10:26; 2 Chron. 12:3), but also, as Bochart observes in his *Hieroz.* p. i. lib. ii. c. 9, because such a number of war chariots is never met with either in sacred or profane history, not even in the case of nations that were much more powerful than the Philistines. The number is therefore certainly corrupt, and we must either read 3000 (שְׁלֹשֶׁת instead of אל׳ שְׁלֹשִׁים אל׳), according to the Syriac and Arabic, or else simply 1000; and in the latter case the origin of the number thirty must be attributed to the fact, that through the oversight of a copyist the ל of the word יִשְׂרָאֵל was written twice, and consequently the second ל was taken for the numeral thirty. This army was encamped *"at Michmash, before* (i.e., in the front, or on the western side of) *Bethaven:"* for, according to Josh. 7:2, Bethaven was to the east of Michmash; and קֶדְמַת when it occurs in geographical accounts, does not "always mean to the east," as Thenius erroneously maintains, but invariably means simply "in front" (see at Gen. 2:14).[27]

1 Samuel 13:6, 7. When the Israelites saw that they had come into a strait (צַר־לוֹ), for the people were oppressed (by the Philistines), they hid themselves in the caves, thorn-bushes, rocks (i.e., clefts of the rocks), fortresses (צְרִחִים: see at Judg. 9:46), and pits (which were to be found in the land); and Hebrews also went over the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead, whilst Saul was still at Gilgal; and all the people (the people of war who had been called together, v. 4) trembled behind him, i.e., were gathered together in his train, or assembled round him as leader, trembling or in despair. The *Gilgal* mentioned here cannot be Jiljilia, which is situated upon the high ground, as assumed in the *Comm. on Joshua,* pp. 68f., but must be the Gilgal in the valley of the Jordan. This is not only favoured by the expression יֵרְדוּ (the Philistines will come *down* from Michmash to Gilgal, v. 12), but also by וַיַּעַל (Samuel went *up* from Gilgal to Gibeah, v. 15), and by the general attitude of Saul and his army towards the Philistines. As the Philistines advanced with a powerful army, after Jonathan's victory over their garrison at Geba (to the south of Michmash), and encamped at Michmash (v. 5); and Saul, after withdrawing from Gilgal, where he had gathered the Israelites together (vv. 4, 8, 12), with Jonathan and the six hundred men who were with him when the muster took place, took up his position at Geba (vv. 15, 16), from which point Jonathan attacked the Philistine post in the pass of Michmash (v. 23,

and 1 Samuel 14:1ff.): Saul must have drawn back from the advancing army of the Philistines to the Gilgal in the Jordan valley, to make ready for the battle by collecting soldiers and presenting sacrifices, and then, after this had been done, must have advanced once more to Gibeah and Geba to commence the war with the army of the Philistines that was encamped at Michmash. If, on the other hand, he had gone northwards to Jiljilia from Michmash, where he was first stationed, to escape the advancing army of the Philistines; he would have had to attack the Philistines from the north when they were encamped at Michmash, and could not possibly have returned to Geba without coming into conflict with the Philistines, since Michmash was situated between Jiljilia and Geba.

1 Samuel 13:8–15. *Saul's untimely sacrifice.*— Vv. 8, 9. Saul waited seven days for Samuel's coming, according to the time appointed by Samuel (see at 1 Samuel 10:8), before proceeding to offer the sacrifices through which the help of the Lord was to be secured for the approaching campaign (see v. 12); and as Samuel did not come, the people began to disperse and leave him. The *Kethib* וייחל is either the *Niphal* וַיִּיָּחֵל, as in Gen. 8:12, or *Piel* וַיְיַחֵל; and the *Keri* וַיּוֹחֶל (*Hiphil*) is unnecessary. The verb יָעַד may easily be supplied to אֲשֶׁר שְׁמוּאֵל from the word לַמּוֹעֵד (see *Ges. Lehrgeb.* p. 851).

1 Samuel 13:9. Saul then resolved, in his anxiety lest the people should lose all hart and forsake him altogether if there were any further delay, that he would offer the sacrifice without Samuel. וַיַּעַל הָעוֹלָה does not imply that Saul offered the sacrifice with his own hand, i.e., that he performed the priestly function upon this occasion. The co-operation of the priests in performing the duties belonging to them on such an occasion is taken for granted, just as in the case of the sacrifices offered by David and Solomon (2 Samuel 24:25; 1 Kings 3:4; 8:63).

1 Samuel 13:10ff. The offering of the sacrifice was hardly finished when Samuel came and said to Saul, as he came to meet him and salute him, *"What hast thou done?"* Saul replied, *"When I saw that the people were scattered away from me, and thou camest not at the time appointed, and the Philistines were assembled at Michmash, I thought the Philistines will come down to me to Gilgal now* (to attack me), *before I have entreated the face of Jehovah; and I overcame myself, and offered the burnt-offering."* חִלָּה פְּנֵי יי׳: see Ex. 32:11.

1 Samuel 13:13. Samuel replied, *"Thou hast acted foolishly,* (and) *not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God, which He commanded thee: for now* (sc., if thou hadst obeyed His commandment) *Jehovah would have established thy sovereignty over Israel for ever; but now* (sc., since thou hast acted thus) *thy sovereignty shall not continue."* The antithesis of עַתָּה הֵכִין and וְעַתָּה לֹא תָקוּם requires that we should understand these two clauses conditionally. The conditional clauses are omitted, simply because they are at once suggested by the tenor of the address (see Ewald, § 358, *a.*). The כִּי (for) assigns the reason, and refers to נִסְכַּלְתָּ ("thou hast done foolishly"), the לֹא שָׁמַרְתָּ וגו׳ being merely added as explanatory. The non-continuance of the sovereignty is not to be regarded as a rejection, or as signifying that Saul had actually lost the throne so far as he himself was concerned; but לֹא תָקוּם (shall not continue) forms the antithesis to הֵכִין עַד־עוֹלָם (established for ever), and refers to the fact that it was not established in perpetuity by being transmitted to his descendants. It was not till his second transgression that Saul was rejected, or declared unworthy of being king over the people of God (1 Samuel 15). We are not compelled to assume an immediate rejection of Saul even by the further announcement made by Samuel, *"Jehovah hath sought him a man after his own heart; him hath Jehovah appointed prince over His people;"* for these words merely

announce the purpose of God, without defining the time of its actual realization. Whether it would take place during Saul's reign, or not till after his death, was known only to God, and was made contingent upon Saul's further behaviour. But if Saul's sin did not consist, as we have observed above, in his having interfered with the prerogatives of the priests by offering the sacrifice himself, but simply in the fact that he had transgressed the commandment of God as revealed to him by Samuel, to postpone the sacrifice until Samuel arrived, the punishment which the prophet announced that God would inflict upon him in consequence appears a very severe one, since Saul had not come to the resolution either frivolously or presumptuously, but had been impelled and almost forced to act as he did by the difficulties in which he was placed in consequence of the prophet delaying his coming. But wherever, as in the present instance, there is a definite command given by the Lord, a man has no right to allow himself to be induced to transgress it, by fixing his attention upon the earthly circumstances in which he is placed. As Samuel had instructed Saul, as a direct command from Jehovah, to wait for his arrival before offering sacrifice, Saul might have trusted in the Lord that he would send His prophet at the right time and cause His command to be fulfilled, and ought not to have allowed his confidence to be shaken by the pressing danger of delay. The interval of seven days and the delay in Samuel's arrival were intended as a test of his faith, which he ought not to have lightly disregarded. Moreover, the matter in hand was the commencement of the war against the principal enemies of Israel, and Samuel was to tell him what he was to do (1 Samuel 10:8). So that when Saul proceeded with the consecrating sacrifice for that very conflict, without the presence of Samuel, he showed clearly enough that he thought he could make war upon the enemies of his kingdom without the counsel and assistance of God. This was an act of rebellion against the sovereignty of Jehovah, for which the punishment announced was by no means too severe.

1 Samuel 13:15. After this occurrence Samuel went up to Gibeah, and Saul mustered the people who were with him, about six hundred men. Consequently Saul had not even accomplished the object of his unseasonable sacrifice, namely, to prevent the dispersion of the people. With this remark the account of the occurrence that decided the fate of Saul's monarchy is brought to a close.

1 Samuel 13:16–23. *Disarming of Israel by the Philistines.*—The following account is no doubt connected with the foregoing, so far as the facts are concerned, inasmuch as Jonathan's brave heroic deed, which brought the Israelites a splendid victory over the Philistines, terminated the war for which Saul had entreated the help of God by his sacrifice at Gilgal; but it is not formally connected with it, so as to form a compact and complete account of the successive stages of the war. On the contrary, the 16th verse, where we have an account of the Israelitish warriors and their enemies, commences a new section of the history, in which the devastating march of the Philistines through the land, and the disarming of the Israelites by these their enemies, are first of all depicted (vv. 17–23); and then the victory of the Israelites through Jonathan's daring and heroic courage, notwithstanding their utter prostration, is recorded (1 Samuel 14:1–46), for the purpose of showing how the Lord had miraculously helped His people.[28]

1 Samuel 13:16. The two clauses of this verse are circumstantial clauses: *"But Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were with him, were sitting,* i.e., tarrying, *in Geba of Benjamin* (the present Jeba; see at v. 3); *and the Philistines had encamped at Michmash."* Just as in vv. 2–4 it is not stated when or why Saul went from Michmash or Geba to Gilgal, but this change in his position is merely hinted at indirectly at the close of v. 4; so here Saul's return from Gilgal to Geba with the fighting men who remained with him is not distinctly mentioned, but simply taken for granted as having already occurred.

1 Samuel 13:17, 18. Then the spoiler went out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. שְׁלֹשָׁה רָאשִׁים is made subject to the verb to define the mode of action (see Ewald, § 279, *c.*); and *rashim* is used here, as in 1 Samuel 11:11. הַמַּשְׁחִית, according to the context, is a hostile band that went out to devastate the land. The definite article points it out as well known. One company took the road to *Ophrah* into the land of *Shual,* i.e., went in a north-easterly direction, as, according to the *Onom., Ophrah* of Benjamin was five Roman miles to the east of Bethel (see at Josh. 18:23). Robinson supposes it to have been on the site of *Tayibeh.* The land of Shual (fox-land) is unknown; it may possibly have been identical with the land of *Saalim* (1 Samuel 9:5). The other company turned on the road to Beth-horon (Beit-ur: see at Josh. 10:11), that is to say, towards the west; the third, "the way to the territory that rises above the valley of *Zeboim* towards the desert." These descriptions are obscure; and the valley of *Zeboim* altogether unknown. There is a town of this name (צְבֹעִים, different from צְבוֹיִים, Deut. 29:22, Gen. 14:2, 8; or צְבֹאִים, Hos. 11:8, in the vale of Siddim) mentioned in Neh. 11:34, which was inhabited by Benjaminites, and was apparently situated in the south-eastern portion of the land of Benjamin, to the north-east of Jerusalem, from which it follows that the third company pursued its devastating course in a south-easterly direction from Michmash towards Jericho. *"The wilderness"* is probably the desert of Judah. The intention of the Philistines in carrying out these devastating expeditions, was no doubt to entice the men who were gathered round Saul and Jonathan out of their secure positions at Gibeah and Geba, and force them to fight.

1 Samuel 13:19ff. The Israelites could not offer a successful resistance to these devastating raids, as there was no smith to be found in the whole land: *"For the Philistines thought the Hebrews might make themselves sword or spear"* (אָמַר followed by פֶּן, "to say, or think, that not," equivalent to being unwilling that it should be done). Consequently (as the words clearly imply) when they proceeded to occupy the land of Israel as described in v. 5, they disarmed the people throughout, i.e., as far as they penetrated, and carried off the smiths, who might have been able to forge weapons; so that, as is still further related in v. 20, all Israel was obliged to go to the Philistines, every one to sharpen his edge-tool, and his ploughshare, and his axe, and his chopper. According to Isa. 2:4, Micah 4:3, and Joel 4:10, אֵת is an iron instrument used in agriculture; the majority of the ancient versions render it *ploughshare.* The word מַחֲרֵשָׁתוֹ is striking after the previous מַחֲרַשְׁתּוֹ (from מַחֲרֵשֶׁת); and the meaning of both words is uncertain. According to the etymology, מַחֲרֵשֶׁת might denote any kind of edge-tool, even the ploughshare. The second מַחֲרֵשָׁתוֹ is rendered τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ (his sickle) by the LXX, and *sarculum* by Jerome, a small garden hoe for loosening and weeding the soil. The fact that the word is connected with קַרְדֹּם, the axe or hatchet, favours the idea that it signifies a *hoe* or *spade* rather than a sickle. Some of the words in v. 21 are still more obscure. וְהָיְתָה, which is the reading adopted by all the earlier translators, indicates that the result is about to be given of the facts mentioned before: *"And there came to pass,"* i.e., so that there came to pass (or arose), הַפְּצִירָה פִּים, *"a blunting of the edges."* פְּצִירָה, bluntness, from פָּצַר, to tear, hence to make blunt, is confirmed by the Arabic *fuṭâr, gladius fissuras habens, obtusus ensis,* whereas the meaning to hammer, i.e., to sharpen by hammering, cannot be established. The insertion of the article before פְּצִירָה is as striking as the omission of it before פִּים; also the *stat. abs.* instead of the construct פְּצִירַת. These anomalies render it a very probable conjecture that the reading may have been הַפְּצִיר הַפִּים (*inf. Hiph. nomin.*). Accordingly the rendering would be, *"so that bluntness of the edges occurred in the edge-tools, and the ploughshares, and the trident, and the axes, and the setting of the*

goad." שְׁלֹשׁ קִלְשׁוֹן is to be regarded as a *nom. comp.* like our trident, denoting an instrument with three prongs, according to the Chaldee and the Rabbins (see Ges. *Thes.* p. 1219). דֶּרְבָּן, *stimulus,* is probably a pointed instrument generally, since the meaning goad is fully established in the case of דָּרְבוֹן in Eccl. 12:11.[29]

1 Samuel 13:22. On the day of battle, therefore, the people with Saul and Jonathan were without either sword or spear; Saul and Jonathan were the only persons provided with them. The account of the expedition of the Israelites, and their victory over the Ammonites, given in v. 11, is apparently at variance with this description of the situation of the Israelites, since the war in question not only presupposes the possession of weapons by the Israelites, but must also have resulted in their capturing a considerable quantity. The discrepancy is very easily removed, however, when we look carefully at all the circumstances. For instance, we can hardly picture the Israelites to ourselves as amply provided with ordinary weapons in this expedition against the Ammonites. Moreover, the disarming of the Israelites by the Philistines took place for the most part if not entirely after this expedition, viz., at the time when the Philistines swept over the land with an innumerable army after Jonathan had smitten their garrison at Geba (vv. 3, 5), so that the fighting men who gathered round Saul and Jonathan after that could hardly bring many arms with them. Lastly, the words "there was neither sword nor spear found in the hands of all the people with Saul and Jonathan" must not be too closely pressed, but simply affirm that the 600 fighting men of Saul and Jonathan were not provided with the necessary arms, because the Philistines had prevented the possibility of their arming themselves in the ordinary way by depriving the people of all their smiths.

1 Samuel 13:23. forms the transition to the heroic act of Jonathan described in 1 Samuel 14.: *"An outpost of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash;"* i.e., the Philistines pushed forward a company of soldiers to the pass (מַעֲבָר, the crossing place) of Michmash, to prevent an attack being made by the Israelites upon their camp. Between *Geba* and *Michmash* there runs the great deep Wady *es Suweinit,* which goes down from Beitin and Bireh (Bethel and Beeroth) to the valley of the Jordan, and intersects the ridge upon which the two places are situated, so that the sides of the wady form very precipitous walls. When Robinson was travelling from Jeba to Mukhmas he had to go down a very steep and rugged path into this deep wady (*Pal.* ii. p. 116). "The way," he says in his *Biblical Researches,* p. 289, "was so steep, and the rocky steps so high, that we were compelled to dismount; while the baggage mules got along with great difficulty. Here, where we crossed, several short side wadys came in from the south-west and north-west. The ridges between these terminate in elevating points projecting into the great wady; and the most easterly of these bluffs on each side were probably the outposts of the two garrisons of Israel and the Philistines. The road passes around the eastern side of the southern hill, the post of Israel, and then strikes up over the western part of the northern one, the post of the Philistines, and the scene of Jonathan's adventure."

Jonathan's Heroic Act, and Israel's Victory Over the Philistines. Saul's Wars and Family.—Ch. 14.

1 Samuel 14:1–15. *Jonathan's heroic act.*— With strong faith and confidence in the might of the Lord, that He could give the victory even through the hands of very few, Jonathan resolved to attack the outpost of the Philistines at the pass of Mukhmas, accompanied by his armour-bearer alone, and the Lord crowned his enterprise with a marvellous victory.

1 Samuel 14

1 Samuel 14:1. Jonathan said to his armour-bearer, *"We will go over to the post of the Philistines, that is over there."* To these words, which introduce the occurrences that followed,

there are attached from וְלְאָבִיו to v. 5 a series of sentences introduced to explain the situation, and the thread of the narrative is resumed in v. 6 by a repetition of Jonathan's words. It is first of all observed that Jonathan did not disclose his intentions to his father, who would hardly have approved of so daring an enterprise. Then follows a description of the place where Saul was stationed with the six hundred men, viz., *"at the end of Gibeah* (i.e., the extreme northern end), *under the pomegranate-tree* (*Rimmon*) *which is by Migron." Rimmon* is not the rock Rimmon (Judg. 20:45), which was on the north-east of Michmash, but is an appellative noun, signifying *a pomegranate-tree. Migron* is a locality with which we are not acquainted, upon the north side of Gibeah, and a different place from the Migron which was on the north or north-west of Michmash (Isa. 10:28). *Gibeah* (*Tuleil el Phul*) was an hour and a quarter from *Geba,* and from the pass which led across to Michmash. Consequently, when Saul was encamped with his six hundred men on the north of Gibeah, he may have been hardly an hour's journey from Geba.

1 Samuel 14:3. Along with Saul and his six hundred men, there was also *Ahiah,* the son of Ahitub, the (elder) brother of Ichabod, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest at Shiloh, and therefore a great-grandson of Eli, wearing the ephod, i.e., in the high priest's robes. *Ahiah* is generally supposed to be the same person as *Ahimelech,* the son of Ahitub (1 Samuel 22:9ff.), in which case *Ahiah* (אֲחִיָה, brother, i.e., friend of Jehovah) would be only another form of the name Ahimelech (i.e., brother or friend of the King, viz., Jehovah). This is very probable, although Ahimelech might have been Ahaiah's brother, who succeeded him in the office of high priest on account of his having died without sons, since there is an interval of at least ten years between the events related in this chapter and those referred to in 1 Samuel 22. Ahimelech was afterwards slain by Saul along with the priests of Nob (1 Samuel 22:9ff.); the only one who escaped being his son Abiathar, who fled to David and, according to 1 Samuel 30:7, was invested with the ephod. It follows, therefore, that Ahiah (or Ahimelech) must have had a son at least ten years old at the time of the war referred to here, viz., the Abiathar mentioned in 1 Samuel 30:7, and must have been thirty or thirty-five years old himself, since Saul had reigned at least twenty-two years, and Abiathar had become high priest a few years before the death of Saul. These assumptions may be very easily reconciled with the passage before us. As Eli was ninety-eight years old when he died, his son Phinehas, who had been killed in battle a short time before, might have been sixty or sixty-five years old, and have left a son of forty years of age, namely Ahitub. Forty years later, therefore, i.e., at the beginning of Saul's reign, Ahitub's son Ahiah (Ahimelech) might have been about fifty years old; and at the death of Ahimelech, which took place ten or twelve years after that, his son Abiathar might have been as much as thirty years of age, and have succeeded his father in the office of high priest. But Abiathar cannot have been older than this when his father died, since he was high priest during the whole of David's forty years' reign, until Solomon deposed him soon after he ascended the throne (1 Kings 2:26ff.). Compare with this the remarks on 2 Samuel 8:17. Jonathan had also refrained from telling the people anything about his intentions, so that they did not know that he had gone.

1 Samuel 14:4, 5. In vv. 4, 5, the locality is more minutely described. Between the passes, through which Jonathan endeavoured to cross over to go up to the post of the Philistines, there was a sharp rock on this side, and also one upon the other. One of these was called *Bozez,* the other *Seneh;* one (formed) a pillar (מָצוּק), i.e., a steep height towards the north opposite to Michmash, the other towards the south opposite to Geba. The expression *"between the passes"* may be explained from the remark of Robinson quoted above, viz., that at the point where he passed the Wady Suweinit, side wadys enter it from the south-west and north-west. These side wadys supply so many

different crossings. Between them, however, on the north and south walls of the deep valley, were the jagged rocks *Bozez* and *Seneh,* which rose up like pillars to a great height. These were probably the "hills" which Robinson saw to the left of the pass by which he crossed: "Two hills of a conical or rather spherical form, having steep rocky sides, with small wadys running up behind so as almost to isolate them. One is on the side towards Jeba, and the other towards Mukhmas" (*Pal.* ii. p. 116).

1 Samuel 14:6. And Jonathan said to his armour-bearer, *"Come, we will go over to the post of these uncircumcised; it may be that Jehovah will work for us; for* (there is) *no hindrance for Jehovah to work salvation by many or few."* Jonathan's resolution arose from the strong conviction that Israel was the nation of God, and possessed in Jehovah an omnipotent God, who would not refuse His help to His people in their conflict with the foes of His kingdom, if they would only put their whole trust in Him.

1 Samuel 14:7. As the armour-bearer approved of Jonathan's resolution (נְטֵה לְךָ, *turn hither*), and was ready to follow him, Jonathan fixed upon a sign by which he would ascertain whether the Lord would prosper his undertaking.

1 Samuel 14:8ff. *"Behold, we go over to the people and show ourselves to them. If they say to us, Wait* (דֹּמּוּ, *keep quiet*) *till we come to you, we will stand still in our place, and not go up to them; but if they say thus, Come up unto us, then we will go up, for Jehovah hath* (in that case) *delivered them into our hand."* The sign was well chosen. If the Philistines said, "Wait till we come," they would show some courage; but if they said, "Come up to us," it would be a sign that they were cowardly, and had not courage enough to leave their position and attack the Hebrews. It was not tempting God for Jonathan to fix upon such a sign by which to determine the success of his enterprise; for he did it in the exercise of his calling, when fighting not for personal objects, but for the kingdom of God, which the uncircumcised were threatening to annihilate, and in the most confident belief that the Lord would deliver and preserve His people. Such faith as this God would not put to shame.

1 Samuel 14:11ff. When the two showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines, they said, *"Behold, Hebrews come forth out of the holes in which they have hidden themselves."* And the men of the garrison cried out to Jonathan and his armour-bearer, *"Come up to us, and we will tell you a word,"* i.e., we will communicate something to you. This was ridicule at the daring of the two men, whilst for all that they had not courage enough to meet them bravely and drive them back. In this Jonathan received the desired sign that the Lord had given the Philistines into the hand of the Israelites: he therefore clambered up the rock on his hands and feet, and his armour-bearer after him; and *"they* (the Philistines) *fell before Jonathan,"* i.e., were smitten down by him, *"and his armour-bearer was slaying behind him."*

1 Samuel 14:14. The first stroke that Jonathan and his armour-bearer struck was (amounted to) about twenty men *"on about half a furrow of an acre of field."* מַעֲנָה, *a furrow,* as in Ps. 129:3, is in the absolute state instead of the construct, because several nouns follow in the construct state (cf. Ewald, § 291, *a.*). צֶמֶד, *lit.* things bound together, then a pair; here it signifies a pair or *yoke of oxen,* but in the transferred sense of a piece of land that could be ploughed in one morning with a yoke of oxen, like the Latin *jugum, jugerum.* It is called the furrow of an acre of land, because the *length* only of half an acre of land was to be given, and not the breadth or the entire circumference. The Philistines, that is to say, took to flight in alarm as soon as the brave heroes really ascended, so that the twenty men were smitten one after another in the distance of half a rood of land. Their terror and flight are perfectly conceivable, if we consider that the outpost of the Philistines was so stationed upon the top of the ridge of the steep mountain wall, that they would not see how many were following, and

the Philistines could not imagine it possible that two Hebrews would have ventured to climb the rock alone and make an attack upon them. Sallust relates a similar occurrence in connection with the scaling of a castle in the Numidian war (*Bell. Jugurth.* c. 89, 90).

1 Samuel 14:15. And there arose a *terror in the camp upon the field* (i.e., in the principal camp) *as well as among all the people* (of the advanced outpost of the Philistines); *the garrison* (i.e., the army that was encamped at Michmash), *and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked,* sc., with the noise and tumult of the frightened foe; *"and it grew into a trembling of God,"* i.e., a supernatural terror miraculously infused by God into the Philistines. The subject to the last וַתְּהִי is either חֲרָדָה, the alarm in the camp, or all that has been mentioned before, i.e., the alarm with the noise and tumult that sprang out of it.

1 Samuel 14:16–23. *Flight and defeat of the Philistines.*—V. 16. The spies of Saul at Gibeah saw how the multitude (in the camp of the Philistines) melted away and was beaten more and more. The words וַיֵּלֶךְ וַהֲלֹם are obscure. The Rabbins are unanimous in adopting the explanation *magis magisque frangebatur,* and have therefore probably taken הֲלֹם as an inf. absol. הָלוֹם, and interpreted הָלַם according to Judg. 5:26. This was also the case with the Chaldee; and Gesenius (*Thes.* p. 383) has adopted the same rendering, except that he has taken הָלַם in the sense of *dissolutus, dissipatus est.* Others take הָלוֹם as adverbial (*"and thither"*), and supply the correlate הֲלֹם (hither), so as to bring out the meaning *"hither and thither."* Thus the LXX render it ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν, but they have not translated וַיֵּלֶךְ at all.

1 Samuel 14:17. Saul conjectured at once that the excitement in the camp of the Philistines was occasioned by an attack made by Israelitish warriors, and therefore commanded the people: פִּקְדוּ־נָא, *"Muster* (number) *now, and see who has gone away from us;"* and *"Jonathan and his armour-bearer were not there,"* i.e., they were missing.

1 Samuel 14:18ff. Saul therefore resolved to ask God, through the priest Ahiah, what he should do; whether he should go out with his army against the Philistines or no. But whilst he was talking with the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines became greater and greater, so that he saw from that what ought to be done under the circumstances, and stopped the priest's inquiring of God, and set out with his people without delay. We are struck, however, with the expression in v. 18, *"Bring hither the ark of God,"* and the explanation which follows, *"for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel,"* inasmuch as the ark was then deposited at Kirjath-jearim, and it is a very improbable thing that it should have been in the little camp of Saul. Moreover, in other cases where the high priest is spoken of as inquiring the will of God, there is no mention made of the ark, but only of the ephod, the high priest's shoulder-dress, upon which there were fastened the Urim and Thummim, through which inquiry was made of God. And in addition to this, the verb הַגִּישָׁה is not really applicable to the ark, which was not an object that could be carried about at will; whereas this verb is the current expression used to signify the fetching of the ephod (vid., 1 Samuel 23:9; 30:7). All these circumstances render the correctness of the Masoretic text extremely doubtful, notwithstanding the fact that the Chaldee, the Syriac, and Arabic, and the Vulgate support it, and recommend rather the reading adopted by the LXX, προσάγαγε τὸἘφούδ· ὅτι αὐτὸς ἦρεν τὸἘφοὺδ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐνώπιονΙσραήλ, which would give as the Hebrew text, הַגִּישָׁה הָאֵפוֹד כִּי הוּא נֹשֵׂא הָאֵפוֹד בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לִפְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. In any case, וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל at the end of the verse should be read לִבְנֵי יִשׂ׳ or לִפְנֵי, since וּ gives no sense at all.

1 Samuel 14:19. *"It increased more and more;" lit.* increasing and becoming greater. The subject וְהֶהָמוֹן וגו׳ is placed absolutely at the

head, so that the verb וַיֵּלֶךְ is appended in the form of an apodosis. אֱסֹף יָדְךָ, *"draw thy hand in"* (back); i.e., leave off now.

1 Samuel 14:20. *"And* (i.e., in consequence of the increasing tumult in the enemy's camp) *Saul had himself, and all the people with him, called,"* i.e., called together for battle; and when they came to the war, i.e., to the place of conflict, *"behold, there was the sword of the one against the other, a very great confusion,"* in consequence partly of terror, and partly of the circumstance alluded to in v. 21.

1 Samuel 14:21. *"And the Hebrews were with the Philistines as before* (yesterday and the day before yesterday), *who had come along with them in the camp round about; they also came over to Israel, which was with Saul and Jonathan."* סָבִיב means distributed round about among the Philistines. Those Israelites whom the Philistines had incorporated into their army are called *Hebrews,* according to the name which was current among foreigners, whilst those who were with Saul are called *Israel,* according to the sacred name of the nation. The difficulty which many expositors have found in the word לִהְיוֹת has been very correctly solved, so far as the sense is concerned, by the earlier translators, by the interpolation of *"they returned:"* תָּבוּ (Chald.), ἐπεστράφησαν (LXX), *reversi sunt* (Vulg.), and similarly the Syriac and Arabic. We are not at liberty, however, to amend the Hebrew text in this manner, as nothing more is omitted than the finite verb הָיוּ before the infinitive לִהְיוֹת (for this construction, see Gesenius, *Gramm.* § 132, 3, Anm. 1), and this might easily be left out here, since it stands at the beginning of the verse in the main clause. The literal rendering would be, they were to be with Israel, i.e., they came over to Israel. The fact that the Hebrews who were serving in the army of the Philistines came over to Saul and his host, and turned their weapons against their oppressors, naturally heightened the confusion in the camp of the Philistines, and accelerated their defeat; and this was still further increased by the fact that the Israelites who had concealed themselves on the mountains of Ephraim also joined the Israelitish army, as soon as they heard of the flight of the Philistines (v. 22).

1 Samuel 14:23. *"Thus the Lord helped Israel that day, and the conflict went out beyond Bethaven." Bethaven* was on the east of Michmash, and, according to v. 31, the Philistines fled westwards from Michmash to Ajalon. But if we bear in mind that the camp of the Philistines was on the eastern side of Michmash before Bethaven, according to 1 Samuel 13:5, and that the Israelites forced their way into it from the south, we shall see that the battle might easily have spread out beyond Bethaven, and that eventually the main body of the enemy might have fled as far as Ajalon, and have been pursued to that point by the victorious Israelites.

1 Samuel 14:24–31. *Saul's precipitate haste.*— V. 24. The men of Israel *were pressed* (i.e., fatigued) *on that day,* sc., through the military service and fighting. Then Saul adjured the people, saying, *"Cursed be the man that eateth bread until the evening, and* (till) *I have avenged myself upon mine enemies."* יֹאכֶל, *fut. apoc.* of יֹאלֶה for יַאֲלֶה, from אָלָה, to swear, *Hiphil* to adjure or require an oath of a person. The people took the oath by saying *"amen"* to what Saul had uttered. This command of Saul did not proceed from a proper attitude towards the Lord, but was an act of false zeal, in which Saul had more regard to himself and his own kingly power than to the cause of the kingdom of Jehovah, as we may see at once from the expression וְנִקַּמְתִּי וגו׳, "till *I* have avenged *myself* upon mine enemies." It was a despotic measure which not only failed to accomplish its object (see vv. 30, 31), but brought Saul into the unfortunate position of being unable to carry out the oath (see v. 45). All the people kept the command. *"They tasted no bread."* וְלֹא־טָעַם is not to be connected with וְנִקַּמְתִּי as an apodosis.

1 Samuel 14:25. *"And all the land* (i.e., all the people of the land who had gathered round

Saul: vid., v. 29) *came into the woody country; there was honey upon the field."* יַעַר signifies here a woody district, in which forests alternated with tracts of arable land and meadows.

1 Samuel 14:26. When the people came into the wood and saw *a stream of honey* (or wild or wood bees), *"no one put his hand to his mouth* (sc., to eat of the honey), *because they feared the oath."*

1 Samuel 14:27. But Jonathan, who had not heard his father's oath, dipped (in the heat of pursuit, that he might not have to stop) the point of his staff in the new honey, and put it to his mouth, *"and his eyes became bright;"* his lost strength, which is reflected in the eye, having been brought back by this invigorating taste. The *Chethibh* תראנה is probably to be read תִּרְאֶינָה, the eyes became seeing, received their power of vision again. The Masoretes have substituted as the *Keri* תָּאֹרְנָה, from אוֹר, to become bright, according to v. 29; and this is probably the correct reading, as the letters might easily be transposed.

1 Samuel 14:28ff. When one of the people told him thereupon of his father's oath, in consequence of which the people were exhausted (וַיָּעַף הָעָם belongs to the man's words; and וַיָּעַף is the same as in Judg. 4:21), Jonathan condemned the prohibition. *"My father has brought the land* (i.e., the people of the land, as in v. 25) *into trouble* (עָכַר, see at Gen. 34:30): *see how bright mine eyes have become because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more if the people had eaten to-day of the booty of its enemies, would not the overthrow among the Philistines truly have then become great?"* כִּי אַף, *lit.* to this (there comes) also that = not to mention how much more; and כִּי עַתָּה is an emphatic introduction of the apodosis, as in Gen. 31:42; 43:10, and other passages, and the apodosis itself is to be taken as a question.

1 Samuel 14:31–46. *Result of the battle, and consequences of Saul's rashness.*—V. 31. *"On that day they smote the Philistines from Michmash to Ajalon,"* which has been preserved in the village of *Yâlo* (see at Josh. 19:42), and was about three geographical miles to the south-west of Michmash; *"and the people were very faint,"* because Saul had forbidden them to eat before the evening (v. 24).

1 Samuel 14:32. They therefore *"fell voraciously upon the booty"*—(the *Chethibh* וַיַּעַשׂ is no doubt merely an error in writing for וַיַּעַט, *imperf. Kal* of עִיט with *Dagesh forte implic.* instead of וַיָּעַט, as we may see from 1 Samuel 15:19, since the meaning required by the context, viz., to fall upon a thing, cannot be established in the case of עָשָׂה with עֶל. On the other hand, there does not appear to be any necessity to supply the article before שָׁלָל, and this *Keri* seems only to have been taken from the parallel passage in 1 Samuel 15:19),—*"and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground* (אַרְצָה, *lit.* to the earth, so that when they were slaughtered the animal fell upon the ground, and remained lying in its blood, and was cut in pieces), *and ate upon the blood"* (עַל הַדָּם, with which אֶל הַדָּם, *"lying to the blood,"* is interchanged in v. 34), i.e., the flesh along with the blood which adhered to it, by doing which they sinned against the law in Lev. 19:26. This sin had been occasioned by Saul himself through the prohibition which he issued.

1 Samuel 14:33, 34. When this was told to Saul, he said, *"Ye act faithlessly towards Jehovah"* by transgressing the laws of the covenant; *"roll me now* (*lit.* this day) *a large stone. Scatter yourselves among the people, and say to them, Let every one bring his ox and his sheep to me, and slay here"* (upon the stone that has been rolled up), viz., so that the blood could run off properly upon the ground, and the flesh be separated from the blood. This the people also did.

1 Samuel 14:35. As a thanksgiving for this victory, Saul built an altar to the Lord. אֹתוֹ הֵחֵל

לִבְנוֹת, *"he began to build it,"* i.e., he built this altar at the beginning, or as the first altar. This altar was probably not intended to serve as a place of sacrifice, but simply to be a memorial of the presence of God, or the revelation of God which Saul had received in the marvellous victory.

1 Samuel 14:36. After the people had strengthened themselves in the evening with food, Saul wanted to pursue the Philistines still farther during the night, and to plunder among them until the light (i.e., till break of day), and utterly destroy them. The people assented to this proposal, but the priest (Ahiah) wished first of all to obtain the decision of God upon the matter. *"We will draw near to God here"* (before the altar which has just been built).

1 Samuel 14:37. But when Saul inquired of God (through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest), *"Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt Thou deliver them into the hand of Israel?"* God did not answer him. Saul was to perceive from this, that the guilt of some sin was resting upon the people, on account of which the Lord had turned away His countenance, and was withdrawing His help.

1 Samuel 14:38, 39. When Saul perceived, this, he directed all the heads of the people (*pinnoth,* as in Judg. 20:2) to draw near to learn whereby (wherein) the sin had occurred that day, and declared, *"As truly as Jehovah liveth, who has brought salvation to Israel, even if it were upon Jonathan my son, he shall die."* The first כִּי in v. 39 is explanatory; the second and third serve to introduce the words, like ὅτι, *quod;* and the repetition serves to give emphasis, lit., *"that even if it were upon my son, that he shall die." "And of all the people no one answered him,"* from terror at the king's word.

1 Samuel 14:40. In order to find out the guilt, or rather the culprit, Saul proceeded to the lot; and for this purpose he made all the people stand on one side, whilst he and his son Jonathan went to the other, and then solemnly addressed Jehovah thus: *"God of Israel, give innocence* (of mind, i.e., truth). *And the lot fell upon Saul and Jonathan* (יִלָּכֵד, as in 1 Samuel 10:20, 21); *and the people went out,"* sc., without the lot falling upon them, i.e., they went out free.

1 Samuel 14:42. When they proceeded still further to cast lots between Saul and his son (הִפִּילוּ, sc., גּוֹרָל; cf. 1 Chron. 26:14, Neh. 11:11, etc.), *Jonathan was taken.* [30]

1 Samuel 14:43, 44. When Saul asked him what he had done, Jonathan confessed that he had tasted a little honey (see v. 27), and resigned himself to the punishment suspended over him, saying, *"Behold, I shall die;"* and Saul pronounced sentence of death upon him, accompanying it with an oath (*"God do so,"* etc.: vid., Ruth 1:17).

1 Samuel 14:45. But the people interposed, *"Shall Jonathan die, who has achieved this great salvation* (victory) *in Israel? God forbid! As truly as Jehovah liveth, not a hair shall fall from his head upon the ground; for he hath wrought* (the victory) *with God to-day."* Thus the people delivered Jonathan from death. The objection raised by the people was so conclusive, that Saul was obliged to yield.

What Jonathan had done was not wrong in itself, but became so simply on account of the oath with which Saul had forbidden it. But Jonathan did not hear the oath, and therefore had not even consciously transgressed. Nevertheless a curse lay upon Israel, which was to be brought to light as a warning for the culprit. Therefore Jehovah had given no reply to Saul. But when the lot, which had the force of a divine verdict, fell upon Jonathan, sentence of death was not thereby pronounced upon him by God; but is was simply made manifest, that through his transgression of his father's oath, with which he was not acquainted, guilt had been brought upon Israel. The breach of a command issued with a solemn oath, even when it took place unconsciously, excited the wrath of God, as being a profanation of the divine name. But such a sin could only rest as guilt upon the man who had committed, or the man who occasioned it. Now where the

command in question was one of God himself, there could be no question, that even in the case of unconscious transgression the sin fell upon the transgressor, and it was necessary that it should either be expiated by him or forgiven him. But where the command of a man had been unconsciously transgressed, the guilt might also fall upon the man who issued the command, that is to say, if he did it without being authorized or empowered by God. In the present instance, Saul had issued the prohibition without divine authority, and had made it obligatory upon the people by a solemn oath. The people had conscientiously obeyed the command, but Jonathan had transgressed it without being aware of it. For this Saul was about to punish him with death, in order to keep his oath. But the people opposed it. They not only pronounced Jonathan innocent, because he had broken the king's command unconsciously, but they also exclaimed that he had gained the victory for Israel *"with God."* In this fact (Jonathan's victory) there was a divine verdict. And Saul could not fail to recognise now, that it was not Jonathan, but he himself, who had sinned, and through his arbitrary and despotic command had brought guilt upon Israel, on account of which God had given him no reply.

1 Samuel 14:46. With the feeling of this guilt, Saul gave up any further pursuit of the Philistines: he *"went up"* (sc., to Gibeah) *"from behind the Philistines,"* i.e., desisting from any further pursuit. But the Philistines went to their place, i.e., back into their own land.

1 Samuel 14:47–52. General Summary of Saul's other Wars, and Account of his Family.—V. 47. *"But Saul had taken the sovereignty."* As Saul had first of all secured a recognition of himself as king on the part of all the tribes of Israel, through his victory over the Ammonites at Jabesh (1 Samuel 11:12ff.), so it was through the victory which he had gained over the Philistines, and by which these obstinate foes of Israel were driven back into their own land, that he first acquired the kingship over Israel, i.e., first really secured the regal authority over the Israelites. This is the meaning of לָכַד הַמְּלוּכָה; and this statement is not at variance either with the election of Saul by lot (1 Samuel 10:17ff.), or with his confirmation at Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:14, 15). But as Saul had to fight for the sovereignty, and could only secure it by successful warfare, his other wars are placed in the foreground in the summary account of his reign which follows (vv. 47, 48), whilst the notices concerning his family, which stand at the very beginning in the case of other kings, are not mentioned till afterwards (vv. 49–51). Saul fought successfully against all the enemies of Israel round about; against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, a district of Syria on this side the Euphrates (see at 2 Samuel 8:3), and against the Philistines. The war against the Ammonites is described in 1 Samuel 11; but with the Philistines Saul had to wage repeated war all the days of his life (v. 52). The other wars are none of them more fully described, simply because they were of no importance to the history of the kingdom of God, having neither furnished occasion for any miraculous displays of divine omnipotence, nor brought about the subjection of hostile nations to the power of Israel. *"Whithersoever he turned, he inflicted punishment."* This is the rendering which Luther has very aptly given to יַרְשִׁיעַ; for הִרְשִׁיעַ signifies to declare wrong, hence to condemn, more especially as applied to judges: here it denotes sentence or condemnation *by deeds.* Saul chastised these nations for their attacks upon Israel.

1 Samuel 14:48. *"And he acquired power;"* עָשָׂה חַיִל (as in Num. 24:18) does not merely signify he proved himself brave, or he formed an army, but denotes the development and unfolding of power in various respects. Here it relates more particularly to the development of strength in the war against Amalek, by virtue of which Saul smote this arch-enemy of Israel, and put an end to their depredations. This war is described more fully in 1 Samuel 15, on account of its consequences in relation to Saul's own sovereignty.

1 Samuel 14:49–51. *Saul's family.*—V. 49. Only three of his sons are mentioned, namely those who fell with him, according to 1 Samuel 31:2, in the war with the Philistines. *Jisvi* is only another name for Abinadab (1 Samuel 31:2; 1 Chron. 8:33; 9:39). In these passages in the Chronicles there is a fourth mentioned, *Esh-baal,* i.e., the one who is called *Ish-bosheth* in 2 Samuel 2:8, etc., and who was set up by Abner as the antagonist of David. The reason why he is not mentioned here it is impossible to determine. It may be that the name has fallen out simply through some mistake in copying: the daughters *Michal* and *Merab* are mentioned, with special reference to the occurrence described in 1 Samuel 18:17ff.

1 Samuel 14:50, 51. *Abner* the general was also Saul's cousin. For *"son of Abiel"* (*ben Abiel*) we must read *"sons of Abiel"* (*bne Abiel:* see 1 Samuel 9:1).

1 Samuel 14:52. The statement, *"and the war was hard* (severe) *against the Philistines as long as Saul lived,"* merely serves to explain the notice which follows, namely, that Saul took or drew to himself every strong man and every brave man that he saw. If we observe this, which is the true relation between the two clauses in this verse, the appearance of abruptness which we find in the first notice completely vanishes, and the verse follows very suitably upon the allusion to the general. The meaning might be expressed in this manner: And as Saul had to carry on a severe war against the Philistines his whole life long, he drew to himself every powerful man and every brave man that he met with.

1 Samuel 15

War with Amalek. Saul's Disobedience and Rejection.—Ch. 15.

1 Samuel 15. As Saul had transgressed the commandment of God which was given to him through Samuel, by the sacrifice which he offered at Gilgal in the war with the Philistines at the very commencement of his reign, and had thereby drawn upon himself the threat that his monarchy should not be continued in perpetuity (1 Samuel 13:13, 14); so his disobedience in the war against the Amalekites was followed by his rejection on the part of God. The Amalekites were the first heathen nation to attack the Israelites after their deliverance out of Egypt, which they did in the most treacherous manner on their journey from Egypt to Sinai; and they had been threatened by God with extermination in consequence. This Moses enjoined upon Joshua, and also committed to writing, for the Israelites to observe in all future generations (Ex. 17:8–16). As the Amalekites afterwards manifested the same hostility to the people of God which they had displayed in this first attack, on every occasion which appeared favourable to their ravages, the Lord instructed Samuel to issue the command to Saul, to wage war against Amalek, and to smite man and beast with the ban, i.e., to put all to death (vv. 1–3). But when Saul had smitten them, he not only left Agag the king alive, but spared the best of the cattle that he had taken as booty, and merely executed the ban upon such animals as were worthless (vv. 4–9). He was rejected by the Lord for this disobedience, so that he was to be no longer king over Israel. His rejection was announced to him by Samuel (vv. 10–23), and was not retracted in spite of his prayer for the forgiveness of his sin (vv. 24–35). In fact, Saul had no excuse for this breach of the divine command; it was nothing but open rebellion against the sovereignty of God in Israel; and if Jehovah would continue King of Israel, He must punish it by the rejection of the rebel. For Saul no longer desired to be the medium of the sovereignty of Jehovah, or the executor of the commands of the God-king, but simply wanted to reign according to his own arbitrary will. Nevertheless this rejection was not followed by his outward deposition. The Lord merely took away His Spirit, had David anointed king by Samuel, and thenceforward so directed the steps of Saul and David, that as time advanced the hearts of the people were turned away more and more from Saul to David; and on the death of Saul, the attempt of the ambitious

Abner to raise his son Ishbosheth to the throne could not possibly have any lasting success.

1 Samuel 15:1–3. The account of the war against the Amalekites is a very condensed one, and is restricted to a description of the conduct of Saul on that occasion. Without mentioning either the time or the immediate occasion of the war, the narrative commences with the command of God which Samuel solemnly communicated to Saul, to go and exterminate that people. Samuel commenced with the words, *"Jehovah sent me to anoint thee to be king over His people, over Israel,"* in order to show to Saul the obligation which rested upon him to receive his commission as coming from God, and to proceed at once to fulfil it. The allusion to the anointing points back not to 1 Samuel 11:15, but to 1 Samuel 10:1.

1 Samuel 15:2. *"Thus saith the Lord of Zebaoth, I have looked upon what Amalek did to Israel, that it placed itself in his way when he came up out of Egypt"* (Ex. 17:8). Samuel merely mentions this first outbreak of hostility on the part of Amalek towards the people of Israel, because in this the same disposition was already manifested which now made the people ripe for the judgment of extermination (vid., Ex. 17:14). The hostility which they had now displayed, according to v. 33, there was no necessity for the prophet to mention particularly, since it was well known to Saul and all Israel. When God looks upon a sin, directs His glance towards it, He must punish it according to His own holiness. This פָּקַדְתִּי points at the very outset to the punishment about to be proclaimed.

1 Samuel 15:3. Saul is to smite and ban everything belonging to it without reserve, i.e., to put to death both man and beast. The last clause וְהֵמַתָּה וגו׳ is only an explanation and exemplification of וְהַחֲרַמְתֶּם וגו׳. *"From man to woman,"* etc., i.e., men and women, children and sucklings, etc.

1 Samuel 15:4–9. Saul summoned the people to war, and mustered them (those who were summoned) at *Telaim* (this was probably the same place as the *Telem* mentioned in Josh. 15:24, and is to be looked for in the eastern portion of the Negeb). *"Two hundred thousand foot, and ten thousand of the men of Judah:"* this implies that the two hundred thousand were from the other tribes. These numbers are not too large; for a powerful Bedouin nation, such as the Amalekites were, could not possibly be successfully attacked with a small army, but only by raising the whole of the military force of Israel.

1 Samuel 15:5. He then advanced as far as the city of the Amalekites, the situation of which is altogether unknown, and placed an ambush in the valley. וַיָּרֶב does not come from רִיב, to fight, i.e., to quarrel, not to give battle, but was understood even by the early translators as a contracted form of וַיַּאֲרֵב, the *Hiphil* of אָרַב. And modern commentators have generally understood it in the same way; but Olshausen (*Hebr. Gramm.* p. 572) questions the correctness of the reading, and Thenius proposes to alter וַיָּרֶב בַּנַּחַל into וַיַּעֲרֹךְ מִלְחָמָה בַּנַּחַל. נַחַל refers to a valley in the neighbourhood of the city of the Amalekites.

1 Samuel 15:6. Saul directed the Kenites to come out from among the Amalekites, that they might not perish with them (אִסְפְּדוּ, *imp. Kal* of אָסַף), as they had shown affection to the Israelites on their journey out of Egypt (compare Num. 10:29 with Judg. 1:16). He then smote the Amalekites from Havilah in the direction towards Shur, which lay before (to the east of) Egypt (cf. Gen. 25:18). *Shur* is the desert of Jifar, i.e., that portion of the desert of Arabia which borders upon Egypt (see at Gen. 16:7). *Havilah,* the country of the *Chaulotaeans,* on the border of Arabia Petraea towards Yemen (see at Gen. 10:29).

1 Samuel 15:8, 9. Their king, *Agag,* he took alive (on the name, see at Num. 24:7), but all the people he banned with the edge of the sword, i.e., he had them put to death without quarter. *"All,"* i.e., all that fell into the hands of the Israelites. For it follows from the very nature of the case that many escaped, and

consequently there is nothing striking in the fact that Amalekites are mentioned again at a later period (1 Samuel 27:8; 30:1; 2 Samuel 8:12). The last remnant was destroyed by the Simeonites upon the mountains of Seir in the reign of Hezekiah (1 Chron. 4:43). Only, king Agag did Saul and the people (of Israel) spare, also *"the best of the sheep and oxen, and the animals of the second birth, and the lambs and everything good; these they would not ban."* מִשְׁנִים, according to D. Kimchi and R. Tanch., are שניים לבטן, i.e., *animalia secundo partu edita,* which were considered superior to the others (vid., Roediger in *Ges. Thes.* p. 1451); and כָּרִים, pasture lambs, i.e., fat lambs. There is no necessity, therefore, for the conjecture of Ewald and Thenius, מַשְׁמַנִּים, fattened, and כְּרָמִים, vineyards; nor for the far-fetched explanation given by Bochart, viz., camels with two humps and camel-saddles, to say nothing of the fact that camel-saddles and vineyards are altogether out of place here. In *"all that was good"* the things already mentioned singly are all included. הַמְּלֻאכָה, the property; here it is applied to cattle, as in Gen. 33:14. נִמְבָּזָה = נִבְזֶה, despised, undervalued. The form of the word is not contracted from a noun מִבְזֶה and the participle נִבְזֶה (*Ges. Lehrgeb.* p. 463), but seems to be a *participle Niph.* formed from a noun מִבְזֶה. But as such a form is contrary to all analogy, Ewald and Olshausen regard the reading as corrupt. נָמֵס (from מָסַס): flowing away; used with reference to diseased cattle, or such as have perished. The reason for sparing the best cattle is very apparent, namely selfishness. But it is not so easy to determine why Agag should have been spared by Saul. It is by no means probable that he wished thereby to do honour to the royal dignity. O. v. Gerlach's supposition, that vanity or the desire to make a display with a royal slave was the actual reason, is a much more probable one.

1 Samuel 15:10–23. The word of the Lord came to Samuel: *"It repenteth me that I have made Saul king, for he hath turned away from me, and not set up* (carried out) *my word."* (On the repentance of God, see the remarks on Gen. 6:6.) That this does not express any changeableness in the divine nature, but simply the sorrow of the divine love at the rebellion of sinners, is evident enough from v. 29. שׁוּב מֵאַחֲרֵי יי, to turn round from following God, in order to go his own ways. This was Saul's real sin. He would no longer be the follower and servant of the Lord, but would be absolute ruler in Israel. Pride arising from the consciousness of his own strength, led him astray to break the command of God. What more God said to Samuel is not communicated here, because it could easily be gathered and supplied from what Samuel himself proceeded to do (see more particularly vv. 16ff.). In order to avoid repetitions, only the principal feature in the divine revelation is mentioned here, and the details are given fully afterwards in the account of the fulfilment of the instructions. Samuel was deeply agitated by this word of the Lord. *"It burned* (in) *him,"* sc., wrath (אַף, compare Gen. 31:36 with 30:2), not on account of the repentance to which God had given utterance at having raised up Saul as king, nor merely at Saul's disobedience, but at the frustration of the purpose of God in calling him to be king in consequence of his disobedience, from which he might justly dread the worst results in relation to the glory of Jehovah and his own prophetic labours.[31] The opinion that יִחַר לְ is also used to signify deep distress cannot be established from 2 Samuel 4:8. *"And he cried to Jehovah the whole night,"* sc., praying for Saul to be forgiven. But it was in vain. This is evident from what follows, where Samuel maintains the cause of his God with strength and decision, after having wrestled with God in prayer.

1 Samuel 15:12. The next morning, after receiving the revelation from God (v. 11), Samuel rose up early, to go and meet Saul as he was returning from the war. On the way it was told him, *"Saul has come to Carmel"*— i.e., *Kurmul,* upon the mountains of Judah to the south-east of Hebron (see at Josh. 15:55)—

"setting himself a memorial" (יָד, a hand, then a memorial or monument, inasmuch as the hand calls attention to anything: see 2 Samuel 18:18), *"and has turned and proceeded farther, and gone down to Gilgal"* (in the valley of the Jordan, as in 1 Samuel 13:4).

1 Samuel 15:13. When Samuel met him there, Saul attempted to hide his consciousness of guilt by a feigned friendly welcome. *"Blessed be thou of the Lord"* (vid., Ruth 2:20, Gen. 14:19, etc.) was his greeting to the prophet; *"I have set up the word of Jehovah."*

1 Samuel 15:14, 15. But the prophet stripped his hypocrisy at once with the question, *"What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears, and a lowing of oxen that I hear?"* Saul replied (v. 15), *"They have brought them from the Amalekites, because the people spared the best sheep and oxen, to sacrifice them to the Lord thy God; and the rest we have banned."* So that it was not Saul, but the people, who had transgressed the command of the Lord, and that with the most laudable intention, viz., to offer the best of the cattle that had been taken, as a thank-offering to the Lord. The falsehood and hypocrisy of these words lay upon the very surface; for even if the cattle spared were really intended as sacrifices to the Lord, not only the people, but Saul also, would have had their own interests in view (vid., v. 9), since the flesh of thank-offerings was appropriated to sacrificial meals.

1 Samuel 15:16ff. Samuel therefore bade him be silent. הֶרֶף, *"leave off,"* excusing thyself any further. *"I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night."* (The *Chethibh* וַיֹּאמְרוּ is evidently a copyist's error for וַיֹּאמֶר.) *"Is it not true, when thou wast little in thine eyes* (a reference to Saul's own words, 1 Samuel 9:21), *thou didst become head of the tribes of Israel? and Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel, and Jehovah sent thee on the way, and said, Go and ban the sinners, the Amalekites, and make war against them, until thou exterminatest them. And wherefore hast thou nor hearkened to the voice of Jehovah, and hast fallen upon the booty,"* etc.? (תַּעַט, see at 1 Samuel 14:32.)

Even after this Saul wanted to justify himself, and to throw the blame of sparing the cattle upon the people.

1 Samuel 15:20. *"Yea, I have hearkened to the voice of Jehovah* (אֲשֶׁר serving, like כִּי, to introduce the reply: here it is used in the sense of asseveration, *utique,* yea), *and have brought Agag the king of the Amalekites, and banned Amalek."* Bringing Agag he mentioned probably as a practical proof that he had carried out the war of extermination against the Amalekites.

1 Samuel 15:21. Even the sparing of the cattle he endeavoured to defend as the fulfilment of a religious duty. The people had taken sheep and oxen from the booty, *"as firstlings of the ban,"* to sacrifice to Jehovah. Sacrificing the best of the booty taken in war as an offering of first-fruits to the Lord, was not indeed prescribed in the law, but was a praiseworthy sign of piety, by which all honour was rendered to the Lord as the giver of the victory (see Num. 31:48ff.). This, Saul meant to say, was what the people had done on the present occasion; only he overlooked the fact, that what was banned to the Lord could not be offered to Him as a burnt-offering, because, being most holy, it belonged to Him already (Lev. 27:29), and according to Deut. 13:16, was to be put to death, as Samuel had expressly said to Saul (v. 3).

1 Samuel 15:22, 23. Without entering, therefore, into any discussion of the meaning of the ban, as Saul only wanted to cover over his own wrong-doings by giving this turn to the affair, Samuel put a stop to any further excuses, by saying, *"Hath Jehovah delight in burnt-offerings and slain-offerings as in hearkening to the voice of Jehovah?* (i.e., in obedience to His word.) *Behold, hearing* (obeying) *is better than slain-offerings, attending better than fat of rams."* By saying this, Samuel did not reject sacrifices as worthless; he did not say that God took no pleasure in burnt-offerings and slain-offerings, but simply compared sacrifice with obedience to the command of God, and pronounced the latter of greater worth than the former. "It was as much as to say that the sum and substance of divine worship consisted in

obedience, with which it should always begin, and that sacrifices were, so to speak, simple appendices, the force and worth of which were not so great as of obedience to the precepts of God" (Calvin). But it necessarily follows that sacrifices without obedience to the commandments of God are utterly worthless; in fact, are displeasing to God, as Ps. 50:8ff., Isa. 1:11ff., 66:3, Jer. 6:20, and all the prophets, distinctly affirm. There was no necessity, however, to carry out this truth any further. To tear off the cloak of hypocrisy, with which Saul hoped to cover his disobedience, it was quite enough to affirm that God's first demand was obedience, and that observing His word was better than sacrifice; because, as the *Berleb. Bible* puts it, "in sacrifices a man offers only the strange flesh of irrational animals, whereas in obedience he offers his own will, which is rational or spiritual worship" (Rom. 12:8). This spiritual worship was shadowed forth in the sacrificial worship of the Old Testament. In the sacrificial animal the Israelite was to give up and sanctify his own person and life to the Lord. (For an examination of the meaning of the different sacrifices, see *Pent.* pp. 505ff., and Keil's *Bibl Archäol.* § 41ff.) But if this were the design of the sacrifices, it was clear enough that God did not desire the animal sacrifice in itself, but first and chiefly obedience to His own word. In v. 22, טוֹב is not to be connected as an adjective with זֶבַח, "more than good sacrifice," as the Sept. and Thenius render it; it is rather to be taken as a predicate, *"better than slain-offerings,"* and מִזֶּבַח is placed first simply for the sake of emphasis. Any contrast between good and bad sacrifices, such as the former construction would introduce into the words, is not only foreign to the context, but also opposed to the parallelism. For חֵלֶב אֵילִים does not mean fat rams, but the fat of rams; the fat portions taken from the ram, which were placed upon the altar in the case of the slain-offerings, and for which חֵלֶב is the technical expression (compare Lev. 3:9, 16, with vv. 4, 11, etc.). *"For,"* continued Samuel (v. 23), *"rebellion is the sin of soothsaying, and opposition is heathenism and idolatry."* מְרִי and הַפְצַר are the subjects, and synonymous in their meaning. חַטַּאת קֶסֶם, the sin of soothsaying, i.e., of divination in connection with the worship of idolatrous and demoniacal powers. In the second clause idols are mentioned instead of idolatry, and compared to resistance, but without any particle of comparison. Opposition is keeping idols and teraphim, i.e., it is like worshipping idols and teraphim. אָוֶן, nothingness, then an idol or image (vid., Isa. 66:3; Hos. 4:15; 10:5, 8). On the *teraphim* as domestic and oracular deities, see at Gen. 31:19. Opposition to God is compared by Samuel to soothsaying and oracles, because idolatry was manifested in both of them. All conscious disobedience is actually idolatry, because it makes self-will, the human I, into a god. So that all manifest opposition to the word and commandment of God is, like idolatry, a rejection of the true God. *"Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, He hath rejected thee, that thou mayst be no longer king."* מִמֶּלֶךְ = מִהְיוֹת מֶלֶךְ (v. 26), away from being king.

1 Samuel 15:24–35. This sentence made so powerful an impression upon Saul, that he confessed, *"I have sinned: for I have transgressed the command of the Lord and thy words, because I feared the people, and hearkened to their voice."* But these last words, with which he endeavoured to make his sin appear as small as possible, show that the consciousness of his guilt did not go very deep. Even if the people had really desired that the best of the cattle should be spared, he ought not as king to have given his consent to their wish, since God had commanded that they should all be banned (i.e., destroyed); and even though he has yielded from weakness, this weakness could not lessen his guilt before God. This repentance, therefore, was rather the effect of alarm at the rejection which had been announced to him, than the fruit of any genuine consciousness of sin. "It was not true and serious repentance, or the result of genuine sorrow of heart because he

had offended God, but was merely repentance of the lips arising from fear of losing the kingdom, and of incurring public disgrace" (C. v. Lapide). This is apparent even from v. 25, but still more from v. 30. In v. 25 he not only entreats Samuel for the forgiveness of his sin, but says, *"Return with me, that I may pray to the Lord."* The שׁוּב presupposes that Samuel was about to go away after the executing his commission. Saul entreated him to remain that he might pray, i.e., not only in order to obtain for him the forgiveness of his sin through his intercession, but, according to v. 30, to show him honour before the elders of the people and before Israel, that his rejection might not be known.

1 Samuel 15:26, 27. This request Samuel refused, repeating at the same time the sentence of rejection, and turned to depart. *"Then Saul laid hold of the lappet of his mantle* (i.e., his upper garment), *and it tore"* (*lit.* was torn off). That the *Niphal* וַיִּקָּרַע is correct, and is not to be altered into וַיִּקְרַע אֹתָהּ, "Saul tore off the lappet," according to the rendering of the LXX, as Thenius supposes, is evident from the explanation which Samuel gave of the occurrence (v. 28): *"Jehovah hath torn the sovereignty of Israel from thee to-day, and given it to thy neighbour, who is better than thou."* As Saul was about to hold back the prophet by force, that he might obtain from him a revocation of the divine sentence, the tearing of the mantle, which took place accidentally, and evidently without any such intention on the part of Saul, was to serve as a sign of the rending away of the sovereignty from him. Samuel did not yet know to whom Jehovah would give it; he therefore used the expression לְרֵעֲךָ, as רֵעַ is applied to any one with whom a person associates. To confirm his own words, he adds in v. 29: *"And also the Trust of Israel doth not lie and doth not repent, for He is not a man to repent."* נֵצַח signifies constancy, endurance, then confidence, trust, because a man can trust in what is constant. This meaning is to be retained here, where the word is used as a name for God, and not the meaning *gloria,* which is taken in 1 Chron. 29:11 from the Aramaean usage of speech, and would be altogether unsuitable here, where the context suggests the idea of unchangeableness. For a man's repentance or regret arises from his changeableness, from the fluctuations in his desires and actions. This is never the case with God; consequently He is נֵצַח יִשְׂרָאֵל, *the unchangeable One, in whom Israel can trust, since He does not lie or deceive, or repent of His purposes.* These words are spoken θεοπρεπῶς (theomorphically), whereas in v. 11 and other passages, which speak of God as repenting, the words are to be understood ἀνθρωποπαθῶς (anthropomorphically; cf. Num. 23:19).

1 Samuel 15:30, 31. After this declaration as to the irrevocable character of the determination of God to reject Saul, Samuel yielded to the renewed entreaty of Saul, that he would honour him by his presence before the elders and the people, and remained whilst Saul worshipped, not merely "for the purpose of preserving the outward order until a new king should take his place" (O. v. Gerlach), but also to carry out the ban upon Agag, whom Saul had spared.

1 Samuel 15:32. After Saul had prayed, Samuel directed him to bring Agag the king of the Amalekites. Agag came מַעֲדַנּוֹת, i.e., in a contented and joyous state of mind, and said (in his heart), *"Surely the bitterness of death is vanished,"* not from any special pleasure at the thought of death, or from a heroic contempt of death, but because he thought that his life was to be granted him, as he had not been put to death at once, and was now about to be presented to the prophet (Clericus).

1 Samuel 15:33. But Samuel pronounced the sentence of death upon him: *"As thy sword hath made women childless, so be thy mother childless before women!"* מִנָּשִׁים is to be understood as a comparative: more childless than (other) women, i.e., the most childless of women, namely, because her son was the king. From these words of Samuel, it is very evident that Agag had carried on his wars with great cruelty,

and had therefore forfeited his life according to the *lex talionis.* Samuel then hewed him in pieces *"before the Lord at Gilgal,"* i.e., before the altar of Jehovah there; for the slaying of Agag being the execution of the ban, was an act performed for the glory of God.

1 Samuel 15:34, 35. After the prophet had thus maintained the rights of Jehovah in the presence of Saul, and carried out the ban upon Agag, he returned to his own home at Ramah; and Saul went to his house at Gibeah. From that time forward Samuel broke off all intercourse with the king whom Jehovah had rejected. *"For Samuel was grieved for Saul, and it repented the Lord that he had made Saul king,"* i.e., because Samuel had loved Saul on account of his previous election; and yet, as Jehovah had rejected him unconditionally, he felt that he was precluded from doing anything to effect a change of heart in Saul, and his reinstatement as king.

1 Samuel 16

Saul's Fall and David's Election.

1 Samuel 16–31. Although the rejection of Saul on the part of God, which was announced to him by Samuel, was not followed by immediate deposition, but Saul remained king until his death, the consequences of his rejection were very speedily brought to light. Whilst Samuel, by the command of God, was secretly anointing David, the youngest son of Jesse, at Bethlehem, as king (1 Samuel 16:1–13), the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit began to terrify him, so that he fell into melancholy; and his servants fetched David to the court, as a man who could play on stringed instruments, that he might charm away the king's melancholy by his playing (1 Samuel 16:14–23). Another war with the Philistines soon furnished David with the opportunity for displaying his heroic courage, by the defeat of the giant Goliath, before whom the whole army of the Israelites trembled; and to attract the eyes of the whole nation to himself, as the deliverer of Israel from its foes (1 Samuel 17:1–54), in consequence of which Saul placed him above the men of war, whilst Saul's brave son Jonathan formed a bond of friendship with him (1 Samuel 17:55–18:5). But this victory, in commemorating which the women sang, "Saul hath slain a thousand, David ten thousand" (1 Samuel 18:7), excited the jealousy of the melancholy king, so that the next day, in an attack of madness, he threw his spear at David, who was playing before him, and after that not only removed him from his presence, but by elevating him to the rank of chief captain, and by the promise to give him his daughter in marriage for the performance of brave deeds, endeavoured to entangle him in such conflicts with the Philistines as should cost him his life. And when this failed, and David prospered in all his undertakings, he began to be afraid of him, and cherished a lifelong hatred towards him (1 Samuel 18:6–30). Jonathan did indeed try to intercede and allay his father's suspicions, and effect a reconciliation between Saul and David; but the evil spirit soon drove the jealous king to a fresh attack upon David's life, so that he was obliged to flee not only from the presence of Saul, but from his own house also, and went to Ramah, to the prophet Samuel, whither, however, Saul soon followed him, though he was so overpowered by the Spirit of the prophets, that he would not do anything to David (1 Samuel 19). Another attempt on the part of Jonathan to change his father's mind entirely failed, and so excited the wrath of Saul, that he actually threw the spear at his own son; so that no other course now remained for David, than to separate himself from his noble friend Jonathan, and seek safety in flight (1 Samuel 20). He therefore fled with his attendant first of all to Nob, where Ahimelech the high priest gave him some of the holy loaves and the sword of Goliath, on his representing to him that he was travelling hastily in the affairs of the king. He then proceeded to Achish, the king of the Philistines, at Gath; but having been recognised as the conqueror of Goliath, he was obliged to feign madness in order to save his life; and being driven away by Achish as a madman, he went to the cave of Adullam, and thence into the land of Moab. But he was

summoned by the prophet to return to his own land, and went into the wood Hareth, in the land of Judah; whilst Saul, who had been informed by the Edomite Doeg of the occurrence at Nob, ordered all the priests who were there to be put to death, and the town itself to be ruthlessly destroyed, with all the men and beasts that it contained. Only one of Ahimelech's sons escaped the massacre, viz., Abiathar; and he took refuge with David (1 Samuel 21–22).

Saul now commenced a regular pursuit of David, who had gradually collected around him a company of 600 men. On receiving intelligence that David had smitten a marauding company of Philistines at Keilah, Saul followed him, with the hope of catching him in this fortified town; and when this plan failed, on account of the flight of David into the wilderness of Ziph, because the high priest had informed him of the intention of the inhabitants to deliver him up, Saul pursued him thither, and had actually surrounded David with his warriors, when a messenger arrived with the intelligence of an invasion of the land by the Philistines, and he was suddenly called away to make war upon these foes (1 Samuel 23). But he had no sooner returned from the attack upon the Philistines, than he pursued David still farther into the wilderness of Engedi, where he entered into a large cave, behind which David and his men were concealed, so that he actually fell into David's hands, who might have put him to death. But from reverence for the anointed of the Lord, instead of doing him any harm, David merely cut off a corner of his coat, to show his pursuer, when he had left the cave, in what manner he had acted towards him, and to convince him of the injustice of his hostility. Saul was indeed moved to tears; but he was not disposed for all that to give up any further pursuit (1 Samuel 24). David was still obliged to wander about from place to place in the wilderness of Judah; and at length he was actually in want of the necessaries of life, so that on one occasion, when the rich Nabal had churlishly turned away the messengers who had been sent to him to ask for a present, he formed the resolution to take bloody revenge upon this hard-hearted fool, and was only restrained from carrying the resolution out by the timely and friendly intervention of the wise Abigail (1 Samuel 25). Soon after this Saul came a second time into such a situation, that David could have killed him; but during the night, whilst Saul and all his people were sleeping, he slipped with Abishai into the camp of his enemy, and carried off as booty the spear that was at the king's head, that he might show him a second time how very far he was from seeking to take his life (1 Samuel 26). But all this only made David's situation an increasingly desperate one; so that eventually, in order to save his life, he resolved to fly into the country of the Philistines, and take refuge with Achish, the king of Gath, by whom he was now received in the most friendly manner, as a fugitive who had been proscribed by the king of Israel. At his request Achish assigned him the town of Ziklag as a dwelling-place for himself and his men, whence he made sundry excursions against different Bedouin tribes of the desert. In consequence of this, however, he was brought into a state of dependence upon this Philistian prince (1 Samuel 27); and shortly afterwards, when the Philistines made an attack upon the Israelites, he would have been perfectly unable to escape the necessity of fighting in their ranks against his own people and fatherland, if the other princes of the Philistines had not felt some mistrust of "these Hebrews," and compelled Achish to send David and his fighting men back to Ziklag (1 Samuel 29). But this was also to put an end to his prolonged flight. Saul's fear of the power of the Philistines, and the fact that he could not obtain any revelation from God, induced him to have recourse to a necromantist woman, and he was obliged to hear from the mouth of Samuel, whom she had invoked, not only the confirmation of his own rejection on the part of God, but also the announcement of his death (1 Samuel 28). In the battle which followed on the mountains of Gilboa, after his three sons had been put to death by his side, he fell upon his own sword, that he might not fall alive into the hands of the

archers of the enemy, who were hotly pursuing him (1 Samuel 31), whilst David in the meantime chastised the Amalekites for their attack upon Ziklag (1 Samuel 30).

It is not stated anywhere how long the pursuit of David by Saul continued; the only notice given is that David dwelt a year and four months in the land of the Philistines (1 Samuel 27:7). If we compare with this the statement in 2 Samuel 5:4, that David was thirty years old when he became king (over Judah), the supposition that he was about twenty years old when Samuel anointed him, and therefore that the interval between Saul's rejection and his death was about ten years, will not be very far from the truth. The events which occurred during this interval are described in the most elaborate way, on the one hand because they show how Saul sank deeper and deeper, after the Spirit of God had left him on account of his rebellion against Jehovah, and not only was unable to procure any longer for the people that deliverance which they had expected from the king, but so weakened the power of the throne through the conflict which he carried on against David, whom the Lord had chosen ruler of the nation in his stead, that when he died the Philistines were able to inflict a total defeat upon the Israelites, and occupy a large portion of the land of Israel; and, on the other hand, because they teach how, after the Lord had anointed David ruler over His people, and had opened the way to the throne through the victory which he gained over Goliath, He humbled him by trouble and want, and trained him up as king after His own heart. On a closer examination of these occurrences, which we have only briefly hinted at, giving their main features merely, we see clearly how, from the very day when Samuel announced to Saul his rejection by God, he hardened himself more and more against the leadings of divine grace, and continued steadily ripening for the judgment of death. Immediately after this announcement an evil spirit took possession of his soul, so that he fell into trouble and melancholy; and when jealousy towards David was stirred up in his heart, he was seized with fits of raving madness, in which he tried to pierce David with a spear, and thus destroy the man whom he had come to love on account of his musical talent, which had exerted so beneficial an influence upon his mind (1 Samuel 16:23; 18:10, 11; 19:9, 10). These attacks of madness gradually gave place to hatred, which developed itself with full consciousness, and to a most deliberately planned hostility, which he concealed at first not only from David but also from all his own attendants, with the hope that he should be able to put an end to David's life through his stratagems, but which he afterwards proclaimed most openly as soon as these plans had failed. When his hostility was first openly declared, his eagerness to seize upon his enemy carried him to such a length that he got into the company of prophets at Ramah, and was so completely overpowered by the Spirit of God dwelling there, that he lay before Samuel for a whole day in a state of prophetic ecstasy (1 Samuel 19:22ff.). But this irresistible power of the Spirit of God over him produced no change of heart. For immediately afterwards, when Jonathan began to intercede for David, Saul threw the spear at his own son (1 Samuel 20:33), and this time not in an attack of madness or insanity, but in full consciousness; for we do not read in this instance, as in 1 Samuel 18–19, that the evil spirit came upon him. He now proceeded to a consistent carrying out of his purpose of murder. He accused his courtiers of having conspired against him like Jonathan, and formed an alliance with David (1 Samuel 22:6ff.), and caused the priests at Nob to be murdered in cold blood, and the whole town smitten with the edge of the sword, because Ahimelech had supplied David with bread; and this he did without paying any attention to the conclusive evidence of his innocence (1 Samuel 22:11ff.). He then went with 3000 men in pursuit of David; and even after he had fallen twice into David's hands, and on both occasions had been magnanimously spared by him, he did not desist from plotting for his life until he had driven him out of the land; so that we may clearly see how each fresh proof of the righteousness of David's cause only

increased his hatred, until at length, in the war against the Philistines, he rashly resorted to the godless arts of a necromancer which he himself had formerly prohibited, and eventually put an end to his own life by falling upon his sword.

Just as clearly may we discern in the guidance of David, from his anointing by Samuel to the death of Saul, how the Lord, as King of His people, trained him in the school of affliction to be His servant, and led him miraculously on to the goal of his divine calling. Having been lifted up as a young man by his anointing, and by the favour which he had acquired with Saul through his playing upon the harp, and still more by his victory over Goliath, far above the limited circumstances of his previous life, he might very easily have been puffed up in the consciousness of the spiritual gifts and powers conferred upon him, if God had not humbled his heart by want and tribulation. The first outbursts of jealousy on the part of Saul, and his first attempts to get rid of the favourite of the people, only furnished him with the opportunity to distinguish himself still more by brave deeds, and to make his name still dearer to the people (1 Samuel 18:30). When, therefore, Saul's hostility was openly displayed, and neither Jonathan's friendship nor Samuel's prophetic authority could protect him any longer, he fled to the high priest Ahimelech, and from him to king Achish at Gath, and endeavoured to help himself through by resorting to falsehood. He did save himself in this way no doubt, but he brought destruction upon the priests at Nob. And he was very soon to learn how all that he did for his people was rewarded with ingratitude. The inhabitants of Keilah, whom he had rescued from their plunderers, wanted to deliver him up to Saul (1 Samuel 23:5, 12); and even the men of his own tribe, the Ziphites, betrayed him twice, so that he was no longer sure of his life even in his own land. But the more this necessarily shook his confidence in his own strength and wisdom, the more clearly did the Lord manifest himself as his faithful Shepherd. After Ahimelech had been put to death, his son Abiathar fled to David with the light and right of the high priest, so that he was now in a position to inquire the will and counsel of God in any difficulty into which he might be brought (1 Samuel 23:6). On two occasions God brought his mortal foe Saul into his hand, and David's conduct in both these cases shows how the deliverance of God which he had hitherto experienced had strengthened his confidence in the Lord, and in the fulfilment of His promises (compare 1 Samuel 24 with 1 Samuel 26). And his gracious preservation from carrying out his purposes of vengeance against Nabal (1 Samuel 25) could not fail to strengthen him still more. Nevertheless, when his troubles threatened to continue without intermission, his courage began to sink and his faith to waver, so that he took refuge in the land of the Philistines, where, however, his wisdom and cunning brought him into a situation of such difficulty that nothing but the grace and fidelity of his God could possibly extricate him, and out of which he was delivered without any act of his own.

In this manner was the divine sentence of rejection fulfilled upon Saul, and the prospect which the anointing of David had set before him, of ascending the throne of Israel, carried out to completion. The account before us of the events which led to this result of the various complications, bears in all respects so thoroughly the stamp of internal truth and trustworthiness, that even modern critics are unanimous in acknowledging the genuine historical character of the biblical narrative upon the whole. At the same time, there are some things, such as the supposed irreconcilable discrepancy between 1 Samuel 16:14–23 and 1 Samuel 17:55–58, and certain repetitions, such as Saul's throwing the spear at David (1 Samuel 18:10 and 19:9, 10), the treachery of the Ziphites (1 Samuel 23:19ff. and 26:1ff.), David's sparing Saul (1 Samuel 24:4ff. and 26:5 ff), which they cannot explain in any other way than by the favourite hypothesis that we have here divergent accounts, or legendary traditions derived from two different sources that are here woven together; whereas, as we shall see when we come to the exposition of the chapters in question, not only do the

discrepancies vanish on a more thorough and minute examination of the matter, but the repetitions are very clearly founded on facts.

Anointing of David. His Playing Before Saul.

1 Samuel 16. After the rejection of Saul, the Lord commanded Samuel the prophet to go to Bethlehem and anoint one of Jesse's sons as king; and when he went to carry out this commission, He pointed out David, the youngest of eight sons, as the chosen one, whereupon the prophet anointed him (vv. 1–13). Through the overruling providence of God, it came to pass after this, that David was brought to the court of Saul, to play upon the harp, and so cheer up the king, who was troubled with an evil spirit (vv. 14–23).

1 Samuel 16:1–13. Anointing of David.—V. 1. The words in which God summoned Samuel to proceed to the anointing of another king, *"How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, whom I have rejected, that he may not be king over Israel?"* show that the prophet had not yet been able to reconcile himself to the hidden ways of the Lord; that he was still afraid that the people and kingdom of God would suffer from the rejection of Saul; and that he continued to mourn for Saul, not merely from his own personal attachment to the fallen king, but also, or perhaps still more, from anxiety for the welfare of Israel. He was now to put an end to this mourning, and to fill his horn with oil and go to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for the Lord had chosen a king from among his sons.

1 Samuel 16:2. But Samuel replied, *"How shall I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me."* This fear on the part of the prophet, who did not generally show himself either hesitating or timid, can only be explained, as we may see from v. 14, on the supposition that Saul was already given up to the power of the evil spirit, so that the very worst might be dreaded from his madness, if he discovered that Samuel had anointed another king. That there was some foundation for Samuel's anxiety, we may infer from the fact that the Lord did not blame him for his fear, but pointed out the way by which he might anoint David without attracting attention (vv. 2, 3). *"Take a young heifer with thee, and say* (sc., if any one ask the reason for your going to Bethlehem), *I am come to sacrifice to the Lord."* There was no untruth in this, for Samuel was really about to conduct a sacrificial festival and was to invite Jesse's family to it, and then anoint the one whom Jehovah should point out to him as the chosen one. It was simply a concealment of the principal object of his mission from any who might make inquiry about it, because they themselves had not been invited. "There was no dissimulation or falsehood in this, since God really wished His prophet to find safety under the pretext of the sacrifice. A sacrifice was therefore really offered, and the prophet was protected thereby, so that he was not exposed to any danger until the time of full revelation arrived" (Calvin).

1 Samuel 16:4. When Samuel arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the city came to meet him in a state of the greatest anxiety, and asked him whether his coming was peace, or promised good. The singular וַיֹּאמֶר may be explained on the ground that one of the elders spoke for the rest. The anxious inquiry of the elders presupposes that even in the time of Saul the prophet Samuel was frequently in the habit of coming unexpectedly to one place and another, for the purpose of reproving and punishing wrong-doing and sin.

1 Samuel 16:5. Samuel quieted them with the reply that he was come to offer sacrifice to the Lord, and called upon them to sanctify themselves and take part in the sacrifice. It is evident from this that the prophet was accustomed to turn his visits to account by offering sacrifice, and so building up the people in fellowship with the Lord. The reason why sacrifices were offered at different places was, that since the removal of the ark from the tabernacle, this sanctuary had ceased to be the only place of the nation's worship. הִתְקַדֵּשׁ, to sanctify one's self by washings and legal purifications, which probably preceded every sacrificial festival (vid., Ex. 19:10, 22). The expression, *"Come with me to the sacrifice,"* is

constructio praegnans for "Come and take part in the sacrifice." *"Call to the sacrifice"* (v. 3) is to be understood in the same way. זֶבַח is the slain-offering, which was connected with every sacrificial meal. It is evident from the following words, *"and he sanctified Jesse and his sons,"* that Samuel addressed the general summons to sanctify themselves more especially to Jesse and his sons. For it was with them that he was about to celebrate the sacrificial meal.

1 Samuel 16:6ff. When they came, sc., to the sacrificial meal, which was no doubt held in Jesse's house, after the sacrifice had been presented upon an altar, and when Samuel saw the eldest son Eliab, who was tall and handsome according to v. 7, *"he thought* (*lit.* he said, sc., in his heart), *Surely His anointed is before Jehovah,"* i.e., surely the man is now standing before Jehovah whom He hath chosen to be His anointed. But Jehovah said to him in the spirit, *"Look not at his form and the height of his stature, for I have rejected him: for not as man seeth* (sc., do I see); *for man looketh at the eyes, and Jehovah looketh at the heart."* The eyes, as contrasted with the heart, are figuratively employed to denote the outward form.

1 Samuel 16:8ff. When Jesse thereupon brought up his other sons, one after another, before Samuel, the prophet said in the case of each, *"This also Jehovah hath not chosen."* As Samuel must be the subject to the verb וַיֹּאמֶר in vv. 8–10, we may assume that he had communicated the object of his coming to Jesse.

1 Samuel 16:11. After the seventh had been presented, and the Lord had not pointed nay one of them out as the chosen one, *"Samuel said to Jesse, Are these all the boys?"* When Jesse replied that there was still *the smallest,* i.e., the youngest, left, and he was keeping the sheep, he directed him to fetch him; *"for,"* said he, *"we will not sit down till he has come hither,"* סָבַב, to surround, sc., the table, upon which the meal was arranged. This is implied in the context.

1 Samuel 16:12, 13. When David arrived,—and he was *ruddy,* also *of beautiful eyes and good looks* (אַדְמוֹנִי, used to denote the reddish colour of the hair, which was regarded as a mark of beauty in southern lands, where the hair is generally black. עִם is an adverb here = therewith), and therefore, so far as his looks and figure were concerned, well fitted, notwithstanding his youth, for the office to which the Lord had chosen him, since corporeal beauty was one of the outward distinctions of a king,—the Lord pointed him out to the prophet as the chosen one; whereupon he anointed him in the midst of his brethren. Along with the anointing the Spirit of Jehovah came upon David from that day forward. But Samuel returned to Ramah when the sacrificial meal was over. There is nothing recorded concerning any words of Samuel to David at the time of the anointing and in explanation of its meaning, as in the case of Saul (1 Samuel 10:1). In all probability Samuel said nothing at the time, since, according to v. 2, he had good reason for keeping the matter secret, not only on his own account, but still more for David's sake; so that even the brethren of David who were present knew nothing about the meaning and object of the anointing, but may have imagined that Samuel merely intended to consecrate David as a pupil of the prophets. At the same time, we can hardly suppose that Samuel left Jesse, and even David, in uncertainty as to the object of his mission, and of the anointing which he had performed. He may have communicated all this to both of them, without letting the other sons know. It by no means follows, that because David remained with his father and kept the sheep as before, therefore his calling to be king must have been unknown to him; but only that in the anointing which he had received he did not discern either the necessity or obligation to appear openly as the anointed of the Lord, and that after receiving the Spirit of the Lord in consequence of the anointing, he left the further development of the matter to the Lord in childlike submission, assured that He would prepare and show him the way to the throne in His own good time.

1 Samuel 16:14–23. David's Introduction to the Court of Saul.—V. 14. With the rejection of Saul on the part of God, the Spirit of Jehovah had departed from him, and an evil spirit from Jehovah had come upon him, who filled him with fear and anguish. The *"evil spirit from Jehovah"* which came into Saul in the place of the Spirit of Jehovah, was not merely an inward feeling of depression at the rejection announced to him, which grew into melancholy, and occasionally broke out in passing fits of insanity, but a higher evil power, which took possession of him, and not only deprived him of his peace of mind, but stirred up the feelings, ideas, imagination, and thoughts of his soul to such an extent that at times it drove him even into madness. This demon is called *"an evil spirit* (coming) *from Jehovah,"* because Jehovah had sent it as a punishment, or *"an evil spirit of God"* (*Elohim:* v. 15), or briefly *"a spirit of God"* (*Elohim*), *or "the evil spirit"* (v. 23, compare 1 Samuel 18:10), as being a supernatural, spiritual, evil power; but never "the Spirit of Jehovah," because this is the Spirit proceeding from the holy God, which works upon men as the spirit of strength, wisdom, and knowledge, and generates and fosters the spiritual or divine life. The expression רוּחַ יְהוָֹה רָעָה (1 Samuel 19:9) is an abbreviated form for רוּחַ רָעָה מֵאֵת יְהוָֹה, and is to be interpreted according.

1 Samuel 16:15. When Saul's attendants, i.e., his officers at court, perceived the mental ailment of the king, they advised him to let the evil spirit which troubled him be charmed away by instrumental music. *"Let our lord speak* (command); *thy servants are before thee* (i.e., ready to serve thee): *they will seek a man skilled in playing upon the harp; so will it be well with thee when an evil spirit of God comes upon thee, and he* (the man referred to) *plays with his hands."* The powerful influence exerted by music upon the state of the mind was well known even in the earliest times; so that the wise men of ancient Greece recommended music to soothe the passions, to heal mental diseases, and even to check tumults among the people. From the many examples collected by Grotius, Clericus, and more especially Bochart in the *Hieroz.* P. i. l. 2, c. 44, we will merely cite the words of Censorinus (*de die natali*, c. 12): *"Pythagoras ut animum sua semper divinitate imbueret, priusquam se somno daret et cum esset expergitus, cithara ut ferunt cantare consueverat, et Asclepiades medicus phreneticorum mentes morbo turbatas saepe per symphoniam suae naturae reddidit."*

1 Samuel 16:17, 18. When Saul commanded them to seek out a good player upon a stringed instrument in accordance with this advice, one of the youths (נְעָרִים, a lower class of court servants) said, *"I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, skilled in laying, and a brave man, and a man of war, eloquent, and a handsome man, and Jehovah is with him."* The description of David is *"a mighty man"* and *"a man of war"* does not presuppose that David had already fought bravely in war, but may be perfectly explained from what David himself afterwards affirmed respecting his conflicts with lions and bears (1 Samuel 17:34, 35). The courage and strength which he had then displayed furnished sufficient proofs of heroism for any one to discern in him the future warrior.

1 Samuel 16:19, 20. Saul thereupon sent to ask Jesse for his son David; and Jesse sent him with a present of an ass's burden of bread, a bottle of wine, and a buck-kid. Instead of the singular expression חֲמוֹר לֶחֶם, an ass with bread, i.e., laden with bread, the LXX read חֹמֶר לֶחֶם, and rendered it γόμορ ἄρτων; but this is certainly wrong, as they were not accustomed to measure bread in bushels. These presents show how simple were the customs of Israel and in the court of Saul at that time.

1 Samuel 16:21. When David came to Saul and stood before him, i.e., served him by playing upon his harp, Saul took a great liking to him, and nominated him his armour-bearer, i.e., his adjutant, as a proof of his satisfaction with him, and sent to Jesse to say, *"Let David stand before me,"* i.e., remain in my service, *"for he has found favour in my sight."* The historian then adds (v. 23): *"When the* (evil) *spirit of God came to Saul*

(אֶל, as in 1 Samuel 19:9, is really equivalent to עַל), *and David took the harp and played, there came refreshing to Saul, and he became well, and the evil spirit departed from him."* Thus David came to Saul's court, and that as his benefactor, without Saul having any suspicion of David's divine election to be king of Israel. This guidance on the part of God was a school of preparation to David for his future calling. In the first place, he was thereby lifted out of his quiet and homely calling in the country into the higher sphere of court-life; and thus an opportunity was afforded him not only for intercourse with men of high rank, and to become acquainted with the affairs of the kingdom, but also to display those superior gifts of his intellect and heart with which God had endowed him, and thereby to gain the love and confidence of the people. But at the same time he was also brought into a severe school of affliction, in which his inner man was to be trained by conflicts from without and within, so that he might become a man after God's heart, who should be well fitted to found the true monarchy in Israel.

1 Samuel 17

David's Victory Over Goliath.—Ch. 17:1–54.

1 Samuel 17:1–54. A war between the Philistines and the Israelites furnished David with the opportunity of displaying before Saul and all Israel, and greatly to the terror of the enemies of his people, that heroic power which was firmly based upon his bold and pious trust in the omnipotence of the faithful covenant God (vv. 1–3). A powerful giant, named Goliath, came forward from the ranks of the Philistines, and scornfully challenged the Israelites to produce a man who would decide the war by a single combat with him (vv. 4–11). David, who had returned home for a time from the court of Saul, and had just been sent into the camp by his father with provisions for his elder brothers who were serving in the army, as soon as he heard the challenge and the scornful words of the Philistine, offered to fight with him (vv. 15–37), and killed the giant with a stone from a sling; whereupon the Philistines took to flight, and were pursued by the Israelites to Gath and Ekron (vv. 38–54).

1 Samuel 17:1–11. Some time after David first came to Saul for the purpose of playing, and when he had gone back to his father to Bethlehem, probably because Saul's condition had improved, the Philistines made a fresh attempt to subjugate the Israelites. They collected their army together (*machaneh,* as in Ex. 14:24, Judg. 4:16) to war at *Shochoh,* the present *Shuweikeh,* in the Wady *Sumt,* three hours and a half to the south-west of Jerusalem, in the hilly region between the mountains of Judah and the plain of Philistia (see at Josh. 15:35), and encamped between *Shochoh* and *Azekah,* at *Ephes-dammim,* which has been preserved in the ruins of *Damûm,* about an hour and a half east by north of Shuweikeh; so that *Azekah,* which has not yet been certainly traced, must be sought for to the east or north-east of *Damûm* (see at Josh. 10:10).

1 Samuel 17:2, 3. Saul and the Israelites encamped opposite to them in the *terebinth* valley (*Emek ha-Elah*), i.e., a plain by the Wady *Musur,* and stood in battle array opposite to the Philistines, in such order that the latter stood *on that side against the mountain* (on the slope of the mountain), and the Israelites *on this side against the mountain; and the valley* (הַגַּיְא, the deeper cutting made by the brook in the plain) *was between them.*

1 Samuel 17:4ff. And *the* (well-known) *champion* came out of the camps of the Philistines (אִישׁ הַבֵּנַיִם, the middle-man, who decides a war between two armies by a single combat; Luther, *"the giant,"* according to the ἀνὴρ δυνατός of the LXX, although in v. 23 the Septuagint translators have rendered the word correctly ἀνὴρ ὁ ἀμεσσαῖος, which is probably only another form of ὁ μεσαῖος), named *Goliath* of Gath, one of the chief cities of the Philistines, where there were Anakim still left, according to Josh. 11:22. His height was *six cubits and a span* (6 1/4 cubits), i.e., according to the calculation made by Thenius, about nine feet two inches Parisian measure,—a great height no doubt,

though not altogether unparalleled, and hardly greater than that of the great uncle of Iren, who came to Berlin in the year 1857 (see Pentateuch, p. 869, note).[32] The armour of Goliath corresponded to his gigantic stature: *"a helmet of brass upon his head, and clothes in scale armour, the weight of which was five thousand shekels of brass."* The meaning *scales* is sustained by the words קַשְׂקֶשֶׂת in Lev. 11:9, 10, and Deut. 14:9, 10, and קַשְׂקְשׂוֹת in Ezek. 29:4. שִׁרְיוֹן קַשְׂקַשִּׂים, therefore, is not θώραξ ἁλυσιδωτός (LXX), a coat of mail made of rings worked together like chains, such as were used in the army of the Seleucidae (1 Macc. 6:35), but according to Aquila's φολιδωτόν (scaled), a coat made of plates of brass lying one upon another like scales, such as we find upon the old Assyrian sculptures, where the warriors fighting in chariots, and in attendance upon the king, wear coats of scale armour, descending either to the knees or ankles, and consisting of scales of iron or brass, which were probably fastened to a shirt of felt or coarse linen (see Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains,* vol. ii. p. 335). The account of the weight, 5000 shekels, i.e., according to Thenius, 148 resden pounds, is hardly founded upon the actual weighing of the coat of mail, but probably rested upon a general estimate, which may have been somewhat too high, although we must bear in mind that the coat of mail not only covered the chest and back, but, as in the case of the Assyrian warriors, the lower part of the body also, and therefore must have been very large and very heavy.[33]

1 Samuel 17:6. And *"greaves of brass upon his feet, and a brazen lance* (hung) *between his shoulders,"* i.e., upon his back. כִּידוֹן signifies a lance, or small spear. The LXX and Vulgate, however, adopt the rendering ἀσπὶς χαλκῆ, *clypeus aeneus;* and Luther has followed them, and translates it a brazen shield. Thenius therefore proposes to alter כִּידוֹן into מָגֵן, because the expression "between his shoulders" does not appear applicable to a spear or javelin, which Goliath must have suspended by a strap, but only to a small shield slung over his back, whilst his armour-bearer carried the larger צִנָּה in front of him. But the difficulty founded upon the expression *"between his shoulders"* has been fully met by Bochart (*Hieroz.* i. 2, c. 8), in the examples which he cites from Homer, Virgil, etc., to prove that the ancients carried their own swords slung over their shoulders (ἀμφὶ δ᾽ ὤμοισιν: *Il.* ii. 45, etc.). And Josephus understood the expression in this way (Ant. vi. 9, 1). Goliath had no need of any shield to cover his back, as this was sufficiently protected by the coat of mail. Moreover, the allusion to the כִּידוֹן in v. 45 points to an offensive weapon, and not to a shield.

1 Samuel 17:7. *"And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the point of it six hundred shekels of iron"* (about seventeen pounds). For חֵץ, according to the *Keri* and the parallel passages, 2 Samuel 21:19, 1 Chron. 20:5, we should read עֵץ, wood, i.e., shaft. Before him went the bearer of the *zinnah,* i.e., the great shield.

1 Samuel 17:8. This giant stood and cried to the ranks of the Israelites, *Why come ye out to place yourselves in battle array? Am I not the Philistine, and ye the servants of Saul? Choose ye out a man who may come down to me"* (into the valley where Goliath was standing). The meaning is: "Why would you engage in battle with us? I am the man who represents the strength of the Philistines, and ye are only servants of Saul. If ye have heroes, choose one out, that we may decide the matter in a single combat."

1 Samuel 17:9. *"If he can fight with me, and kill me, we will be your servants; if I overcome him, and slay him, ye shall be our servants, and serve us."* He then said still further (v. 10), *"I have mocked the ranks of Israel this day* (the mockery consisted in his designating the Israelites as servants of Saul, and generally in the triumphant tone in which he issued the challenge to single combat); *give me a man, that we may fight together!"*

1 Samuel 17:11. At these words Saul and all Israel were dismayed and greatly afraid, because not one of them dared to accept the challenge to fight with such a giant.

1 Samuel 17:12–31. *David's arrival in the camp, and wish to fight with Goliath.*—David had been dismissed by Saul at that time, and having returned home, he was feeding his father's sheep once more (Vv. 12–15). Now, when the Israelites were standing opposite to the Philistines, and Goliath was repeating his challenge every day, David was sent by his father into the camp to bring provisions to his three eldest brothers, who were serving in Saul's army, and to inquire as to their welfare (vv. 16–19). He arrived when the Israelites had placed themselves in battle array; and running to his brethren in the ranks, he saw Goliath come out from the ranks of the Philistines, and heard his words, and also learned from the mouth of an Israelite what reward Saul would give to any one who would defeat this Philistine (vv. 20–25). He then inquired more minutely into the matter; and having thereby betrayed his own intention of trying to fight with him (vv. 26, 27), he was sharply reproved by his eldest brother in consequence (vv. 28, 29). He did not allow this to deter him, however, but turned to another with the same question, and received a similar reply (v. 30); whereupon his words were told to the king, who ordered David to come before him (v. 31).

This is, in a condensed form, the substance of the section, which introduces the conquest of Goliath by David in the character of an episode. This first heroic deed was of the greatest importance to David and all Israel, for it was David's first step on the way to the throne, to which Jehovah had resolved to raise him. This explains the fulness and circumstantiality of the narrative, in which the intention is very apparent to set forth most distinctly the marvellous overruling of all the circumstances by God himself. And this circumstantiality of the account is closely connected with the form of the narrative, which abounds in repetitions, that appear to us tautological in many instances, but which belong to the characteristic peculiarities of the early Hebrew style of historical composition.[34]

1 Samuel 17:12–15. Vv. 12–15 are closely connected with the preceding words, *"All Israel was alarmed at the challenge of the Philistine; but David the son of that Ephratite* (*Ephratite,* as in Ruth 1:1, 2) *of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse,"* etc. The verb and predicate do not follow till v. 15; so that the words occur here in the form of an anacolouthon. The traditional introduction of the verb הָיָה between וְדָוִד and בֶּן־אִישׁ (David *was* the son of that Ephratite) is both erroneous and misleading. If the words were to be understood in this way, הָיָה could no more be omitted here than הָיְתָה in 2 Chron. 22:3, 11. The true explanation is rather, that vv. 12–15 form one period expanded by parentheses, and that the historian lost sight of the construction with which he commenced in the intermediate clauses; so that he started afresh with the subject וְדָוִד in v. 15, and proceeded with what he had to say concerning David, doing this at the same time in such a form that what he writes is attached, so far as the sense if concerned, to the parenthetical remarks concerning Jesse's eldest sons. To bring out distinctly the remarkable chain of circumstances by which David was led to undertake the conflict with Goliath, he links on to the reference to his father certain further notices respecting David's family and his position at that time. Jesse had eight sons and was an old man in the time of Saul. בָּא בַאֲנָשִׁים, *"come among the weak."* אֲנָשִׁים generally means, no doubt, people or men. But this meaning does not give any appropriate sense here; and the supposition that the word has crept in through a slip of the pen for בַּשָּׁנִים, is opposed not only by the authority of the early translators, all of whom read אֲנָשִׁים, but also by the circumstance that the expression בּוֹא בַּשָּׁנִים does not occur in

the whole of the Old Testament, and that בּוֹא בַּיָּמִים alone is used with this signification.

1 Samuel 17:13. *"The three great* (i.e., eldest) *sons of Jesse had gone behind Saul into the war."* הָלְכוּ, which appears superfluous after the foregoing וַיֵּלְכוּ, has been defended by Böttcher, as necessary to express the pluperfect, which the thought requires, since the *imperfect consec.* וַיֵּלְכוּ, when attached to a substantive and participial clause, merely expresses the force of the aorist. Properly, therefore, it reads thus: *"And then* (in Jesse's old age) *the three eldest sons followed, had followed, Saul;"* a very ponderous construction indeed, but quite correct, and even necessary, with the great deficiency of forms, to express the pluperfect. The names of these three sons agree with 1 Samuel 16:6–9, whilst the third, *Shammah,* is called *Shimeah* (שִׁמְעָה) in 2 Samuel 13:3, 32, שִׁמְעִי in 2 Samuel 21:21, and שִׁמְעָא in 1 Chron. 2:13; 20:7.

1 Samuel 17:15. *"But David was going and returning away from Saul:"* i.e., he went backwards and forwards from Saul to feed his father's sheep in Bethlehem; so that he was not in the permanent service of Saul, but at that very time was with his father. The latter is to be supplied from the context.

1 Samuel 17:16. The Philistine drew near (to the Israelitish ranks) morning and evening, and stationed himself for forty days (in front of them). This remark continues the description of Goliath's appearance, and introduces the account which follows. Whilst the Philistine was coming out every day for forty days long with his challenge to single combat, Jesse sent his son David into the camp. *"Take now for thy brethren this ephah of parched grains* (see Lev. 23:13), *and these ten loaves, and bring them quickly into the camp to thy brethren."*

1 Samuel 17:18. *"And these ten slices of soft cheese* (so the ancient versions render it) *bring to the chief captain over thousand, and visit thy brethren to inquire after their welfare, and bring with you a pledge from them"*—a pledge that they are alive and well. This seems the simplest explanation of the word עֲרֻבָּתָם, of which very different renderings were given by the early translators.

1 Samuel 17:19. *"But Saul and they* (the brothers), *and the whole of the men of Israel, are in the terebinth valley,"* etc. This statement forms part of Jesse's words.

1 Samuel 17:20, 21. In pursuance of this commission, David went in the morning *to the waggon-rampart,* when the army, which was going out (of the camp) into battle array, raised the war-cry, and Israel and the Philistines placed themselves *battle-array against battle-array.* וְהַחַיִל וגו׳ is a circumstantial clause, and the predicate is introduced with וְהֵרֵעוּ, as וְהַחַיִל וגו׳ is placed at the head absolutely: *"and as for the army which,* etc., *it raised a shout."* הֵרֵעַ בַּמִּלְחָמָה, *lit.* to make a noise in war, i.e., *to raise a war-cry.*

1 Samuel 17:22. David left the vessels with the provisions in the charge of the keeper of the vessels, and ran into the ranks to inquire as to the health of his brethren.

1 Samuel 17:23. Whilst he was talking with them, the champion (middle-man) Goliath drew near, and spoke according to those words (the words contained in vv. 8ff.), and David heard it. מִמַּעֲרוֹת פלׅ is probably an error for מִמַּעַרְכוֹת פלׅ (*Keri,* LXX, Vulg.; cf. v. 26). If the *Chethibh* were the proper reading, it would suggest an Arabic word signifying a crowd of men (Dietrich on *Ges. Lex.*).

1 Samuel 17:24, 25. All the Israelites fled from Goliath, and were sore afraid. They said (אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל is a collective noun), *"Have ye seen this man who is coming?* (הֲרְאִיתֶם, with *Dagesh dirim* as in 1 Samuel 10:24. *Surely to defy Israel is he coming; and whoever shall slay him, the king will enrich him with great wealth, and give him his daughter, and make his father's house* (i.e., his family) *free in Israel,"* viz., from taxes and public burdens. There is nothing said afterwards

about the fulfilment of these promises. But it by no means follows from this, that the statement is to be regarded as nothing more than an exaggeration, that had grown up among the people, of what Saul had really said. There is all the less probability in this, from the fact that, according to v. 27, the people assured him again of the same thing. In all probability Saul had actually made some such promises as these, but did not feel himself bound to fulfil them afterwards, because he had not made them expressly to David himself.

1 Samuel 17:26. When David heard these words, he made more minute inquiries from the bystanders about the whole matter, and dropped some words which gave rise to the supposition that he wanted to go and fight with this Philistine himself. This is implied in the words, *"For who is the Philistine, this uncircumcised one* (i.e., standing as he does outside the covenant with Jehovah), *that he insults the ranks of the living God!"* whom he has defied in His army. "He must know," says the *Berleburger Bible,* "that he has not to do with men, but with God. With a living God he will have to do, and not with an idol."

1 Samuel 17:28. David's eldest brother was greatly enraged at his talking thus with the men, and reproved David: *"Why hast thou come down* (from Bethlehem, which stood upon high ground, to the scene of the war), *and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the desert?" "Those few sheep,"* the loss of only one of which would be a very great loss to our family. *"I know thy presumption, and the wickedness of thy heart; for thou hast come down to look at the war;"* i.e., thou art not contented with thy lowly calling, but aspirest to lofty things; it gives thee pleasure to look upon bloodshed. Eliab sought for the splinter in his brother's eye, and was not aware of the beam in his own. The very things with which he charged his brother—presumption and wickedness of heart—were most apparent in his scornful reproof.

1 Samuel 17:29, 30. David answered very modestly, and so as to put the scorn of his reprover to shame: *"What have I done, then? It was only a word"*—a very allowable inquiry certainly. He then turned from him (Eliab) to another who was standing by; and having repeated his previous words, he received the same answer from the people.

1 Samuel 17:31. David's words were told to Saul, who had him sent for immediately.

1 Samuel 17:32–40. *David's resolution to fight with Goliath; and his equipment for the conflict.*—V. 32. When in the presence of Saul, David said, *"Let no man's heart* (i.e., courage) *fail on his account* (on account of the Philistine, about whom they had been speaking): *thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."*

1 Samuel 17:33ff. To Saul's objection that he, a mere youth, could not fight with this Philistine, a man of war from his youth up, David replied, that as a shepherd he had taken a sheep out of the jaws of a lion and a bear, and had also slain them both. The article before אֲרִי and דֹּוב points out these animals as the *well-known* beasts of prey. By the expression וְאֶת־הַדֹּוב the bear is subordinated to the lion, or rather placed afterwards, as something which came in addition to it; so that אֵת is to be taken as a *nota accus.* (vid., Ewald, § 277, *a*), though it is not to be understood as implying that the lion and the bear went together in search of prey. The subordination or addition is merely a logical one: not only the lion, but also the bear, which seized the sheep, did David slay. זֶה, which we find in most of the editions since the time of Jac. Chayim, 1525, is an error in writing, or more correctly in hearing, for שֶׂה, a sheep. *"And I went out after it; and when it rose up against me, I seized it by its beard, and smote it, and killed it."* זָקָן, beard and chin, signifies *the bearded chin.* Thenius proposes, though without any necessity, to alter בִּזְקָנוֹ into בִּגְרוֹנוֹ, for the simple but weak reason, that neither lions nor bears have any actual beard. We have only to think, for example, of the λῖς ἠὐγένειος in Homer (*Il.* xv. 275, xvii. 109), or the *barbam vellere mortuo leoni* of Martial (x. 9). Even in modern times we read of lions having been killed by Arabs with a

stick (see Rosenmüller, *Bibl. Althk.* iv. 2, pp. 132–3). The constant use of the *singular* suffix is sufficient to show, that when David speaks of the lion and the bear, he connects together two different events, which took place at different times, and then proceeds to state how he smote both the one and the other of the two beasts of prey.

1 Samuel 17:36. *"Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and the Philistine, this uncircumcised one, shall become like one of them* (i.e., the same thing shall happen to him as to the lion and the bear), *because he has defied the ranks of the living God." "And,"* he continued (v. 37), *"the Lord who delivered me out of the hand* (the power) *of the lion and the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."* David's courage rested, therefore, upon his confident belief that the living God would not let His people be defied by the heathen with impunity. Saul then desired for him the help of the Lord in carrying out his resolution, and bade him put on his own armour-clothes, and bird on his armour. מַדָּיו (his clothes) signifies probably a peculiar kind of clothes which were worn under the armour, a kind of armour-coat to which the sword was fastened.

1 Samuel 17:39, 40. When he was thus equipped with brazen helmet, coat of mail, and sword, David began to walk, but soon found that he could do nothing with these. He therefore said to Saul, *"I cannot go in these things, for I have not tried them;"* and having taken them off, he took his shepherd's staff in his hand, sought out five smooth stones from the brook-valley, and put them in the shepherd's thing that he had, namely his shepherd's bag. He then took the sling in his hand, and went up to the Philistine. In the exercise of his shepherd's calling he may have become so skilled in the use of the sling, that, like the Benjaminites mentioned in Judg. 20:16, he could sling at a hair's-breadth, and not miss.

1 Samuel 17:41–54. *David and Goliath: fall of Goliath, and flight of the Philistines.*—V. 41. The Philistine came closer and closer to David.

1 Samuel 17:42ff. When he saw David, *"he looked at him, and despised him,"* i.e., he looked at him contemptuously, because he was a youth (as in 1 Samuel 16:12); *"and then said to him, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with sticks?"* (the plural מַקְלוֹת is used in contemptuous exaggeration of the armour of David, which appeared so thoroughly unfit for the occasion); *"and cursed David by his God* (i.e., making use of the name of Jehovah in his cursing, and thus defying not David only, but the God of Israel also), *and finished with the challenge, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the birds of heaven and the beasts of the field"* (to eat). It was with such threats as these that Homer's heroes used to defy one another (vid., Hector's threat, for example, in *Il.* xiii. 831–2).

1 Samuel 17:45ff. David answered this defiance with bold, believing courage: *"Thou comest to me with sword, and javelin, and lance; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Saboath, the God of the ranks of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hand; and I shall smite thee, and cut off thine head, and give the corpse of the army of the Philistines to the birds this day … And all the world shall learn that Israel hath a God; and this whole assembly shall discover that Jehovah bringeth deliverance* (victory) *not by sword and spear: for war belongeth to Jehovah, and He will give you into our hand."* Whilst Goliath boasted of his strength, David founded his own assurance of victory upon the Almighty God of Israel, whom the Philistine had defied. פֶּגֶר is to be taken collectively. יֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל does not mean "God is for Israel," but "Israel hath a God," so that *Elohim* is of course used here in a pregnant sense. This *God* is Jehovah; war is his, i.e., He is the Lord of war, who has both war and its results in His power.

1 Samuel 17:48, 49. When the Philistines rose up, drawing near towards David (קָם and יֵלֶךְ simply serve to set forth the occurrence in a more pictorial manner), *David hastened and ran to the battle array to meet him,* took a stone out of his pocket, hurled it, and hit the Philistine on

his temples, so that the stone entered them, and Goliath fell upon his face to the ground.

1 Samuel 17:50. V. 50 contains a remark by the historian with reference to the result of the conflict: *"Thus was David stronger than the Philistine, with a sling and stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him without a sword in his hand."* And then in v. 51 the details are given, namely, that David cut off the head of the fallen giant with his own sword. Upon the downfall of their hero the Philistines were terrified and fled; whereupon the Israelites rose up with a cry to pursue the flying foe, and pursued them *"to a valley, and to the gates of Ekron."* The first place mentioned is a very striking one. The *"valley"* cannot mean the one which divided the two armies, according to v. 3, not only because the article is wanting, but still more from the facts themselves. For it is neither stated, nor really probable, that the Philistines had crossed that valley, so as to make it possible to pursue them into it again. But if the word refers to some other valley, it seems very strange that nothing further should be said about it. Both these circumstances render the reading itself, גיא, suspicious, and give great probability to the conjecture that גיא is only a copyist's error for *Gath,* which is the rendering given by the LXX, especially when taken in connection with the following clause, *"to Gath and to Ekron"* (v. 52).

1 Samuel 17:52. *"And wounded of the Philistines fell on the way to Shaaraim, and to Gath and to Ekron." Shaaraim* is the town of *Saarayim,* in the lowland of Judah, and has probably been preserved in the Tell *Kefr Zakariya* (see at Josh. 15:36). On *Gath* and *Ekron,* see at Josh. 13:3.

1 Samuel 17:53. After returning from the pursuit of the flying foe, the Israelites plundered the camp of the Philistines. דָּלַק אַחֲרֵי, to pursue hotly, as in Gen. 31:36.

1 Samuel 17:54. But David took the head of Goliath and brought it to Jerusalem, and put his armour in his tent. אֹהֶל is an antiquated term for a dwelling-place, as in 1 Samuel 4:10; 13:2, etc. The reference is to David's house at Bethlehem, to which he returned with the booty after the defeat of Goliath, and that by the road which ran past Jerusalem, where he left the head of Goliath. There is no anachronism in these statements; for the assertion made by some, that Jerusalem was not yet in the possession of the Israelites, rests upon a confusion between the citadel of Jebus upon Zion, which was still in the hands of the Jebusites, and the city of Jerusalem, in which Israelites had dwelt for a long time (see at Josh. 15:63, and Judg. 1:8). Nor is there any contradiction between this statement and 1 Samuel 21:9, where Goliath's sword is said to have been preserved in the tabernacle at Nob: for it is not affirmed that David *kept* Goliath's armour in his own home, but only that he took it thither; and the supposition that Goliath's sword was afterwards deposited by him in the sanctuary in honour of the Lord, is easily reconcilable with this. Again, the statement in 1 Samuel 18:2, to the effect that, after David's victory over Goliath, Saul did not allow him to return to his father's house any more, is by no means at variance with this explanation of the verse before us. For the statement in question must be understood in accordance with 1 Samuel 17:15, viz., as signifying that from that time forward Saul did not allow David to return to his father's house to keep the sheep as he had done before, and by no means precludes his paying brief visits to Bethlehem.

Jonathan's Friendship. Saul's Jealousy and Plots Against David.—Ch. 17:55–18:30.

1 Samuel 17:55–18:30. David's victory over Goliath was a turning-point in his life, which opened the way to the throne. But whilst this heroic deed brought him out of his rural shepherd life to the scene of Israel's conflict with its foes, and in these conflicts Jehovah crowned all his undertakings with such evident success, that the Israelites could not fail to discern more and more clearly in him the man whom God had chosen as their future king; it brought him, on the other hand, into such a relation to the royal house, which had been rejected by God, though it still continued to

reign, as produced lasting and beneficial results in connection with his future calling. In the king himself, from whom the Spirit of God had departed, there was soon stirred up such jealousy of David as his rival to whom the kingdom would one day come, that he attempted at first to get rid of him by stratagem; and when this failed, and David's renown steadily increased, he proceeded to open hostility and persecution. On the other hand, the heart of Jonathan clung more and more firmly to David with self-denying love and sacrifice. This friendship on the part of the brave and noble son of the king, not only helped David to bear the more easily all the enmity and persecution of the king when plagued by his evil spirit, but awakened and strengthened in his soul that pure feeling of unswerving fidelity towards the king himself, which amounted even to love of his enemy, and, according to the marvellous counsel of the Lord, contributed greatly to the training of David for his calling to be a king after God's own heart. In the account of the results which followed David's victory over Goliath, not only for himself but also for all Israel, the friendship of Jonathan is mentioned first (vv. 55–1 Samuel 18:5); and this is followed by an account of the growing jealousy of Saul in its earliest stages (vv. 6–30).

1 Samuel 17:55–18:5. *Jonathan's friendship.*— Vv. 55–58. The account of the relation into which David was brought to Saul through the defeat of Goliath is introduced by a supplementary remark, in vv. 55, 56, as to a conversation which took place between Saul and his commander-in-chief Abner concerning David, whilst he was fighting with the giant. So far, therefore, as the actual meaning is concerned, the verbs in vv. 55 and 56 should be rendered as pluperfects. When Saul saw the youth walk boldly up to meet the Philistine, he asked Abner whose son he was; whereupon Abner assured him with an oath that he did not know. In our remarks concerning the integrity of this section (pp. 482f.) we have already observed, with regard to the meaning of the question put by Saul, that it does not presuppose an actual want of acquaintance with the person of David and the name of his father, but only ignorance of the social condition of David's family, with which both Abner and Saul may hitherto have failed to make themselves more fully acquainted.[35]

1 Samuel 17:57, 58. When David returned *"from the slaughter of the Philistine,"* i.e., after the defeat of Goliath, and when Abner, who probably went as commander to meet the brave hero and congratulate him upon his victory, had brought him to Saul, the king addressed the same question to David, who immediately gave him the information he desired. For it is evident that David said more than is here communicated, viz., *"the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite,"* as we have already observed, from the words of 1 Samuel 18:1, which presuppose a protracted conversation between Saul and David. The only reason, in all probability, why this conversation has not been recorded, is that it was not followed by any lasting results either for Jesse or David.

1 Samuel 18

1 Samuel 18:1–5. The bond of friendship which Jonathan formed with David was so evidently the main point, that in v. 1 the writer commences with the love of Jonathan to David, and then after that proceeds in v. 2 to observe that Saul took David to himself from that day forward; whereas it is very evident that Saul told David, either at the time of his conversation with him or immediately afterwards, that he was henceforth to remain with him, i.e., in his service. *"The soul of Jonathan bound itself* (*lit.* chained itself; cf. Gen. 44:30) *to David's soul, and Jonathan loved him as his soul."* The *Chethibh* וַיֶּאֱהָבוֹ with the suffix וֹ attached to the imperfect is very rare, and hence the *Keri* וַיֶּאֱהָבֵהוּ (vid., Ewald, § 249, *b.,* and Olshausen, *Gramm.* p. 469). לָשׁוּב, to return to his house, viz., to engage in his former occupation as shepherd.

1 Samuel 18:3. Jonathan *made a covenant* (i.e., a covenant of friendship) *and* (i.e., with) *David,* because he loved him as his soul.

1 Samuel 18:4. As a sign and pledge of his friendship, Jonathan gave David *his clothes and his armour. Meil,* the upper coat or cloak. *Maddim* is probably the *armour coat* (vid., 1 Samuel 17:39). This is implied in the word וְעַד, which is repeated three times, and by which the different arms were attached more closely to מַדָּיו. For the act itself, compare the exchange of armour made by Glaucus and Diomedes (Hom. *Il.* vi. 230). This seems to have been a common custom in very ancient times, as we meet with it also among the early Celts (see Macpherson's *Ossian*).

1 Samuel 18:5. And David *went out,* sc., to battle; *whithersoever Saul sent him, he acted wisely and prosperously* (יַשְׂכִּיל, as in Josh. 1:8: see at Deut. 29:8). Saul placed him above the men of war in consequence, made him one of their commanders; and he pleased all the people, and the servants of Saul also, i.e., the courtiers of the king, who are envious as a general rule.

1 Samuel 18:6–16. *Saul's jealousy towards David.* [36]—Saul had no sooner attached the conqueror of Goliath to his court, than he began to be jealous of him. The occasion for his jealousy was the celebration of victory at the close of the war with the Philistines.

1 Samuel 18:6, 7. *"When they came,"* i.e., when the warriors returned with Saul from the war, *"when* (as is added to explain what follows) *David returned from the slaughter,"* i.e., from the war in which he had slain Goliath, the women came out of all the towns of Israel, *"to singing and dancing,"* i.e., to celebrate the victory with singing and choral dancing (see the remarks on Ex. 15:20), *"to meet king Saul with tambourines, with joy, and with triangles."* שִׂמְחָה is used here to signify expressions of joy, a *fête,* as in Judg. 16:23, etc. The striking position in which the word stands, viz., between two musical instruments, shows that, the word is to be understood here as referring specially to songs of rejoicing, since according to v. 7 their playing was accompanied with singing. The women who *"sported"* (מְשַׂחֲקוֹת), i.e., performed mimic dances, sang in alternate choruses (*"answered,"* as in Ex. 15:21), *"Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."*

1 Samuel 18:8. Saul was enraged at this. The words displeased him, so that he said, *"They have given David ten thousands, and to me thousands, and there is only the kingdom more for him"* (i.e., left for him to obtain). "In this foreboding utterance of Saul there was involved not only a conjecture which the result confirmed, but a deep inward truth: if the king of Israel stood powerless before the subjugators of his kingdom at so decisive a period as this, and a shepherd boy came and decided the victory, this was an additional mark of his rejection" (O. v. Gerlach).

1 Samuel 18:9. From that day forward Saul *was looking askance* at David. עָוִן, a denom. verb, from עַיִן, an eye, looking askance, is used for עוֹיֵן (*Keri*).

1 Samuel 18:10, 11. The next day the evil spirit fell upon Saul (*"the evil spirit of God;"* see at 1 Samuel 16:14), so that he raved *in his house,* and threw his javelin at David, who played before him *"as day by day,"* but did not hit him, because David *turned away before him twice.* הִתְנַבֵּא does not mean to prophesy in this instance, but *"to rave."* This use of the word is founded upon the ecstatic utterances, in which the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God manifested itself in the prophets (see at 1 Samuel 10:5). וַיָּטֶל, from טוּל, he hurled the javelin, and said (to himself), *"I will pierce David and the wall."* With such force did he hurl his spear; but David turned away from him, i.e., eluded it, twice. His doing so a second time presupposes that Saul hurled the javelin twice; that is to say, he probably swung it twice without letting it go out of his hand,—a supposition which is raised into certainty by the fact that it is not stated here that the javelin entered the wall, as in 1 Samuel 19:10. But even with this view יָטֶל is not to be changed into יִטֹּל, as Thenius proposes, since the verb נָטַל cannot be proved to have ever the meaning to swing.

Saul seems to have held the javelin in his hand as a sceptre, according to ancient custom.

1 Samuel 18:12, 13. *"And Saul was afraid of David, because the Spirit of Jehovah was with him, and had departed from Saul;"* he *"removed him therefore from him,"* i.e., from his immediate presence, by appointing him chief captain over thousand. In this fear of David on the part of Saul, the true reason for his hostile behaviour is pointed out with deep psychological truth. The fear arose from the consciousness that the Lord had departed from him,—a consciousness which forced itself involuntarily upon him, and drove him to make the attempt, in a fit of madness, to put David to death. The fact that David did not leave Saul immediately after this attempt upon his life, may be explained not merely on the supposition that he looked upon this attack as being simply an outburst of momentary madness, which would pass away, but still more from his firm believing confidence, which kept him from forsaking the post in which the Lord had placed him without any act of his own, until he saw that Saul was plotting to take his life, not merely in these fits of insanity, but also at other times, in calm deliberation (vid., 1 Samuel 19:1ff.).

1 Samuel 18:14ff. As chief commander over thousand, he went out and in before the people, i.e., he carried out military enterprises, and that so wisely and prosperously, that the blessing of the Lord rested upon all he did. But these successes on David's part increased Saul's fear of him, whereas all Israel and Judah came to love him as their leader. David's success in all that he took in hand compelled Saul to promote him; and his standing with the people increased with his promotion. But as the Spirit of God had departed from Saul, this only filled him more and more with dread of David as his rival. As the hand of the Lord was visibly displayed in David's success, so, on the other hand, Saul's rejection by God was manifested in his increasing fear of David.

1 Samuel 18:17–30. *Craftiness of Saul in the betrothal of his daughters to David.*—Vv. 17ff. As Saul had promised to give his daughter for a wife to the conqueror of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:25), he felt obliged, by the growing love and attachment of the people to David, to fulfil this promise, and told him that he was ready to do so, with the hope of finding in this some means of destroying David. He therefore offered him his elder daughter *Merab* with words that sounded friendly and kind: *"Only be a brave man to me, and wage the wars of the Lord."* He called the wars with the Philistines *"wars of Jehovah,"* i.e., wars for the maintenance and defence of the kingdom of God, to conceal his own cunning design, and make David feel all the more sure that the king's heart was only set upon the welfare of the kingdom of God. Whoever waged the wars of the Lord might also hope for the help of the Lord. But Saul had intentions of a very different kind. He thought ("said," sc., to himself), *"My hand shall not be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him;"* i.e., I will not put him to death; the Philistines may do that. When Saul's reason had returned, he shrank from laying hands upon David again, as he had done before in a fit of madness. He therefore hoped to destroy him through the medium of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 18:18. But David replied with true humility, without suspecting the craftiness of Saul: *"Who am I, and what is my condition in life, my father's family in Israel, that I should become son-in-law to the king?"* מִי חַיַּי is a difficult expression, and has been translated in different ways, as the meaning which suggests itself first (viz., *"what is my life"*) is neither reconcilable with the מִי (the interrogative personal pronoun), nor suitable to the context. Gesenius (*Thes.* p. 471) and Böttcher give the meaning *"people"* for חַיִּים, and Ewald (*Gramm.* § 179, *b.*) the meaning *"family."* But neither of these meanings can be established. חַיִּים seems evidently to signify the condition in life, the relation in which a person stands to others, and מִי is to be explained on the ground that David referred to the persons who formed the class to which he belonged. *"My father's family"* includes

all his relations. David's meaning was, that neither on personal grounds, nor on account of his social standing, nor because of his lineage, could he make the slightest pretension to the honour of becoming the son-in-law of the king.

1 Samuel 18:19. But Saul did not keep his promise. When the time arrived for its fulfilment, *he gave his daughter to Adriel the Meholathite,* a man of whom nothing further is known.[37]

1 Samuel 18:20–24. *Michal is married to David.*—The pretext under which Saul broke his promise is not given, but it appears to have been, at any rate in part, that Merab had no love to David. This may be inferred from vv. 17, 18, compared with v. 20. *Michal, the younger daughter of Saul, loved David.* When Saul was told this, the thing was quite right in his eyes. He said, *"I will give her to him, that she may become a snare to him, and the hand of the Philistines may come upon him"* (sc., if he tries to get the price which I shall require a dowry; cf. v. 25). He therefore said to David, *"In a second way* (בִּשְׁתַּיִם, as in Job 33:14) *shalt thou become my son-in-law."* Saul said this casually to David; but he made no reply, because he had found out the fickleness of Saul, and therefore put no further trust in his words.

1 Samuel 18:22. Saul therefore employed his courtiers to persuade David to accept his offer. In this way we may reconcile in a very simple manner the apparent discrepancy, that Saul is said to have offered his daughter to David himself, and yet he commissioned his servants to talk to David privately of the king's willingness to give him his daughter. The omission of v. 21*b* in the Septuagint is to be explained partly from the fact that בִּשְׁתַּיִם points back to vv. 17–19, which are wanting in this version, and partly also in all probability from the idea entertained by the translators that the statement itself is at variance with vv. 22ff. The courtiers were to talk to David בַּלָּט, *"in private,"* i.e., as though they were doing it behind the king's back.

1 Samuel 18:23. David replied to the courtiers, *"Does it seem to you a little thing to become son-in-law to the king, seeing that I am a poor and humble man?" "Poor,"* i.e., utterly unable to offer anything like a suitable dowry to the king. This reply was given by David in perfect sincerity, since he could not possibly suppose that the king would give him his daughter without a considerable marriage portion.

1 Samuel 18:24ff. When this answer was reported to the king, he sent word through his courtiers what the price was for which he would give him his daughter. He required no dowry (see at Gen. 34:12), but only a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, i.e., the slaughter of a hundred Philistines, and the proof that this had been done, to avenge himself upon the enemies of the king; whereas, as the writer observes, Saul supposed that he should thus cause David to fall, i.e., bring about his death by the hand of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 18:26, 27. But David was satisfied with Saul's demand, since he had no suspicion of his craftiness, and loved Michal. Even before the days were full, i.e., before the time appointed for the delivery of the dowry and for the marriage had arrived, he rose up with his men, smote two hundred Philistines, and brought their foreskins, which were placed in their full number before the king; whereupon Saul was obliged to give him Michal his daughter to wife. The words *"and the days were not full"* (v. 26) form a circumstantial clause, which is to be connected with the following sentence, *"David arose,"* etc. David delivered twice the price demanded. *"They made them full to the king,"* i.e., they placed them in their full number before him.

1 Samuel 18:28, 29. The knowledge of the fact that David had carried out all his enterprises with success had already filled the melancholy king with fear. But when the failure of this new plan for devoting David to certain death had forced the conviction upon him that Jehovah was with David, and that he was miraculously protected by Him; and when, in addition to this, there was the love of his daughter Michal to

David; his fear of David grew into a lifelong enmity. Thus his evil spirit urged him ever forward to greater and greater hardness of heart.

1 Samuel 18:30. The occasion for the practical manifestation of this enmity was the success of David in all his engagements with the Philistines. As often as the princes of the Philistines went out (sc., to war with Israel), David acted more wisely and prosperously than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was held in great honour. With this general remark the way is prepared for the further history of Saul's conduct towards David.

1 Samuel 19

Jonathan's Intercession for David. Saul's Renewed Attempts to Murder Him. David's Flight to Samuel.—Ch. 19.

1 Samuel 19:1–7. Jonathan warded off the first outbreak of deadly enmity on the part of Saul towards David. When Saul spoke to his son Jonathan and all his servants about his intention to kill David (לְהָמִית אֶת־דָּוִד, i.e., not that they should kill David, but *"that he intended to kill him"*), Jonathan reported this to David, because he was greatly attached to him, and gave him this advice: *"Take heed to thyself in the morning; keep thyself in a secret place, and hide thyself. I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will talk to my father about thee* (דִּבֶּר בְּ, as in Deut. 6:7, Ps. 87:3, etc., to talk of or about a person), *and see what* (sc., he will say), *and show it to thee."* David was to conceal himself in the field near to where Jonathan would converse with his father about him; not that he might hear the conversation in his hiding-place, but that Jonathan might immediately report to him the result of his conversation, without there being any necessity for going far away from his father, so as to excite suspicion that he was in league with David.

1 Samuel 19:4, 5. Jonathan then endeavoured with all the modesty of a son to point out most earnestly to his father the grievous wickedness involved in his conduct towards David. *"Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; for he hath not sinned against thee, and his works are very good* (i.e., very useful) *to thee. He hath risked his life* (see at Judg. 12:3), *and smitten the Philistines, and Jehovah hath wrought a great salvation of all Israel. Thou hast seen it, and rejoiced; and wherefore wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"*

1 Samuel 19:6, 7. These words made an impression upon Saul. He swore, *"As Jehovah liveth, he* (David) *shall not be put to death;"* whereupon Jonathan reported these words to David, and brought him to Saul, so that he was with him again as before. But this reconciliation, unfortunately, did not last long.

1 Samuel 19:8–17. Another great defeat which David had inflicted upon the Philistines excited Saul to such an extent, that in a fit of insanity he endeavoured to pierce David with his javelin as he was playing before him. The words *Ruach Jehovah* describe the attack of madness in which Saul threw the javelin at David according to its higher cause, and that, as implied in the words *Ruach Jehovah* in contrast with *Ruach Elohim* (1 Samuel 18:10; 16:15), as inflicted upon him by Jehovah. The thought expressed is, that the growth of Saul's melancholy was a sign of the hardness of heart to which Jehovah had given him up on account of his impenitence. David happily escaped this javelin also. He slipped away from Saul, so that he hurled the javelin into the wall; whereupon David fled and escaped the same night, i.e., the night after this occurrence. This remark somewhat anticipates the course of the events, as the author, according to the custom of Hebrew historians, gives the result at once, and then proceeds to describe in detail the more exact order of the events.

1 Samuel 19:11. *"Saul sent messengers to David's house,"* to which David had first fled, *"to watch him* (that he might not get away again), *and to put him to death in the* (next) *morning."* Michal made him acquainted with this danger, and then let him down through the window, so

that he escaped. The danger in which David was at that time is described by him in Ps. 59, from which we may see how Saul was surrounded by a number of cowardly courtiers, who stirred up his hatred against David, and were busily engaged in getting the dreaded rival out of the way.

1 Samuel 19:13, 14. Michal then took the *teraphim,*— i.e., in all probability an image of the household gods of the size of life, and, judging from what follows, in human form,— laid it in the bed, and put a piece of woven goats' hair *at his head,* i.e., either round or over the head of the image, and *covered it with the garment* (*beged,* the upper garment, which was generally only a square piece of cloth for wrapping round), and told the messengers whom Saul had sent to fetch him that he was ill. Michal probably kept *teraphim* in secret, like Rachel, because of her barrenness (see at Gen. 31:19). The meaning of כְּבִיר הָעִזִּים is doubtful. The earlier translators took it to mean goat-skin, with the exception of the Seventy, who confounded כְּבִיר with כָּבֵד, *liver,* upon which Josephus founds his account of Michal having placed a still moving goat's liver in the bed, to make the messengers believe that there was a breathing invalid beneath. כְּבִיר, from כָּבַר, signifies something woven, and עִזִּים goats' hair, as in Ex. 25:4. But it is impossible to decide with certainty what purpose the cloth of goats' hair was to serve; whether it was merely to cover the head of the teraphim with hair, and so make it like a human head, or to cover the head and face as if of a person sleeping. The definite article not only before תְּרָפִים and בֶּגֶד, but also with כְּבִיר הָעִזִּים, suggests the idea that all these things belonged to Michal's house furniture, and that כְּבִיר עִזִּים was probably a counterpane made of goats' hair, with which persons in the East are in the habit of covering the head and face when sleeping.

1 Samuel 19:15ff. But when Saul sent the messengers again to see David, and that with the command, *"Bring him up to me in the bed,"* and when they only found the teraphim in the bed, and Saul charged Michal with this act of deceit, she replied, *"He* (David) *said to me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?"—"Behold, teraphim were* (laid) *in the bed."* The verb can be naturally supplied from v. 13. In the words *"Why should I kill thee?"* Michael intimates that she did not mean to let David escape, but was obliged to yield to his threat that he would kill her if she continued to refuse. This prevarication she seems to have considered perfectly justifiable.

1 Samuel 19:18–24. David fled to Samuel at Ramah, and reported to him all that Saul had done, partly to seek for further advice from the prophet who had anointed him, as to his further course, and partly to strengthen himself, by intercourse with him, for the troubles that still awaited him. He therefore went along with Samuel, and dwelt with him in *Naioth.* נוית (to be read נָוְיֹת according to the *Chethibh,* for which the Masoretes have substituted the form נָיוֹת, vv. 19, 23, and 20:1), from נָוֶה or נָוֶא, signifies dwellings; but here it is in a certain sense a proper name, applied to the *coenobium* of the pupils of the prophets, who had assembled round Samuel in the neighbourhood of Ramah. The plural נְוְיֹת points to the fact, that this coenobium consisted of a considerable number of dwelling-places or houses, connected together by a hedge or wall.

1 Samuel 19:19, 20. When Saul was told where this place was, he sent messengers to fetch David. But as soon as the messengers saw the company of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came upon them, so that they also prophesied. The singular וַיֵּרְא is certainly very striking here; but it is hardly to be regarded as merely a copyist's error for the plural וַיִּרְאוּ, because it is extremely improbable that such an error as this should have found universal admission into the MSS; so that it is in all probability to be taken as the original and correct reading, and understood either as

relating to the leader of the messengers, or as used because the whole company of messengers were regarded as one body. The ἁπ. λεγ. לַהֲקָה signifies, according to the ancient versions, an assembly, equivalent to קְהָלָה, from which it arose according to Kimchi and other Rabbins by simple inversion.

1 Samuel 19:21. The same thing happened to a second and third company of messengers, whom Saul sent one after another when the thing was reported to him.

1 Samuel 19:22ff. Saul then set out to Ramah himself, and inquired, as soon as he had arrived at the great pit at *Sechu* (a place near Ramah with which we are not acquainted), where Samuel and David were, and went, according to the answer he received, to the Naioth at Ramah. There the Spirit of God came upon him also, so that he went along prophesying, until he came to the Naioth at Ramah; and there he even took off his clothes, and prophesied before Samuel, and lay there naked all that day, and the whole night as well. עָרוֹם, γυμνός, does not always signify complete nudity, but is also applied to a person with his upper garment off (cf. Isa. 20:2; Micah 1:8; John 21:7). From the repeated expression *"he also,"* in vv. 23, 24, it is not only evident that Saul came into an ecstatic condition of prophesying as well as his servants, but that the prophets themselves, and not merely the servants, took off their clothes like Saul when they prophesied. It is only in the case of וַיִּפֹּל עָרֹם that the expression "he also" is not repeated; from which we must infer, that Saul alone lay there the whole day and night with his clothes off, and in an ecstatic state of external unconsciousness; whereas the ecstasy of his servants and the prophets lasted only a short time, and the clear self-consciousness returned earlier than with Saul. This different is not without significance in relation to the true explanation of the whole affair. Saul had experienced a similar influence of the Spirit of God before, namely, immediately after his anointing by Samuel, when he met a company of prophets who were prophesying at Gibeah, and he had been thereby changed into another man (1 Samuel 10:6ff.). This miraculous seizure by the Spirit of God was repeated again here, when he came near to the seat of the prophets; and it also affected the servants whom he had sent to apprehend David, so that Saul was obliged to relinquish the attempt to seize him. This result, however, we cannot regard as the principal object of the whole occurrence, as Vatablus does when he says, "The spirit of prophecy came into Saul, that David might the more easily escape from his power." Calvin's remarks go much deeper into the meaning: "God," he says, "changed their (the messengers') thoughts and purpose, not only so that they failed to apprehend David according to the royal command, but so that they actually became the companions of the prophets. And God effected this, that the fact itself might show how He holds the hearts of men in His hand and power, and turns and moves them according to His will." Even this, however, does not bring out the full meaning of the miracle, and more especially fails to explain why the same thing should have happened to Saul in an intensified degree. Upon this point Calvin simply observes, that "Saul ought indeed to have been strongly moved by these things, and to have discerned the impossibility of his accomplishing anything by fighting against the Lord; but he was so hardened that he did not perceive the hand of God: for he hastened to Naioth himself, when he found that his servants mocked him;" and in this proceeding on Saul's part he discovers a sign of his increasing hardness of heart. Saul and his messengers, the zealous performers of his will, ought no doubt to have learned, from what happened to them in the presence of the prophets, that God had the hearts of men in His power, and guided them at His will; but they were also to be seized by the might of the Spirit of God, which worked in the prophets, and thus brought to the consciousness, that Saul's raging against David was fighting against Jehovah and His Spirit, and so to be led to give up the evil thoughts of their heart. Saul was seized by this mighty influence of the Spirit of God in a more powerful manner than his servants were, both

because he had most obstinately resisted the leadings of divine grace, and also in order that, if it were possible, his hard heart might be broken and subdued by the power of grace. If, however, he should nevertheless continue obstinately in his rebellion against God, he would then fall under the judgment of hardening, which would be speedily followed by his destruction. This new occurrence in Saul's life occasioned a renewal of the proverb: *"Is Saul also among the prophets?"* The words *"wherefore they say"* do not imply that the proverb was first used at this time, but only that it received a new exemplification and basis in the new event in Saul's experience. The origin of it has been already mentioned in 1 Samuel 10:12, and the meaning of it was there explained.

This account is also worthy of note, as having an important bearing upon the so-called *Schools of the Prophets* in the time of Samuel, to which, however, we have only casual allusions. From the passage before us we learn that there was a company of prophets at Ramah, under the superintendence of Samuel, whose members lived in a common building (נוית), and that Samuel had his own house at Ramah (1 Samuel 7:17), though he sometimes lived in the *Naioth* (cf. vv. 18ff.). The origin and history of these schools are involved in obscurity. If we bear in mind, that, according to 1 Samuel 3:1, before the call of Samuel as prophet, the prophetic word was very rare in Israel, and prophecy was not widely spread, there can be no doubt that these unions of prophets arose in the time of Samuel, and were called into existence by him. The only uncertainty is whether there were other such unions in different parts of the land beside the one at Ramah. In 1 Samuel 10:5, 10, we find a band of prophesying prophets at Gibeah, coming down from the sacrificial height there, and going to meet Saul; but it is not stated there that this company had its seat at Gibeah, although it may be inferred as probable, from the name *"Gibeah of God"* (see the commentary on 1 Samuel 10:5, 6). No further mention is made of these in the time of Samuel; nor do we meet with them again till the times of Elijah and Elisha, when we find them, under the name of *sons of the prophets* (1 Kings 20:35), living in considerable numbers at Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho (vid., 2 Kings 4:38; 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1; 6:1; 9:1). According to 1 Samuel 4:38, 42, 43, about a hundred sons of the prophets sat before Elisha at Gilgal, and took their meals together. The number at Jericho may have been quite as great; for fifty men of the sons of the prophets went with Elijah and Elisha to the Jordan (comp. 1 Samuel 2:7 with vv. 16, 17). These passages render it very probable that the sons of the prophets also lived in a common house. And this conjecture is raised into a certainty by 1 Samuel 6:1ff. In this passage, for example, they are represented as saying to Elisha: "The place where we sit before thee is too strait for us; let us go to the Jordan, and let each one fetch thence a beam, and build ourselves a place to dwell in there." It is true that we might, if necessary, supply לְפָנֶיךָ from v. 1, after לָשֶׁבֶת שָׁם, "to sit before thee," and so understand the words as merely referring to the erection of a more commodious place of meeting. But if they built it by the Jordan, we can hardly imagine that it was merely to serve as a place of meeting, to which they would have to make pilgrimages from a distance, but can only assume that they intended to live there, and assemble together under the superintendence of a prophet. In all probability, however, only such as were unmarried lived in a common building. Many of them were married, and therefore most likely lived in houses of their own (2 Kings 4:1ff.). We may also certainly assume the same with reference to the unions of prophets in the time of Samuel, even if it is impossible to prove that these unions continued uninterruptedly from the time of Samuel down to the times of Elijah and Elisha. Oehler argues in support of this, "that the historical connection, which can be traced in the influence of prophecy from the time of Samuel forwards, may be most easily explained from the uninterrupted continuance of these supports; and also that the large number of

prophets, who must have been already there according to 1 Kings 18:13 when Elijah first appeared, points to the existence of such unions as these." But the historical connection in the influence of prophecy, or, in other words, the uninterrupted succession of prophets, was also to be found in the kingdom of Judah both before and after the times of Elijah and Elisha, and down to the Babylonian captivity, without our discovering the slightest trace of any schools of the prophets in that kingdom.

All that can be inferred from 1 Kings 18 is, that the large number of prophets mentioned there (vv. 4 and 13) were living in the time of Elijah, but not that they were there when he first appeared. The first mission of Elijah to king Ahab (1 Samuel 17) took place about three years before the events described in 1 Kings 18, and even this first appearance of the prophet in the presence of the king is not to be regarded as the commencement of his prophetic labours. How long Elijah had laboured before he announced to Ahab the judgment of three years' drought, cannot indeed be decided; but if we consider that he received instructions to call Elisha to be his assistant and successor not very long after this period of judgment had expired (1 Kings 19:16ff.), we may certainly assume that he had laboured in Israel for many years, and may therefore have founded unions of the prophets. In addition, however, to the absence of any allusion to the continuance of these schools of the prophets, there is another thing which seems to preclude the idea that they were perpetuated from the time of Samuel to that of Elijah, viz., the fact that the schools which existed under Elijah and Elisha were only to be found in the kingdom of the ten tribes, and never in that of Judah, where we should certainly expect to find them if they had been handed down from Samuel's time. Moreover, Oehler also acknowledges that "the design of the schools of the prophets, and apparently their constitution, were not the same under Samuel as in the time of Elijah." This is confirmed by the fact, that the members of the prophets' unions which arose under Samuel are never called "sons of the prophets," as those who were under the superintendence of Elijah and Elisha invariably are (see the passages quoted above). Does not this peculiar epithet seem to indicate, that the "sons of the prophets" stood in a much more intimate relation to Elijah and Elisha, as their spiritual fathers, than the חֶבֶל הַנְּבִיאִים or לַהֲקַת הַנְּבִיאִים did to Samuel as their president? (1 Samuel 19:20.) בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים does not mean *filii prophetae,* i.e., sons who are prophets, as some maintain, though without being able to show that בְּנֵי is ever used in this sense, but *filii prophetarum,* disciples or scholars of the prophets, from which it is very evident that these sons of the prophets stood in a relation of dependence to the prophets (Elijah and Elisha), i.e., of subordination to them, and followed their instructions and admonitions. They received commissions from them, and carried them out (vid., 2 Kings 9:1). On the other hand, the expressions חֶבֶל and לַהֲקָה simply point to combinations for common working under the presidency of Samuel, although the words נִצָּב עֲלֵיהֶם certainly show that the direction of these unions, and probably the first impulse to form them, proceeded from Samuel, so that we might also call these societies schools of the prophets.

The opinions entertained with regard to the nature of these unions, and their importance in relation to the development of the kingdom of God in Israel, differ very widely from one another. Whilst some of the fathers (Jerome for example) looked upon them as an Old Testament order of monks; others, such as Tennemann, Meiners, and Winer, compare them to the Pythagorean societies. Kranichfeld supposes that they were free associations, and chose a distinguished prophet like Samuel as their president, in order that they might be able to cement their union the more firmly through his influence, and carry out their vocation with the greater success.[38] The truth lies between these two extremes. The latter view, which precludes almost every relation of dependence and community, is not reconcilable with the name "sons of the prophets," or with 1 Samuel

19:20, where Samuel is said to have stood at the head of the prophesying prophets as נִצָּב עֲלֵיהֶם, and has no support whatever in the Scriptures, but is simply founded upon the views of modern times and our ideas of liberty and equality. The prophets' unions had indeed so far a certain resemblance to the monastic orders of the early church, that the members lived together in the same buildings, and performed certain sacred duties in common; but if we look into the aim and purpose of monasticism, they were the very opposite of those of the prophetic life. The prophets did not wish to withdraw from the tumult of the world into solitude, for the purpose of carrying on a contemplative life of holiness in this retirement from the earthly life and its affairs; but their unions were associations formed for the purpose of mental and spiritual training, that they might exert a more powerful influence upon their contemporaries. They were called into existence by chosen instruments of the Lord, such as Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, whom the Lord had called to be His prophets, and endowed with a peculiar measure of His Spirit for this particular calling, that they might check the decline of religious life in the nation, and bring back the rebellious "to the law and the testimony." Societies which follow this as their purpose in life, so long as they do not lose sight of it, will only separate and cut themselves off from the external world, so far as the world itself opposes them, and pursues them with hostility and persecution. The name "schools of the prophets" is the one which expresses most fully the character of these associations; only we must not think of them as merely educational institutions, in which the pupils of the prophets received instruction in prophesying or in theological studies.[39] We are not in possession indeed of any minute information concerning their constitution. Prophesying could neither be taught nor communicated by instruction, but was a gift of God which He communicated according to His free will to whomsoever He would. But the communication of this divine gift was by no means an arbitrary thing, but presupposed such a mental and spiritual disposition on the part of the recipient as fitted him to receive it; whilst the exercise of the gift required a thorough acquaintance with the law and the earlier revelations of God, which the schools of the prophets were well adapted to promote. It is therefore justly and generally assumed, that the study of the law and of the history of the divine guidance of Israel formed a leading feature in the occupations of the pupils of the prophets, which also included the cultivation of sacred poetry and music, and united exercises for the promotion of the prophetic inspiration. That the study of the earlier revelations of God was carried on, may be very safely inferred from the fact that from the time of Samuel downwards the writing of sacred history formed an essential part of the prophet's labours, as has been already observed at pp. 8, 9 (translation). The cultivation of sacred music and poetry may be inferred partly from the fact that, according to 1 Samuel 10:5, musicians walked in front of the prophesying prophets, playing as they went along, and partly also from the fact that sacred music not only received a fresh impulse from David, who stood in a close relation to the association of prophets at Ramah, but was also raised by him into an integral part of public worship. At the same time, music was by no means cultivated merely that the sons of the prophets might employ it in connection with their discourses, but also as means of awakening holy susceptibilities and emotions in the soul, and of lifting up the spirit of God, and so preparing it for the reception of divine revelations (see at 2 Kings 3:15). And lastly, we must include among the spiritual exercises prophesying in companies, as at Gibeah (1 Samuel 10:5) and Ramah (1 Samuel 19:20).

The outward occasion for the formation of these communities we have to seek for partly in the creative spirit of the prophets Samuel and Elijah, and partly in the circumstances of the times in which they lived. The time of Samuel forms a turning-point in the development of the Old Testament kingdom of God. Shortly after the call of Samuel the judgment fell upon the

sanctuary, which had been profaned by the shameful conduct of the priests: the tabernacle lost the ark of the covenant, and ceased in consequence to be the scene of the gracious presence of God in Israel. Thus the task fell upon Samuel, as prophet of the Lord, to found a new house for that religious life which he had kindled, by collecting together into closer communities, those who had been awakened by his word, not only for the promotion of their own faith under his direction, but also for joining with him in the spread of the fear of God and obedience to the law of the Lord among their contemporaries. But just as, in the time of Samuel, it was the fall of the legal sanctuary and priesthood which created the necessity for the founding of schools of the prophets; so in the times of Elijah and Elisha, and in the kingdom of the ten tribes, it was the utter absence of any sanctuary of Jehovah which led these prophets to found societies of prophets, and so furnish the worshippers of Jehovah, who would not bend their knees to Baal, with places and means of edification, as a substitute for what the righteous in the kingdom of Judah possessed in the temple and the Levitical priesthood. But the reasons for the establishment of prophets' schools were not to be found merely in the circumstances of the times. There was a higher reason still, which must not be overlooked in our examination of these unions, and their importance in relation to the theocracy. We may learn from the fact that the disciples of the prophets who were associated together under Samuel are found prophesying (1 Samuel 10:10; 19:20), that they were also seized by the Spirit of God, and that the Divine Spirit which moved them exerted a powerful influence upon all who came into contact with them. Consequently the founding of associations of prophets is to be regarded as an operation of divine grace, which is generally manifested with all the greater might where sin most mightily abounds. As the Lord raised up prophets for His people at the times when apostasy had become great and strong, that they might resist idolatry with almighty power; so did He also create for himself organs of His Spirit in the schools of the prophets, who united with their spiritual fathers in fighting for His honour. It was by no means an accidental circumstance, therefore, that these unions are only met with in the times of Samuel and of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. These times resembled one another in the fact, that in both of them idolatry had gained the upper hand; though, at the same time, there were some respects in which they differed essentially from one another. In the time of Samuel the people did not manifest the same hostility to the prophets as in the time of Elijah. Samuel stood at the head of the nation as judge even during the reign of Saul; and after the rejection of the latter, he still stood so high in authority and esteem, that Saul never ventured to attack the prophets even in his madness. Elijah and Elisha, on the other hand, stood opposed to a royal house which was bent upon making the worship of Baal the leading religion of the kingdom; and they had to contend against priest of calves and prophets of Baal, who could only be compelled by hard strokes to acknowledge the Lord of Sabaoth and His prophets. In the case of the former, what had to be done was to bring the nation to a recognition of its apostasy, to foster the new life which was just awakening, and to remove whatever hindrances might be placed in its way by the monarchy. In the time of the latter, on the contrary, what was needed was "a compact phalanx to stand against the corruption which had penetrated so deeply into the nation." These differences in the times would certainly not be without their influence upon the constitution and operations of the schools of the prophets.

1 Samuel 20

Jonathan's Last Attempt to Reconcile His Father to David.—Ch. 20–21:1.

1 Samuel 20:1–11. After the occurrence which had taken place at Naioth, David fled thence and met with Jonathan, to whom he poured out his heart.[40] Though he had been delivered for the moment from the death which threatened

him, through the marvellous influence of the divine inspiration of the prophets upon Saul and his messengers, he could not find in this any lasting protection from the plots of his mortal enemy. He therefore sought for his friend Jonathan, and complained to him, "What have I done? what is my crime, my sin before thy father, that he seeks my life?"

1 Samuel 20:2. Jonathan endeavoured to pacify him: *"Far be it! thou shalt not die: behold, my father does nothing great or small* (i.e., not the smallest thing; cf. 1 Samuel 25:36 and Num. 22:18) *that he does not reveal to me; why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so."* The לוֹ after הִגֶּה stands for לֹא: the *Chethibh* עָשָׂה is probably to be preferred to the *Keri* יַעֲשֶׂה, and to be understood in this sense: "My father has (hitherto) done nothing at all, which he has not told to me." This answer of Jonathan does not presuppose that he knew nothing of the occurrences described in 1 Samuel 19:9–24, although it is possible enough that he might not have been with his father just at that time; but it is easily explained from the fact that Saul had made the fresh attack upon David's life in a state of madness, in which he was no longer master of himself; so that it could not be inferred with certainty from this that he would still plot against David's life in a state of clear consciousness. Hitherto Saul had no doubt talked over all his plans and undertakings with Jonathan, but he had not uttered a single word to him about his deadly hatred, or his intention of killing David; so that Jonathan might really have regarded his previous attacks upon David's life as nothing more than symptoms of temporary aberration of mind.

1 Samuel 20:3. But David had looked deeper into Saul's heart. He replied with an oath ("he sware again," i.e., a second time), *"Thy father knoweth that I have found favour in thine eyes* (i.e., that thou art attached to me); *and thinketh Jonathan shall not know this, lest he be grieved. But truly, as surely as Jehovah liveth, and thy soul liveth, there is hardly a step* (*lit.* about a step) *between me and death."* כִּי introduces the substance of the oath, as in 1 Samuel 14:44, etc.

1 Samuel 20:4. When Jonathan answered, *"What thy soul saith, will I do to thee,"* i.e., fulfil every wish, David made this request, *"Behold, to-morrow is new moon, and I ought to sit and eat with the king: let me go, that I may conceal myself in the field* (i.e., in the open air) *till the third evening."* This request implies that Saul gave a feast at the new moon, and therefore that the new moon was not merely a religious festival, according to the law in Num. 10:10; 28:11–15, but that it was kept as a civil festival also, and in the latter character for two days; as we may infer both from the fact that David reckoned to the third evening, i.e., the evening of the third day from the day then present, and therefore proposed to hide himself on the new moon's day and the day following, and also still more clearly from vv. 12, 27, and 34, where Saul is said to have expected David at table on the day after the new moon. We cannot, indeed, conclude from this that there was a religious festival of two days' duration; nor does it follow, that because Saul supposed that David might have absented himself on the first day on account of Levitical uncleanness (v. 26), therefore the royal feast was a sacrificial meal. It was evidently contrary to social propriety to take part in a public feast in a state of Levitical uncleanness, even though it is not expressly forbidden in the law.

1 Samuel 20:6. *"If thy father should miss me, then say, David hath asked permission of me to hasten to Bethlehem, his native town; for there is a yearly sacrifice for the whole family there."* This ground of excuse shows that families and households were accustomed to keep united sacrificial feasts once a year. According to the law in Deut. 12:5ff., they ought to have been kept at the tabernacle; but at this time, when the central sanctuary had fallen into disuse, they were held in different places, wherever there were altars of Jehovah—as, for example, at Bethlehem (cf. 1 Samuel 16:2ff.). We see from these words that David did not look upon prevarication as a sin.

1 Samuel 20:7. *"If thy father says, It is well, there is peace to thy servant* (i.e., he cherishes no murderous thoughts against me); *but if he be very wroth, know that evil is determined by him."* כָּלָה, to be completed; hence to be firmly and unalterably determined (cf. 1 Samuel 25:17; Esther 7:7). Seb. Schmidt infers from the closing words that the fact was certain enough to David, but not to Jonathan. Thenius, on the other hand, observes much more correctly, that "it is perfectly obvious from this that David was not quite clear as to Saul's intentions," though he upsets his own previous assertion, that after what David had gone through, he could never think of sitting again at the king's table as he had done before.

1 Samuel 20:8. David made sure that Jonathan would grant this request on account of his friendship, as he had *brought him into a covenant of Jehovah with himself.* David calls the covenant of friendship with Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:3) a *covenant of Jehovah,* because he had made it with a solemn invocation of Jehovah. But in order to make quite sure of the fulfilment of his request on the part of Jonathan, David added, *"But if there is a fault in me, do thou kill me* (אַתָּה used to strengthen the suffix); *for why wilt thou bring me to thy father?"* sc., that he may put me to death.

1 Samuel 20:9. Jonathan replied, *"This be far from thee!"* sc., that I should kill thee, or deliver thee up to my father. חָלִילָה points back to what precedes, as in v. 2. *"But* (כִּי after a previous negative assertion) *if I certainly discover that evil is determined by my father to come upon thee, and I do not tell it thee,"* sc., "may God do so to me," etc. The words are to be understood as an asseveration on oath, in which the formula of an oath is to be supplied in thought. This view is apparently a more correct one, on account of the cop. ו before לֹא, than to take the last clause as a question, "Shall I not tell it thee?"

1 Samuel 20:10. To this friendly assurance David replied, *"Who will tell me?"* sc., how thy father expresses himself concerning me; *"or what will thy father answer thee roughly?"* sc., if thou shouldst attempt to do it thyself. This is the correct explanation given by De Wette and Maurer. Gesenius and Thenius, on the contrary, take אוֹ in the sense of *"if perchance."* But this is evidently incorrect; for even though there are certain passages in which אוֹ may be so rendered, it is only where some other case is supposed, and therefore the meaning *or* still lies at the foundation. These questions of David were suggested by a correct estimate of the circumstances, namely, that Saul's suspicions would leave him to the conclusion that there was some understanding between Jonathan and David, and that he would take steps in consequence to prevent Jonathan from making David acquainted with the result of his conversation with Saul.

1 Samuel 20:11. Before replying to these questions, Jonathan asked David to go with him to the field, that they might there fix upon the sign by which he would let him know, in a way in which no one could suspect, what was the state of his father's mind.

1 Samuel 20:12–23. In the field, where they were both entirely free from observation, Jonathan first of all renewed his covenant with David, by vowing to him on oath that he would give him information of his father's feelings towards him (vv. 12, 13); and then entreated him, with a certain presentiment that David would one day be king, even then to maintain his love towards him and his family for ever (vv. 14–16); and lastly, he made David swear again concerning his love (v. 17), and then gave him the sign by which he would communicate the promised information (vv. 18–23).

1 Samuel 20:12–15. Vv. 12 and 13*a* are connected. Jonathan commences with a solemn invocation of God: *"Jehovah, God of Israel!"* and thus introduces his oath. We have neither to supply "Jehovah is *witness,"* nor "as truly as Jehovah *liveth,"* as some have suggested. *"When I inquire of my father about this time to-morrow, the day after to-morrow* (a concise mode of saying 'to-morrow or the day after'), *and behold it is* (stands) *well for David, and then I do not*

send to thee and make it known to thee, Jehovah shall do so to Jonathan," etc. ("The Lord do so," etc., the ordinary formula used in an oath: see 1 Samuel 14:44). The other case is then added without an adversative particle: *"If it should please my father evil against thee* (*lit.* as regards evil), *"I will make it known to thee, and let thee go, that thou mayest go in peace; and Jehovah be with thee, as He has been with my father."* In this wish there is expressed the presentiment that David would one day occupy that place in Israel which Saul occupied then, i.e., the throne.—In vv. 14 and 15 the Masoretic text gives no appropriate meaning. Luther's rendering, in which he follows the Rabbins and takes the first וְלֹא (v. 14) by itself, and then completes the sentence from the context ("but if I do it not, show me no mercy, because I live, not even if I die"), contains indeed a certain permissible sense when considered in itself; but it is hardly reconcilable with what follows, *"and do not tear away thy compassion for ever from my house."* The request that he would show no compassion to him (Jonathan) even if he died, and yet would not withdraw his compassion from his house for ever, contains an antithesis which would have been expressed most clearly and unambiguously in the words themselves, if this had been really what Jonathan intended to say. De Wette's rendering gives a still more striking contradiction: *"But let not* (Jehovah be with thee) *if I still live, and thou showest not the love of Jehovah to me, that I doe not, and thou withdrawest not thy love from my house for ever."* There is really no other course open than to follow the Syriac and Arabic, as Maurer, Thenius, and Ewald have done, and change the וְלֹא in the first two clauses in v. 14 into וְלוּ or וְלֶא, according to the analogy of the form לוּא (1 Samuel 14:30), and to render the passage thus: "And mayest thou, if I still live, mayest thou show to me the favour of the Lord, and not if I doe, not withdraw thy favour from my house for ever, not even (וְלֹא) when Jehovah shall cut off the enemies of David, every one from the face of the earth!" *"The favour of Jehovah"* is favour such as Jehovah shall cut off," etc., shows very clearly Jonathan's conviction that Jehovah would give to David a victory over all his enemies.

1 Samuel 20:16. Thus Jonathan concluded a covenant with the house of David, namely, by bringing David to promise kindness to his family for ever. The word בְּרִית must be supplied in thought to יִכְרֹת, as in 1 Samuel 22:8 and 2 Chron. 7:18. *"And Jehovah required it* (what Jonathan had predicted) *at the hand of David's enemies."* Understood in this manner, the second clause contains a remark of the historian himself, namely, that Jonathan's words were really fulfilled in due time. The traditional rendering of וּבִקֵּשׁ as a relative preterite, with אָמַר understood, *"and said, Let Jehovah take vengeance,"* is not only precluded by the harshness of the introduction of the word "saying," but still more by the fact, that if אָמַר (saying) is introduced between the copula *vav* and the verb בִּקֵּשׁ, the perfect cannot stand for the optative בְּקֵשׁ, as in Josh. 22:23.

1 Samuel 20:17. *"And Jonathan adjured David again by his love to him, because he loved him as his own soul"* (cf. 1 Samuel 18:1, 3); i.e., he once more implored David most earnestly with an oath to show favour to him and his house.

1 Samuel 20:18ff. He then discussed the sign with him for letting him know about his father's state of mind: *"To-morrow is new moon, and thou wilt be missed, for thy seat will be empty,"* sc., at Saul's table (see at v. 5). *"And on the third day come down quickly* (from thy sojourning place), *and go to the spot where thou didst hide thyself on the day of the deed, and place thyself by the side of the stone Ezel."* The first words in this (19th) verse are not without difficulty. The meaning "on the third day" for the verb שְׁלֵשׁ cannot be sustained by parallel passages, but is fully established, partly by הַשְּׁלִשִׁית, the third day, and partly by the Arabic usage (vid., Ges. *Thes. s. v.*). מְאֹד after תֵּרֵד, lit., *"go violently down,"* is more striking still. Nevertheless the correctness of the text is not to be called in

question, since שִׁלַּשְׁתָּ is sustained by τρισσεύσει in the Septuagint, and תֵּרֵד מְאֹד by *descende ergo festinus* in the Vulgate, and also by the rendering in the Chaldee, Arabic, and Syriac versions, "and on the third day thou wilt be missed still more," which is evidently merely a conjecture founded upon the context. The meaning of בְּיוֹם הַמַּעֲשֶׂה is doubtful. Gesenius, De Wette, and Maurer render it "on the day of the deed," and understand it as referring to Saul's deed mentioned in 1 Samuel 19:2, viz., his design of killing David; others render it "on the day of business," i.e., the working day (Luther, after the LXX and Vulgate), but this is not so good a rendering. The best is probably that of Thenius, "on the day of the business" (which is known to thee). Nothing further can be said concerning the stone Ezel than that Ezel is a proper name.

1 Samuel 20:20. *"And I will shoot off three arrows to the side of it* (the stone Ezek), *to shoot for me at the mark,"* i.e., as if shooting at the mark. The article attached to הַחִצִּים is either to be explained as denoting that the historian assumed the thing as already well known, or on the supposition that Jonathan went to the field armed, and when giving the sign pointed to the arrows in his quiver. In the word צִדָּהּ the *Raphe* indicates that the suffix of הָּ- is not a mere toneless ה, although it has no mappik, having given up its strong breathing on account of the harsh ץ sound.

1 Samuel 20:21. *"And, behold* (הִנֵּה, directing attention to what follows as the main point), *I will send the boy* (saying), *Go, get the arrows. If I shall say to the boy, Behold, the arrows are from thee hitherwards, fetch them; then come, for peace is to thee, and it is nothing, as truly as Jehovah liveth."*

1 Samuel 20:22. *"But if I say to the youth, Behold, the arrows are from thee farther off; then go, for Jehovah sendeth thee away,"* i.e., bids thee flee. The appointment of this sign was just as simple as it was suitable to the purpose.

1 Samuel 20:23. This arrangement was to remain an eternal secret between them. *"And* (as for) *the word that we have spoken, I and thou, behold, the Lord is between me and thee for ever,"* namely, a witness and judge in case one of us two should break the covenant (vid., Gen. 31:48, 49). This is implied in the words, without there being any necessity to assume that עֵד had dropped out of the text. *"The word"* refers not merely to the sign agreed upon, but to the whole matter, including the renewal of the bond of friendship.

1 Samuel 20:24–34. David thereupon concealed himself in the field, whilst Jonathan, as agreed upon, endeavoured to apologize for his absence from the king's table.

1 Samuel 20:24, 25. On the new moon's day Saul sat at table, and as always, *at his seat by the wall,* i.e., at the top, just as, in eastern lands at the present day, the place of honour is the seat in the corner (see *Harmar Beobachtungen* ii. pp. 66ff.). *"And Jonathan rose up, and Abner seated himself by the side of Saul, and David's place remained empty."* The difficult passage, *"And Jonathan rose up,"* etc., can hardly be understood in any other way than as signifying that, when Abner entered, Jonathan rose from his seat by the side of Saul, and gave up the place to Abner, in which case all that is wanting is an account of the place to which Jonathan moved. Every other attempted explanation is exposed to much graver difficulties. The suggestion made by Gesenius, that the cop. ו should be supplied before אַבְנֵר, and וַיֵּשֶׁב referred to Jonathan ("and Jonathan rose up and sat down, and Abner [sat down] by the side of Saul"), as in the Syriac, is open to this objection, that in addition to the necessity of supplying ו, it is impossible to see why Jonathan should have risen up for the purpose of sitting down again. The rendering "and Jonathan came," which is the one adopted by Maurer and De Wette, cannot be philologically sustained; inasmuch as, although קוּם is used to signify rise up, in the sense of the occurrence of important events, or the appearance of celebrated of

persons, it never means simply "to come." And lastly, the conjecture of Thenius, that וַיָּקָם should be altered into וַיְקַדֵּם, according to the senseless rendering of the LXX, προέφθασε τὸνἸονάθαν, is overthrown by the fact, that whilst קִדֵּם does indeed mean to anticipate or come to meet, it never means to sit in front of, i.e., opposite to a person.

1 Samuel 20:26. On this (first) day Saul said nothing, sc., about David's absenting himself, *"for he thought there has* (something) *happened to him, that he is not clean; surely* (כִּי) *he is not clean"* (vid., Lev. 15:16ff.; Deut. 23:11).

1 Samuel 20:27ff. But on the second day, the day after the new moon (lit., *the morrow after the new moon, the second day:* הַשֵּׁנִי is a nominative, and to be joined to וַיְהִי, and not a genitive belonging to הַחֹדֶשׁ), when David was absent from table again, Saul said to Jonathan, *"Why is the son of Jesse not come to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day?"* Whereupon Jonathan answered, as arranged with David (compare vv. 28 and 29 with v. 6). *"And my brother, he hath commanded me,"* i.e., ordered me to come. צִוָּה as in Ex. 6:13, and אָחִי, the elder brother, who was then at the head of the family, and arranged the sacrificial meal.

1 Samuel 20:30, 31. Saul was greatly enraged at this, and said to Jonathan, *"Son of a perverse woman* (נַעֲוַת is a participle, *Niph.* fem. from עָוָה) *of rebellion,"*— i.e., son of a perverse and rebellious woman (an insult offered to the mother, and therefore so much the greater to the son), hence the meaning really is, "Thou perverse, rebellious fellow,"—*"do I not know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame, and to the shame of thy mother's nakedness?"* בָּחַר, to choose a person out of love, to take pleasure in a person; generally construed with ב *pers.,* here with לְ, although many Codd. have ב here also. *"For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the earth, thou and thy kingdom* (kingship, throne) *will not stand."* Thus Saul evidently suspected David as his rival, who would either wrest the government from him, or at any rate after his death from his son. *"Now send and fetch him to me, for he is a child of death,"* i.e., he has deserved to die, and shall be put to death.

1 Samuel 20:32ff. When Jonathan replied, *"My father, why shall he die? what has he done?"* Saul was so enraged that he hurled his javelin at Jonathan (cf. 1 Samuel 18:11). Thus Jonathan saw that his father had firmly resolved to put David to death, and rose up from the table in fierce anger, and did not eat that day; for he was grieved concerning David, because his father had done him shame. כְּלָה is a substantive in the sense of unalterable resolution, like the verb in v. 9. בְּיוֹם־הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי, on the second day of the new moon or month.

1 Samuel 20:35–42. The next morning Jonathan made David acquainted with what had occurred, by means of the sign agreed upon with David. The account of this, and of the meeting between Jonathan and David which followed, is given very concisely, only the main points being touched upon. In the morning (after what had occurred) Jonathan went to the field, לְמוֹעֵד דָּוִד, either *"at the time agreed upon with David,"* or *"to the meeting with David,"* or perhaps better still, *"according to the appointment* (agreement) *with David,"* and a small boy with him.

1 Samuel 20:36. To the latter he said, namely as soon as they had come to the field, Run, get the arrows which I shoot. The boy ran, and he shot off the arrows, *"to go out beyond him,"* i.e., so that the arrows flew farther than the boy had run. The form חֵצִי for חֵץ only occurs in connection with disjunctive accents; beside the present chapter (vv. 36, 37, 38, *Chethibh*) we find it again in 2 Kings 9:24. The singular is used here with indefinite generality, as the historian did not consider it necessary to mention expressly, after what he had previously written, that Jonathan shot off three arrows one after another.

1 Samuel 20:37. When the boy came to the place of the shot arrow (i.e., to the place to which the arrow had flown), Jonathan called after him, *"See, the arrow is* (lies) *away from thee, farther off;"* and again, *"Quickly, haste, do not stand still,"* that he might not see David, who was somewhere near; and the boy picked up the arrow and came to his lord. The *Chethibh* הַחֵצִי is evidently the original reading, and the singular is to be understood as in v. 37; the *Keri* הַחִצִּים is an emendation, according to the meaning of the words. The writer here introduces the remark in v. 39, that the boy knew nothing of what had been arranged between Jonathan and David.

1 Samuel 20:40. Jonathan then gave the boy his things (bow, arrows, and quiver), and sent him with them to the town, that he might be able to converse with David for a few seconds after his departure, and take leave of him unobserved.

1 Samuel 20:41. When the boy had gone, *David rose* (from his hiding-place) *from the south side, fell down upon his face to the ground, and bowed three times* (before Jonathan); they then kissed each other, and wept for one another, *"till David wept strongly,"* i.e., to such a degree that David wept very loud. מֵאֵצֶל הַנֶּגֶב, *"from the side of the south,"* which is the expression used to describe David's hiding-place, according to its direction in relation to the place where Jonathan was standing, has not been correctly rendered by any of the early translators except Aquila and Jerome. In the Septuagint, the Chaldee, the Syriac, and the Arabic, the statement in v. 19 is repeated, simply because the translators could not see the force of מֵאֵצֶל הַנֶּגֶב, although it is intelligible enough in relation to what follows, according to which David fled from thence *southwards to Nob.*

1 Samuel 20:42. All that is given of the conversation between the two friends is the parting word spoken by Jonathan to David: *"Go in peace. What we two have sworn in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever:"* sc., let it stand, or let us abide by it. The clause contains an aposiopesis, which may be accounted for from Jonathan's deep emotion, and in which the apodosis may be gathered from the sense. For it is evident, from a comparison of v. 23, that the expression "for ever" must be understood as forming part of the oath.—Ch. 21:1. David then set out upon his journey, and Jonathan returned to the town. This verse ought, strictly speaking, to form the conclusion of 1 Samuel 20.[41] The subject to *"arose"* is David; not because Jonathan was the last one spoken of (Thenius), but because the following words, "and Jonathan came," etc., are in evident antithesis to "he arose and went."

1 Samuel 21

David's Flight to Nob, and Thence to Gath.—Ch. 21:2–16.

1 Samuel 21:2–16. After the information which David had received from Jonathan, nothing remained for him in order to save his life but immediate flight. He could not return to the prophets at Ramah, where he had been miraculously preserved from the first outbreak of Saul's wrath, because they could not ensure him permanent protection against the death with which he was threatened. He therefore fled first of all to Nob, to Ahimelech the high priest, to inquire the will of God through him concerning his future course (1 Samuel 22:10, 15), and induced him to give him bread and the sword of Goliath, also, under the pretext of having to perform a secret commission from the king with the greatest speed; for which Saul afterwards took fearful vengeance upon the priests at Nob when he was made acquainted with the affair through the treachery of Doeg (vv. 1–9). David then fled to Gath to the Philistian king Achish; but here he was quickly recognised as the conqueror of Goliath, and obliged to feign insanity in order to save his life, and then to flee still farther (vv. 10–15). The state of his mind at this time he poured out before God in the words of Ps. 56, 52, and 34.

1 Samuel 21:1–9. *David at Nob.*—The town of *Nob* or *Nobeh* (unless indeed the form נֹבָה

stands for נֹבָה here and in 1 Samuel 22:9, and the ה attached is merely ה local, as the name is always written נֹב in other places: vid., 1 Samuel 22:11, 32; 2 Samuel 21:16; Isa. 10:32; Neh. 11:32) was at that time a priests' city (1 Samuel 22:19), in which, according to the following account, the tabernacle was then standing, and the legal worship carried on. According to Isa. 10:30, 32, it was between Anathoth (*Anata*) and Jerusalem, and in all probability it has been preserved in the village of *el-Isawiyeh,* i.e., probably the village of Esau or Edom, which is midway between Anata and Jerusalem, an hour from the latter, and the same distance to the south-east of Gibeah of Saul (Tell el Phul), and which bears all the marks of an ancient place, partly in its dwellings, the stones of which date from a great antiquity, and partly in many marble columns which are found there (vid., Tobler, *Topogr. v. Jerusalem* ii. p. 720). Hence v. Raumer (*Pal.* p. 215, ed. 4) follows Kiepert in the map which he has appended to Robinson's *Biblical Researches,* and set down this place as the ancient *Nob,* for which Robinson indeed searched in vain (see *Pal.* ii. p. 150). Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, most probably the same person as Ahiah (1 Samuel 14:3), was *"the priest,"* i.e., the high priest (see at 1 Samuel 14:3). When David came to him, the priest *"went trembling to meet him"* (יֶחֱרַד לִקְרָאת) with the inquiry, *"Why art thou alone, and no one is with thee?"* The unexpected appearance of David, the son-in-law of the king, without any attendants, alarmed Ahimelech, who probably imagined that he had come with a commission from the king which might involve him in danger. David had left the few servants who accompanied him in his flight somewhere in the neighbourhood, as we may gather from v. 2, because he wished to converse with the high priest alone. Ahimelech's anxious inquiry led David to resort to the fabrication described in v. 2: *"The king hath commanded me a business, and said to me, No one is to know anything of this matter, in which* (*lit.* in relation to the matter with regard to which) *I send thee, and which I have entrusted to thee* (i.e., no one is to know either the occasion or the nature of the commission): *and the servants I have directed to such and such a place."* יוֹדַע, *Poel,* to cause to know, point, show. Ahimelech had received no information as yet concerning the most recent occurrences between Saul and David; and David would not confess to him that he was fleeing from Saul, because he was evidently afraid that the high priest would not give him any assistance, lest he should draw down the wrath of the king. This falsehood brought he greatest calamities upon Ahimelech and the priests at Nob (1 Samuel 22:9–19), and David was afterwards obliged to confess that he had occasioned it all (1 Samuel 22:22).

1 Samuel 21:3. *"And now what is under thy hand? give into my hand* (i.e., hand me) *five loaves, or whatever* (else) *is to be found."* David asked for five loaves, because he had spoken of several attendants, and probably wanted to make provision for two or three days (Thenius).

1 Samuel 21:4. The priest answered that he had no common bread, but only holy bread, viz., according to v. 6, shew-bread that had been removed, which none but priests were allowed to eat, and that in a sacred place; but that he was willing to give him some of these loaves, as David had said that he was travelling upon an important mission from the king, provided only that *"the young men had kept themselves at least from women,"* i.e., had not been defiled by sexual intercourse (Lev. 15:18). If they were clean at any rate in this respect, he would in such a case of necessity depart from the Levitical law concerning the eating of the shew-bread, for the sake of observing the higher commandment of love to a neighbour (Lev. 19:18; cf. Matt. 12:5, 6, Mark 2:25, 26).[42]

1 Samuel 21:5. David quieted him concerning this scruple, and said, *"Nay, but women have been kept from us since yesterday and the day before."* The use of כִּי אִם may be explained from the fact, that in David's reply he paid more attention to the sense than to the form of the priest's scruple, and expressed himself as concisely as possible. The words, "if the young

men have only kept themselves from women," simply meant, if only they are not unclean; and David replied, That is certainly not the case, *but* women have been kept from us; so that כִּי אִם has the meaning *but* in this passage also, as it frequently has after a previous negative, which is implied in the thought here as in 2 Samuel 13:33. *"When I came out, the young men's things were holy* (Levitically clean); *and if it is an unholy way, it becomes even holy through the instrument."* David does not say that the young men were clean when he came out (for the rendering given to כְּלֵי הַנְּעָרִים in the Septuagint, πάντα τὰ παιδάρια, is without any critical value, and is only a mistaken attempt to explain the word כְּלֵי, which was unintelligible to the translator), but simply affirms that כְּלֵי הַנְּעָרִים קֹדֶשׁ, i.e., according to Luther's rendering (*der Knaben Zeug war heilig*), the young men's things (clothes, etc.) were holy. כֵּלִים does not mean merely vessels, arms, or tools, but also the dress (Deut. 22:5), or rather the clothes as well as such things as were most necessary to meet the wants of life. By the *coitus,* or strictly speaking, by the *emissio seminis* in connection with the *coitus,* not only were the persons themselves defiled, but also every article of clothing or leather upon which any of the *semen* fell (Lev. 15:18); so that it was necessary for the purpose of purification that the things which a man had on should all be washed. David explains, with evident allusion to this provision, that the young men's things were holy, i.e., perfectly clean, for the purpose of assuring the priest that there was not the smallest Levitical uncleanness attaching to them. The clause which follows is to be taken as conditional, and as supposing a possible case: *"and if it is an unholy way."* דֶּרֶךְ, the way that David was going with his young men, i.e., his purpose of enterprise, by which, however, we are not to understand his request of holy bread from Ahimelech, but the performance of the king's commission of which he had spoken. וְאַף כִּי, *lit.* besides (there is) also that, = moreover there is also the fact, that it becomes holy through the instrument; i.e., as O. v. Gerlach has correctly explained it, "on the supposition of the important royal mission, upon which David pretended to be sent, *through me* as an ambassador of the anointed of the Lord," in which, at any rate, David's meaning really was, "the way was sanctified before God, when he, as His chosen servant, the preserver of the true kingdom of God in Israel, went to him in his extremity." That כְּלִי in the sense of instrument is also applied to *men,* is evident from Isa. 13:5 and Jer. 50:25.

1 Samuel 21:6. The priest then gave him (what was) holy, namely the shew-loaves *"that were taken from before Jehovah,"* i.e., from the holy table, upon which they had lain before Jehovah for seven days (vid., Lev. 24:6–9).—In v. 7 there is a parenthetical remark introduced, which was of great importance in relation to the consequences of this occurrence. There at the sanctuary there was a man of Saul's servants, נֶעְצָר, i.e., *"kept back* (shut off) *before Jehovah:"* i.e., at the sanctuary of the tabernacle, either for the sake of purification or as a proselyte, who wished to be received into the religious communion of Israel, or because of supposed leprosy, according to Lev. 13:4. His name was Doeg the Edomite, אַבִּיר הָרֹעִים, *"the strong one* (i.e., the overseer) *of the herdsmen of Saul."* [43]

1 Samuel 21:8. David also asked Ahimelech whether he had not a sword or a javelin at hand; *"for I have neither brought my sword nor my* (other) *weapons with me, because the affair of the king was pressing,"* i.e., very urgent, נָחוּץ, ἁπ. λεγ., literally, compressed.

1 Samuel 21:9. The priest replied, that there was only the sword of Goliath, whom David slew in the terebinth valley (1 Samuel 17:2), wrapped up in a cloth hanging behind the ephod (the high priest's shoulder-dress),—a sign of the great worth attached to this dedicatory offering. He could take that. David accepted it, as a weapon of greater value to him than any other, because he had not only taken this sword as booty from the Philistine, but had

cut off the head of Goliath with it (see 1 Samuel 17:51). When and how this sword had come into the tabernacle is not known (see the remarks on 1 Samuel 17:54). The form בַּזֶּה for בָּזֶה is only met with here. On the *Piska,* see at Josh. 4:1.

1 Samuel 21:10–15. *David with Achish at Gath.*—David fled from Nob to Achish of Gath. This Philistian king is called *Abimelech* in the heading of Ps. 34, according to the standing title of the Philistian princes at Gath. The fact that David fled at once out of the land, and that to the Philistines at Gath, may be accounted for from the great agitation into which he had been thrown by the information he had received from Jonathan concerning Saul's implacable hatred. As some years had passed since the defeat of Goliath, and the conqueror of Goliath was probably not personally known to many of the Philistines, he might hope that he should not be recognised in Gath, and that he might receive a welcome there with his few attendants, as a fugitive who had been driven away by Saul, the leading foe of the Philistines.[44] But in this he was mistaken. He was recognised at once by the courtiers of Achish. They said to their prince, *"Is not this David the king of the land? Have they not sung in circles, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?"* (cf. 1 Samuel 18:6, 7). *"King of the land"* they call David, not because his anointing and divine election were known to them, but on account of his victorious deeds, which had thrown Saul entirely into the shade. Whether they intended by these words to celebrate David as a hero, or to point him out to their prince as a dangerous man, cannot be gathered from the words themselves, nor can the question be decided with certainty at all (cf. 1 Samuel 29:5).

1 Samuel 21:12. But David took these words to heart, and was in great fear of Achish, lest he should treat him as an enemy, and kill him. In order to escape this danger, *"he disguised his understanding* (i.e., pretended to be out of his mind) *in their eyes* (i.e., before the courtiers of Achish), *behaved insanely under their hands* (when they tried to hold him as a madman), *scribbled upon the door-wings, and let his spittle run down into his beard."* The suffix to וַיְשַׁנּוֹ is apparently superfluous, as the object, אֶת־טַעְמוֹ, follows immediately afterwards. But it may be accounted for from the circumstantiality of the conversation of every-day life, as in 2 Samuel 14:6, and (though these cases are not perfectly parallel) Ex. 2:6, Prov. 5:22, Ezek. 10:3 (cf. Gesenius' *Gramm.* § 121, 6, Anm. 3). וַיִּתָּו, from תָּוָה, to make signs, i.e., to scribble. The LXX and Vulgate render it ἐτυμπανίζειν, *impingebat, he drummed,* smote with his fists upon the wings of the door, which would make it appear as if they had read וַיִּתָּף (from תָּפַף), which seems more suitable to the condition of a madman whose saliva ran out of his mouth.

1 Samuel 21:14, 15. By this dissimulation David escaped the danger which threatened him; for Achish thought him mad, and would have nothing to do with him. *"Wherefore do ye bring him to me? Have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this man hither to rave against me? Shall this man come into my house?"* Thus Achish refused to receive him into his house. But whether he had David taken over the border, or at any rate out of the town; or whether David went away of his own accord; or whether he was taken away by his servants, and then hurried as quickly as possible out of the land of the Philistines, is not expressly mentioned, as being of no importance in relation to the principal object of the narrative. All that is stated is, that he departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam.

1 Samuel 22

David's Wanderings in Judah and Moab. Massacre of Priests by Saul.—Ch. 22.

1 Samuel 22:1–5. Having been driven away by Achish, the Philistian king at Gath, David took refuge in the cave Adullam, where his family joined him. The cave *Adullam* is not to be sought for in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, as some have inferred from 2 Samuel 23:13, 14,

but near the town *Adullam,* which is classed in Josh. 15:35 among the towns in the lowlands of Judah, and at the foot of the mountains; though it has not yet been traced with any certainty, as the caves of *Deir Dubban,* of which Van de Velde speaks, are not the only large caves on the western slope of the mountains of Judah. When his brethren and his father's house, i.e., the rest of his family, heard of his being there, they came down to him, evidently because they no longer felt themselves safe in Bethlehem from Saul's revenge. The cave Adullam cannot have been more than three hours from Bethlehem, as Socoh and Jarmuth, which were near to Adullam, were only three hours and a half from Jerusalem (see at Josh. 12:15).

1 Samuel 22:2. There a large number of malcontents gathered together round David, viz., all who were in distress, and all who had creditors, and all who were embittered in spirit (bitter of soul), i.e., people who were dissatisfied with the general state of affairs or with the government of Saul,—about four hundred men, whose leader he became. David must in all probability have stayed there a considerable time. The number of those who went over to him soon amounted to six hundred men (1 Samuel 23:13), who were for the most part brave and reckless, and who ripened into heroic men under the command of David during his long flight. A list of the bravest of them is given in 1 Chron. 12, with which compare 2 Samuel 23:13ff. and 1 Chron. 11:15ff.

1 Samuel 22:3–5. David proceeded thence to *Mizpeh* in Moab, and placed his parents in safety with the king of the Moabites. His ancestress Ruth was a Moabitess. *Mizpeh:* literally a watch-tower or mountain height commanding a very extensive prospect. Here it is probably a proper name, belonging to a mountain fastness on the high land, which bounded the Arboth Moab on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, most likely on the mountains of Abarim or Pisgah (Deut. 34:1), and which could easily be reached from the country round Bethlehem, by crossing the Jordan near the point where it entered the Dead Sea. As David came to the king of Moab, the Moabites had probably taken possession of the most southerly portion of the eastern lands of the Israelites; we may also infer this from the fact that, according to 1 Samuel 14:47, Saul had also made war upon Moab, for *Mizpeh Moab* is hardly to be sought for in the actual land of the Moabites, on the south side of the Arnon (Mojeb). אִתְּכֶם … יֵצֵא־נָא, *"May my father and my mother go out with you."* The construction of יָצָא with אֵת is a pregnant one: to go out of their home and stay with you (Moabites). *"Till I know what God will do to me."* Being well assured of the justice of his cause, as contrasted with the insane persecutions of Saul, David confidently hoped that God would bring his flight to an end. His parents remained with the king of Moab as long as David was בַּמְּצוּדָה, i.e., upon the mount height, or citadel. This can only refer to the place of refuge which David had found at Mizpeh Moab. For it is perfectly clear from v. 5, where the prophet Gad calls upon David not to remain any longer בַּמְּצוּדָה, but to return to the land of Judah, that the expression cannot refer either to the cave Adullam, or to any other place of refuge in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. The prophet *Gad* had probably come to David from Samuel's school of prophets; but whether he remained with David from that time forward to assist him with his counsel in his several undertakings, cannot be determined, on account of our want of information. In 1 Chron. 21:9 he is called David's seer. In the last year of David's reign he announced to him the punishment which would fall upon him from God on account of his sin in numbering the people (2 Samuel 24:11ff.); and according to 1 Chron. 29:29 he also wrote the acts of David. In consequence of this admonition, David returned to Judah, and went into the wood *Hareth,* a woody region on the mountains of Judah, which is never mentioned again, and the situation of which is unknown. According to the counsels of God, David was not to seek for refuge outside the land; not only that he might

not be estranged from his fatherland and the people of Israel, which would have been opposed to his calling to be the king of Israel, but also that he might learn to trust entirely in the Lord as his only refuge and fortress.

1 Samuel 22:6–23. Murder of the Priests by Saul.—Vv. 6ff. When Saul heard that David and the men with him *were known,* i.e., that information had been received as to their abode or hiding-place, he said to his servants when they were gathered round him, *"Hear,"* etc. The words, *"and Saul was sitting at Gibeah under the tamarisk upon the height,"* etc., show that what follows took place in a solemn conclave of all the servants of Saul, who were gathered round their king to deliberate upon the more important affairs of the kingdom. This sitting took place at Gibeah, the residence of Saul, and in the open air *"under the tamarisk."* בָּרָמָה, *upon the height,* not "under a grove at Ramah" (*Luther*); for *Ramah* is an appellative, and בָּרָמָה, which belongs to תַּחַת הָאֶשֶׁל, is a more minute definition of the locality, which is indicated by the definite article (*the* tamarisk upon *the* height) as the well-known place where Saul's deliberative assemblies were held. From the king's address (*"hear, ye Benjaminites; will the son of Jesse also give you all fields and vineyards?"*) we perceive that Saul had chosen his immediate attendants form the members of his own tribe, and had rewarded their services right royally. גַּם־לְכֻלְּכֶם is placed first for the sake of emphasis, *"You Benjaminites also,"* and not rather to Judahites, the members of his own tribe. The second לְכֻלְּכֶם (before יְשֵׁי) is not a dative; but ל merely serves to give greater prominence to the object which is placed at the head of the clause: *As for all of you, will he make* (you: see Ewald, § 310, *a.*).

1 Samuel 22:8. *"That you have all of you conspired against me, and no one informs me of it, since my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse."* בִּכְרֹת, *lit.* at the making of a covenant. Saul may possibly have heard something of the facts related in 1 Samuel 20:12–17; at the same time, his words may merely refer to Jonathan's friendship with David, which was well known to him. וְאֵין־חֹלֶה, *"and no one of you is grieved on my account … that my son has set my servant* (David) *as a lier in wait against me,"* i.e., to plot against my life, and wrest the throne to himself. We may see from this, that Saul was carried by his suspicions very far beyond the actual facts. *"As at this day:"* cf. Deut. 8:18, etc.

1 Samuel 22:9, 10. The Edomite Doeg could not refrain from yielding to this appeal, and telling Saul what he had seen when staying at Nob; namely, that Ahimelech had inquired of God for David, and given him food as well as Goliath's sword. For the fact itself, see 1 Samuel 21:1–10, where there is no reference indeed to his inquiring of God; though it certainly took place, as Ahimelech (v. 15) does not disclaim it. Doeg is here designated נֹצֵב, *"the superintendent of Saul's servants,"* so that apparently he had been invested with the office of marshal of the court.

1 Samuel 22:11ff. On receiving this information, Saul immediately summoned the priest Ahimelech and *"all his father's house,"* i.e., the whole priesthood, to Nob, to answer for what they had done. To Saul's appeal, *"Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, by giving him bread?"* Ahimelech, who was not conscious of any such crime, since David had come to him with a false pretext, and the priest had probably but very little knowledge of what took place at court, replied both calmly and worthily (v. 14): *"And who of all thy servants is so faithful* (proved, attested, as in Num. 12:7) *as David, and son-in-law of the king, and having access to thy private audience, and honoured in thy house?"* The true explanation of סָר אֶל־מִשְׁמַעְתֶּךָ may be gathered from a comparison of 2 Samuel 23:23 and 1 Chron. 11:25, where מִשְׁמַעַת occurs again, as the context clearly shows, in the sense of a privy councillor of the king, who hears his personal revelations and converses with him about them, so that it corresponds to our *"audience."* סוּר, *lit.* to turn aside from the way, to go in to

any one, or to look after anything (Ex. 3:3; Ruth 4:1, etc.); hence in the passage before us *"to have access,"* to be attached to a person. This is the explanation given by Gesenius and most of the modern expositors, whereas the early translators entirely misunderstood the passage, though they have given the meaning correctly enough at 2 Samuel 23:23. But if this was the relation in which David stood to Saul,—and he had really done so for a long time,—there was nothing wrong in what the high priest had done for him; but he had acted according to the best of his knowledge, and quite conscientiously as a faithful subject of the king. Ahimelech then added still further (v. 15): *"Did I then begin to inquire of God for him this day?"* i.e., was it the first time that I had obtained the decision of God for David concerning important enterprises, which he had to carry out in the service of the king? *"Far be from me,"* sc., any conspiracy against the king, like that of which I am accused. *"Let not the king lay it as a burden upon thy servant, my whole father's house* (the omission of the *cop.* ו before בְּכָל־בֵּית may be accounted for from the excitement of the speaker); *for thy servant knows not the least of all this."* בְּכָל־זֹאת, of all that Saul had charged him with.

1 Samuel 22:16, 17. Notwithstanding this truthful assertion of his innocence, Saul pronounced sentence of death, not only upon the high priest, but upon all the priests at Nob, and commanded his רָצִים, *"runner,"* i.e., halberdiers, to put the priests to death, because, as he declared in his wrath, *"their hand is with David* (i.e., because they side with David), *and because they knew that he fled and did not tell me."* Instead of the *Chethibh* אָזְנוֹ, it is probably more correct to read אָזְנִי, according to the *Keri,* although the *Chethibh* may be accounted for if necessary from a sudden transition from a direct to an indirect form of address: *"and* (as he said) *had not told him."* This sentence was so cruel, and so nearly bordering upon madness, that the halberdiers would not carry it out, but refused to lay hands upon *"the priests of Jehovah."*

1 Samuel 22:18. Saul then commanded Doeg to cut down the priests, and he at once performed the bloody deed. On the expression *"wearing the linen ephod,"* compare the remarks at 1 Samuel 2:18. The allusion to the priestly clothing, like the repetition of the expression *"priests of Jehovah,"* serves to bring out into its true light the crime of the bloodthirsty Saul and his executioner Doeg. The very dress which the priests wore, as the consecrated servants of Jehovah, ought to have made them shrink from the commission of such a murder.

1 Samuel 22:19. But not content with even this revenge, Saul had the whole city of Nob destroyed, like a city that was laid under the ban (vid., Deut. 13:13ff.). So completely did Saul identify his private revenge with the cause of Jehovah, that he avenged a supposed conspiracy against his own person as treason against Jehovah the God-king.

1 Samuel 22:20–23. The only one of the whole body of priests who escaped this bloody death was a son of Ahimelech, named Abiathar, who *"fled after David,"* i.e., to David the fugitive, and informed him of the barbarous vengeance which Saul had taken upon the priests of the Lord. Then David recognised and confessed his guilt. *"I knew that day that the Edomite Doeg was there, that he* (i.e., that as the Edomite Doeg was there, he) *would tell Saul: I am the cause of all the souls of thy father's house,"* i.e., of their death. סָבַב is used here in the sense of being the cause of a thing, which is one of the meanings of the verb in the Arabic and Talmudic (vid., Ges. *Lex. s. v.*). *"Stay with me, fear not; for he who seeks my life seeks thy life: for thou art safe with me."* The abstract *mishmereth,* protection, keeping (Ex. 12:6; 16:33, 34), is used for the concrete, in the sense of protected, well kept. The thought is the following: As no other is seeking thy life than Saul, who also wants to kill me, thou mayest stay with me without fear, as I am sure of divine protection. David spoke thus in the firm belief that the Lord would deliver him from his foe, and give him the kingdom.

The action of Saul, which had just been reported to him, could only strengthen him in this belief, as it was a sign of the growing hardness of Saul, which must accelerate his destruction.

1 Samuel 23

David Delivers Keilah. He is Betrayed by the Ziphites, and Marvellously Saved from Saul in the Desert of Maon.—Ch. 23.

1 Samuel 23. The following events show how, on the one hand, the Lord gave pledges to His servant David that he would eventually become king, but yet on the other hand plunged him into deeper and deeper trouble, that He might refine him and train him to be a king after His own heart. Saul's rage against the priests at Nob not only drove the high priest into David's camp, but procured for David the help of the "light and right" of the high priest in all his undertakings. Moreover, after the prophet Gad had called David back to Judah, an attack of the Philistines upon Keilah furnished him with the opportunity to show himself to the people as their deliverer. And although this enterprise of his exposed him to fresh persecutions on the part of Saul, who was thirsting for revenge, he experienced in connection therewith not only the renewal of Jonathan's friendship on this occasion, but a marvellous interposition on the part of the faithful covenant God.

1 Samuel 23:1–14. Rescue of Keilah.—After his return to the mountains of Judah, David received intelligence that Philistines, i.e., a marauding company of these enemies of Israel, were fighting against Keilah, and plundering the threshing-floors, upon which the corn that had been reaped was lying ready for threshing. *Keilah* belonged to the towns of the lowlands of Judah (Josh. 15:44); and although it has not yet been discovered, was certainly very close to the Philistian frontier.

1 Samuel 23:2. After receiving this information, David inquired of the Lord (through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest) whether he should go and smite these Philistines, and received an affirmative answer.

1 Samuel 23:3–5. But his men said to him, *"Behold, here in Judah we are in fear* (i.e., are not safe from Saul's pursuit); *how shall we go to Keilah against the ranks of the Philistines?"* In order, therefore, to infuse courage into them, he inquired of the Lord again, and received the assurance from God, *"I will give the Philistines into thy hand."* He then proceeded with his men, fought against the Philistines, drove off their cattle, inflicted a severe defeat upon them, and thus delivered the inhabitants of Keilah. In v. 6 a supplementary remark is added in explanation of the expression *"inquired of the Lord,"* to the effect that, when Abiathar fled to David to Keilah, the ephod had come to him. The words *"to David to Keilah"* are not to be understood as signifying that Abiathar did not come to David till he was in Keilah, but that when he fled after David (1 Samuel 22:20), he met with him as he was already preparing for the march of Keilah, and immediately proceeded with him thither. For whilst it is not stated in 1 Samuel 22:20 that Abiathar came to David in the wood of Hareth, but the place of meeting is left indefinite, the fact that David had already inquired of Jehovah (i.e., through the oracle of the high priest) with reference to the march to Keilah, compels us to assume that Abiathar had come to him before he left the mountains for Keilah. So that the brief expression "to David to Keilah," which is left indefinite because of its brevity, must be interpreted in accordance with this fact.

1 Samuel 23:7–9. As soon as Saul received intelligence of David's march to Keilah, he said, *"God has rejected him* (and delivered him) *into my hand."* נִכַּר does not mean simply to look at, but also to find strange, and treat as strange, and then absolutely *to reject* (Jer. 19:4, as in the Arabic in the fourth conjugation). This is the meaning here, where the construction with בְּיָדִי is to be understood as a pregnant expression: *"rejection and delivered into my hand"* (vid., Ges. *Lex. s. v.*). The early translators have rendered it quite correctly according to the sense מָכַר, πέπρακεν, *tradidit,* without there being any

reason to suppose that they read מָכַר instead of נִבַּר. *"For he hath shut himself in, to come* (= coming, or by coming) *into a city with gates and bolts."*

1 Samuel 23:8. He therefore called all the people (i.e., men of war) together to war, to go down to Keilah, and to besiege David and his men.

1 Samuel 23:9ff. But David heard that Saul was *preparing mischief against him* (*lit.* forging, הֶחֱרִישׁ, from חָרַשׁ; Prov. 3:29; 6:14, etc.), and he inquired through the oracle of the high priest whether the inhabitants of Keilah would deliver him up to Saul, and whether Saul would come down; and as both questions were answered in the affirmative, he departed from the city with his six hundred men, before Saul carried out his plan. It is evident from vv. 9–12, that when the will of God was sought through the Urim and Thummim, the person making the inquiry placed the matter before God in prayer, and received an answer; but always to *one* particular question. For when David had asked the two questions given in v. 11, he received the answer to the second question only, and had to ask the first again (v. 12).

1 Samuel 23:13. *"They went whithersoever they could go"* (*lit.* "they wandered about where they wandered about"), i.e., wherever they could go without danger.

1 Samuel 23:14. David retreated into the desert (of Judah), to the mountain heights (that were to be found there), and remained on the mountains in the desert of Ziph. The *"desert of Judah"* is the desert tract between the mountains of Judah and the Dead Sea, in its whole extent, from the northern boundary of the tribe of Judah to the Wady Fikreh in the south (see at Josh. 15:61). Certain portions of this desert, however, received different names of their own, according to the names of different towns on the border of the mountains and desert. The desert of *Ziph* was that portion of the desert of Judah which was near to and surrounded the town of *Ziph,* the name of which has been retained in the ruins of *Tell Zif,* an hour and three-quarters to the south-east of Hebron (see at Josh. 15:55).

1 Samuel 23:14 b. "And Saul sought him all the days, but God delivered him not into his hand." This is a general remark, intended to introduce the accounts which follow, of the various attempts made by Saul to get David into his power. *"All the days,"* i.e., as long as Saul lived.

1 Samuel 23:15–28. David in the Deserts of Ziph and Maon.—The history of David's persecution by Saul is introduced in vv. 15–18, with the account of an attempt made by the noble-minded prince Jonathan, in a private interview with his friend David, to renew his bond of friendship with him, and strengthen David by his friendly words for the sufferings that yet awaited him. Vv. 15, 16 are to be connected together so as to form one period: *"When David saw that Saul was come out … and David was in the desert of Ziph, Jonathan rose up and went to David into the wood."* חֹרְשָׁה, from חֹרֶשׁ, with ה paragogic, signifies a wood or thicket; here, however, it is probably a proper name for a district in the desert of Ziph that was overgrown with wood or bushes, and where David was stopping at that time. "There is no trace of this wood now. The land lost its ornament of trees centuries ago through the desolating hand of man" (v. de Velde). *"And strengthened his hand in God,"* i.e., strengthened his heart, not by supplies, or by money, or any subsidy of that kind, but by consolation drawn from his innocence, and the promises of God (vid., Judg. 9:24; Jer. 23:14). *"Fear not,"* said Jonathan to him, *"for the hand of Saul my father will not reach thee; and thou wilt become king over Israel, and I will be the second to thee; and Saul my father also knows that it is so."* Even though Jonathan had heard nothing from David about his anointing, he could learn from David's course thus far, and from his own father's conduct, that David would not be overcome, but would possess the sovereignty after the death of Saul. Jonathan expresses here, as his firm conviction, what he has intimated once before, in 1 Samuel 20:13ff.; and with the most loving self-denial entreats David, when he shall be

king, to let him occupy the second place in the kingdom. It by no means follows from the last words (*"Saul my father knoweth"*), that Saul had received distinct information concerning the anointing of David, and his divine calling to be king. The words merely contain the thought, he also sees that it will come. The assurance of this must have forced itself involuntarily upon the mind of Saul, both from his own rejection, as foretold by Samuel, and also from the marvellous success of David in all his undertakings.

1 Samuel 23:18. After these encouraging words, they two made a covenant before Jehovah: i.e., they renewed the covenant which they had already made by another solemn oath; after which Jonathan returned home, but David remained in the wood.

The *treachery of the Ziphites* forms a striking contrast to Jonathan's treatment of David. They went up to Gibeah to betray to Saul the fact that David was concealed in the wood upon their mountain heights, and indeed *"upon the hill Hachilah, which lies to the south of the waste."* The hill of *Ziph* is a flattened hill standing by itself, of about a hundred feet in height. "There is no spot from which you can obtain a better view of David's wanderings backwards and forwards in the desert than from the hill of *Ziph,* which affords a true panorama. The Ziphites could see David and his men moving to and fro in the mountains of the desert of *Ziph,* and could also perceive how he showed himself in the distance upon the hill *Hachilah* on the south side of *Ziph* (which lies to the right by the desert); whereupon they sent as quickly as possible to Saul, and betrayed to him the hiding-place of his enemy" (v. de Velde, ii. pp. 104–5). *Jeshimon* does not refer here to the waste land on the north-eastern coast of the Dead Sea, as in Num. 21:20; 23:28, but to the western side of that sea, which is also desert.

v. 20 reads literally thus: *"And now, according to all the desire of thy soul, O king, to come down* (from Gibeah, which stood upon higher ground), *come down, and it is in us to deliver him* (David) *into the hand of the king."*

1 Samuel 23:21. For this treachery Saul blessed them: *"Be blessed of the Lord, that ye have compassion upon me."* In his evil conscience he suspected David of seeking to become his murderer, and therefore thanked God in his delusion that the Ziphites had had compassion upon him, and shown him David's hiding-place.

1 Samuel 23:22. In his anxiety, however, lest David should escape him after all, he charged them, *"Go, and give still further heed* (הֵכִין without לֵב, as in Judg. 12:6), *and reconnoitre and look at his place where his foot cometh* (this simply serves as a more precise definition of the nominal suffix in מְקוֹמוֹ, his place), *who hath seen him there* (sc., let them inquire into this, that they may not be deceived by uncertain or false reports): *for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly."*

1 Samuel 23:23. They were to search him out in every corner (the object to דְּעוּ must be supplied from the context). *"And come ye again to me with the certainty* (i.e., when you have got some certain intelligence concerning his hiding-place), *that I may go with you; and if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands* (i.e., families) *of Judah."*

1 Samuel 23:24. With this answer the Ziphites arose and *"went to Ziph before Saul"* (who would speedily follow with his warriors); but David had gone farther in the meantime, and was with his men *"in the desert of Maon, in the steppe to the south of the wilderness." Maon,* now *Ma•n,* is about three hours and three-quarters S.S.E. of Hebron (see at Josh. 15:55), and therefore only two hours from Ziph, from which it is visible. "The table-land appears to terminate here; nevertheless the principal ridge of the southern mountains runs for a considerable distance towards the south-west, whereas towards the south-east the land falls off more and more into a lower table-land." This is the *Arabah* or steppe on the right of the wilderness (v. de Velde, ii. pp. 107–8).

1 Samuel 23:25. Having been informed of the arrival of Saul and his men (warriors), David

went down the rock, and remained in the desert of Maon. *"The rock"* is probably the conical mountain of *Main* (*Maon*), the top of which is now surrounded with ruins, probably remains of a tower (Robinson, *Pal.* ii. p. 194), as the rock from which David came down can only have been the mountain (v. 26), along one side of which David went with his men whilst Saul and his warriors went on the other, namely when Saul pursued him into the desert of Maon.

1 Samuel 23:26, 27. *"And David was anxiously concerned to escape from Saul, and Saul and his men were encircling David and his men to seize them; but a messenger came to Saul … Then Saul turned from pursuing David."* The two clauses, "for Saul and his men" (v. 26*b*), and "there came a messenger" (v. 27), are the circumstantial clauses by which the situation is more clearly defined: the apodosis to וַיְהִי דָוִד does not follow till וַיָּשָׁב in v. 28. The apodosis cannot begin with וּמַלְאָךְ because the verb does not stand at the head. David had thus almost inextricably fallen into the hands of Saul; but God saved him by the fact that at that very moment a messenger arrived with the intelligence, "Hasten and go (come), for Philistines have fallen into the land," and thus called Saul away from any further pursuit of David.

1 Samuel 23:28. From this occurrence the place received the name of *Sela-hammahlekoth, "rock of smoothnesses,"* i.e., of slipping away or escaping, from חָלַק, in the sense of being smooth. This explanation is at any rate better supported than "rock of divisions, i.e., the rock at which Saul and David were separated" (Clericus), since חָלַק does not mean to separate.

1 Samuel 24

David Spares Saul in the Cave.—Ch. 24.

1 Samuel 24:1–8. Whilst Saul had gone against the Philistines, David left this dangerous place, and went to the mountain heights of *Engedi,* i.e., the present *Ain-jidy* (goat-fountain), in the middle of the western coats of the Dead Sea (see at Josh. 15:62), which he could reach from Maon in six or seven hours. The soil of the neighbourhood consists entirely of limestone; but the rocks contain a considerable admixture of chalk and flint. Round about there rise bare conical mountains, and even ridges of from two to four hundred feet in height, which mostly run down to the sea. The steep mountains are intersected by wadys running down in deep ravines to the sea. "On all sides the country is full of caverns, which might then serve as lurking-places for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day" (Rob. *Pal.* p. 203).

1 Samuel 24:1, 2. When Saul had returned from his march against the Philistines, and was informed of this, he set out thither with three thousand picked men to search for David and his men in the wild-goat rocks. The expression *"rocks of the wild goats"* is probably not a proper name for some particular rocks, but a general term applied to the rocks of that locality on account of the number of wild goats and chamois that were to be found in all that region, as mountain goats are still (Rob. *Pal.* ii. p. 204).

1 Samuel 24:3. When Saul came to the sheep-folds by the way, where there was a cave, he entered it to cover his feet, whilst David and his men sat behind in the cave. V. de Velde (*R.* ii. p. 74) supposes the place, where the sheep-folds by the roadside were, to have been the Wady *Chareitun,* on the south-west of the Frank mountain, and to the north-east of Tekoah, a very desolate and inaccessible valley. "Rocky, precipitous walls, which rise up one above another for many hundred feet, form the sides of this defile. Stone upon stone, and cliff above cliff, without any sign of being habitable, or of being capable of affording even a halting-place to anything but wild goats." Near the ruins of the village of *Chareitun,* hardly five minutes' walk to the east, there is a large cave or chamber in the rock, with a very narrow entrance entirely concealed by stones, and with many side vaults in which the deepest darkness reigns, at least to any one who has just entered the limestone vaults from the dazzling light of

day. It may be argued in favour of the conjecture that this is the cave which Saul entered, and at the back of which David and his men were concealed, that this cave is on the road from Bethlehem to Ain-jidy, and one of the largest caves in that district, if not the largest of all, and that, according to Pococke (*Beschr. des Morgenl.* ii. p. 61), the Franks call it a labyrinth, the Arabs *Elmaama,* i.e., hiding-place, whilst the latter relate how at one time thirty thousand people hid themselves in it "to escape an evil wind," in all probability the simoom. The only difficulty connected with this supposition is the distance from Ain-jidy, namely about four or five German miles (fifteen or twenty English), and the nearness of Tekoah, according to which it belongs to the desert of Tekoah rather than to that of Engedi. *"To cover his feet"* is a euphemism according to most of the ancient versions, as in Judg. 3:24, for performing the necessities of nature, as it is a custom in the East to cover the feet. It does not mean "to sleep," as it is rendered in this passage in the *Peschito,* and also by Michaelis and others; for although what follows may seem to favour this, there is apparently no reason why any such euphemistic expression should have been chosen for sleep. *"The sides of the cave:"* i.e., the outermost or farthest sides.

1 Samuel 24:4. Then David's men said to him, *"See, this is the day of which Jehovah hath said to thee, Behold, I give thine enemy into thy hand, and do to him what seemeth good to thee."* Although these words might refer to some divine oracle which David had received through a prophet, Gad for example, what follows clearly shows that David had received no such oracle; and the meaning of his men was simply this, "Behold, to-day is the day when God is saying to thee:" that is to say, the speakers regarded the leadings of providence by which Saul had been brought into David's power as a divine intimation to David himself to take this opportunity of slaying his deadly enemy, and called this intimation a word of Jehovah. *David then rose, up, and cut off the edge of Saul's cloak privily.* Saul had probably laid the *meil* on one side, which rendered it possible for David to cut off a piece of it unobserved.

1 Samuel 24:5. But *his heart smote him* after he had done it; i.e., his conscience reproached him, because he regarded this as an injury done to the king himself.

1 Samuel 24:6. With all the greater firmness, therefore, did he repel the suggestions of his men: *"Far be it to me from Jehovah* (on Jehovah's account: see at Josh. 22:29), *that* (אִם, a particle denoting an oath) *I should do such a thing to my lord, the anointed of Jehovah, to stretch out my hand against him."* These words of David show clearly enough that no word of Jehovah had come to him to do as he liked with Saul.

1 Samuel 24:7. Thus he kept back his people with words (שִׁסַּע, *verbis dilacere*), and did not allow them to rise up against Saul, sc., to slay him.

1 Samuel 24:8–16. But when Saul had gone out of the cave, David went out, and called, *"My lord king,"* that when the king looked round he might expostulate with him, with the deepest reverence, but yet with earnest words, that should sharpen his conscience as to the unfounded nature of his suspicion and the injustice of his persecution. *"Why dost thou hearken to words of men, who say, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have been that Jehovah hath given thee to-day into my hand in the cave, and they said* (אָמַר, thought) *to kill thee, and I spared thee:" lit.* it (mine eye) spared thee (cf. Gen. 45:20, Deut. 7:16, etc., which show that עֵינִי is to be supplied).

1 Samuel 24:11. To confirm what he said, he then showed him the lappet of his coat which he had cut off, and said, *"My father, see."* In these words there is an expression of the childlike reverence and affection which David cherished towards the anointed of the Lord. *"For that I cut off the lappet and did not kill thee, learn and see* (from this) *that* (there is) *not evil in my hand* (i.e., that I do not go about for the purpose of injury and crime), *and that I have*

not sinned against thee, as thou nevertheless layest wait for my soul to destroy it."

1 Samuel 24:12, 13. After he had proved to the king in this conclusive manner that he had no reason whatever for seeking his life, he invoked the Lord as judge between him and his adversary: *"Jehovah will avenge me upon thee, but my hand will not be against thee. As the proverb of the ancients* (הַקַּדְמוֹנִי is used collectively) *says, Evil proceedeth from the evil, but my hand shall not be upon thee."* The meaning is this: Only a wicked man could wish to avenge himself; I do not.

1 Samuel 24:14. And even if he should wish to attack the king, he did not possess the power. This thought introduces v. 14: *"After whom is the king of Israel gone out? After whom dost thou pursue? A dead dog, a single flea."* By these similes David meant to describe himself as a perfectly harmless and insignificant man, of whom Saul had no occasion to be afraid, and whom the king of Israel ought to think it beneath his dignity to pursue. A dead dog cannot bite or hurt, and is an object about which a king ought not to trouble himself (cf. 2 Samuel 9:8 and 16:9, where the idea of something contemptible is included). The point of comparison with a flea is the insignificance of such an animal (cf. 1 Samuel 26:20).

1 Samuel 24:15. As Saul had therefore no good ground for persecuting David, the latter could very calmly commit his cause to the Lord God, that He might decide it as judge, and deliver him out of the hand of Saul: *"Let Him look at it, and conduct my cause,"* etc.

1 Samuel 24:16–22. These words made an impression upon Saul. David's conduct went to his heart, so that he wept aloud, and confessed to him: *"Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast shown me good, and I* (have shown) *thee evil;* and thou hast given me a proof of this to-day."

1 Samuel 24:19. *"If a man meet with his enemy, will he send him* (let him go) *in peace?"* This sentence is to be regarded as a question, which requires a negative reply, and expresses the thought: When a man meets with an enemy, he does not generally let him escape without injury. But thou hast acted very differently towards me. This thought is easily supplied from the context, and what follows attaches itself to this: *"The Lord repay thee good for what thou hast done to me this day."*

1 Samuel 24:20, 21. This wish was expressed in perfect sincerity. David's behaviour towards him had conquered for the moment the evil demon of his heart, and completely altered his feelings. In this better state of mind he felt impelled even to give utterance to these words, *"I know that thou wilt be king, and the sovereignty will have perpetuity in thy hand."* Saul could not prevent this conviction from forcing itself upon him, after his own rejection and the failure of all that he attempted against David; and it was this which drove him to persecute David whenever the evil spirit had the upper hand in his soul. But now that better feelings had arisen in his mind, he uttered it without envy, and merely asked David to promise on oath that he would not cut off his descendants after his death, and seek to exterminate his name from his father's house. A name is exterminated when the whole of the descendants are destroyed,—a thing of frequent occurrence in the East in connection with a change of dynasties, and one which occurred again and again even in the kingdom of the ten tribes (vid., 1 Kings 15:28ff., 16:11ff.; 2 Kings 10).

1 Samuel 24:22. when David had sworn this, Saul returned home. But David remained upon the mountain heights, because he did not regard the passing change in Saul's feelings as likely to continue. הַמְּצוּדָה (translated *"the hold"*) is used here to denote the mountainous part of the desert of Judah. It is different in 1 Samuel 22:5.

1 Samuel 25

Death of Samuel. Nabal and Abigail.—Ch. 25.

1 Samuel 25:1. The *death of Samuel* is inserted here, because it occurred at that time. The fact

that all Israel assembled together to his burial, and lamented him, i.e., mourned for him, was a sign that his labours as a prophet were recognised by the whole nation as a blessing for Israel. Since the days of Moses and Joshua, no man had arisen to whom the covenant nation owed so much as to Samuel, who has been justly called the reformer and restorer of the theocracy. They buried him *"in his house at Ramah."* The expression "his house" does not mean his burial-place or family tomb, nor his native place, but the house in which he lived, with the court belonging to it, where Samuel was placed in a tomb erected especially for him. After the death of Samuel, David went down into the desert of *Paran,* i.e., into the northern portion of the desert of Arabia, which stretches up to the mountains of Judah (see at Num. 10:12); most likely for no other reason than because he could no longer find sufficient means of subsistence for himself and his six hundred men in the desert of Judah.

1 Samuel 25:2–44. The following history of *Nabal's* folly, and of the wise and generous behaviour of his pious and intelligent wife Abigail towards David, shows how Jehovah watched over His servant David, and not only preserved him from an act of passionate excitement, which might have endangered his calling to be king of Israel, but turned the trouble into which he had been brought into a source of prosperity and salvation.

1 Samuel 25:2–13. At *Maon,* i.e., Main or the mountains of Judah (see at Josh. 15:55), there lived a rich man (גָּדוֹל, *great* through property and riches), who had his establishment at *Carmel.* מַעֲשֶׂה, work, occupation, then establishment, possessions (vid., Ex. 23:15). *Carmel* is not the promontory of that name (Thenius), but the present *Kurmul* on the mountains of Judah, scarcely half an hour's journey to the north-west of Maon (see at Josh. 15:55). This man possessed three thousand sheep and a thousand goats, and was at the sheep-shearing at Carmel. His name was *Nabal* (i.e., fool): this was hardly his proper name, but was a surname by which he was popularly designated on account of his folly. His wife *Abigail* was *"of good understanding,"* i.e., intelligent, *"and of beautiful figure;"* but the husband was *"harsh and evil in his doings."* He sprang from the family of *Caleb.* This is the rendering adopted by the Chaldee and Vulgate, according to the *Keri* כָּלְבִּי. The *Chethibh* is to be read כְּלִבּוֹ, "according to his heart;" though the LXX (ἄνθρωπος κυνικός) and Josephus, as well as the Arabic and Syriac, derive it from כֶּלֶב, and understand it as referring to the dog-like, or shameless, character of the man.

1 Samuel 25:4, 5. When David heard in the desert (cf. v. 1) that Nabal was shearing his sheep, which was generally accompanied with a festal meal (see at Gen. 38:12), he sent ten young men up to Carmel to him, and bade them wish him peace and prosperity in his name, and having reminded him of the friendly services rendered to his shepherds, solicit a present for himself and his people. שְׁאַל לוֹ לְשָׁלוֹם, ask him after his welfare, i.e., greet him in a friendly manner (cf. Ex. 18:7). The word לֶחָי is obscure, and was interpreted by the early translators merely according to uncertain conjectures. The simplest explanation is apparently *in vitam,* long *life,* understood as a wish in the sense of "good fortune to you" (Luther, Maurer, etc.); although the word חַי in the singular can only be shown to have the meaning *life* in connection with the formula used in oaths, חַי נַפְשְׁךָ, etc. But even if חַי must be taken as an adjective, it is impossible to explain לֶחָי in any other way than as an elliptical exclamation meaning "good fortune to the living man." For the idea that the word is to be connected with אֱמַרְתֶּם, "say to the living man," i.e., to the man if still alive, is overthrown by the fact that David had no doubt that Nabal was still living. The words which follow are also to be understood as a wish, *"May thou and thy house, and all that is thine, be well!"* After this salutation they were to proceed with the object of their visit: *"And now I have heard that thou hast sheep-shearers. Now thy*

shepherds have been with us; we have done them no harm (הִכְלִים, as in Judg. 18:7: on the form, see Ges. § 53, 3, Anm. 6), *and nothing was missed by them so long as they were in Carmel."* When living in the desert, David's men had associated with the shepherds of Nabal, rendered them various services, and protected them and their flocks against the southern inhabitants of the desert (the Bedouin Arabs); in return for which they may have given them food and information. Thus David proved himself a protector of his people even in his banishment. וְיִמְצְאוּ, *"so may the young men* (those sent by David) *find favour in thine eyes! for we have come to a good* (i.e., a festive) *day. Give, I pray, what thy hand findeth* (i.e., as much as thou canst) *to thy servant, and to thy son David."* With the expression *"thy son"* David claims Nabal's fatherly goodwill. So far as the fact itself is concerned, "on such a festive occasion near a town or village even in our own time, an Arab sheikh of the neighbouring desert would hardly fail to put in a word either in person or by message; and his message both in form and substance would be only the transcript of that of David" (Robinson, *Palestine,* p. 201).

1 Samuel 25:9. David's messengers delivered their message to Nabal, וַיָּנוּחוּ, *"and sat down,"* sc., awaiting the fulfilment of their request. The rendering given by the Chaldee (פְּסָקוּ, *cessaverunt loqui*) and the Vulgate (*siluerunt*) is less suitable, and cannot be philologically sustained. The Septuagint, on the other hand, has καὶ ἀνεπήδησε, "and he (Nabal) sprang up," as if the translators had read וַיָּקָם (vid., LXX at 1 Samuel 20:34). This rendering, according to which the word belongs to the following clause, gives a very appropriate sense, if only, supposing that וַיָּקָם really did stand in the text, the origin and general adoption of וַיָּנוּחוּ could in any way be explained.

1 Samuel 25:10. Nabal refused the petitioners in the most churlish manner: *"Who is David? who the son of Jesse?"* i.e., what have I to do with David? *"There by many servants now-a-days who tear away every one from his master."* Thus, in order to justify his own covetousness, he set down David as a vagrant who had run away from his master.

1 Samuel 25:11. *"And I should take my bread and my water* (i.e., my food and drink), *and my cattle, … and give them to men whom I do not know whence they are?"* וְלָקַחְתִּי is a perfect with *vav consec.,* and the whole sentence is to be taken as a question.

1 Samuel 25:12, 13. The messengers returned to David with this answer. The churlish reply could not fail to excite his anger. He therefore commanded his people to gird on the sword, and started with 400 men to take vengeance upon Nabal, whilst 200 remained behind with the things.

1 Samuel 25:14–31. However intelligible David's wrath may appear in the situation in which he was placed, it was not right before God, but a sudden burst of sinful passion, which was unseemly in a servant of God. By carrying out his intention, he would have sinned against the Lord and against His people. But the Lord preserved him from this sin by the fact that, just at the right time, Abigail, the intelligent and pious wife of Nabal, heard of the affair, and was able to appease the wrath of David by her immediate and kindly interposition.

1 Samuel 25:14, 15. Abigail heard from one of (Nabal's) servants what had taken place (בָּרֵךְ, to wish any one prosperity and health, i.e., to salute, as in 1 Samuel 13:10; and יָעַט, from עִיט, to speak wrathfully: on the form, see at 1 Samuel 15:19 and 14:32), and also what had been praiseworthy in the behaviour of David's men towards Nabal's shepherds; how they had not only done them no injury, had not robbed them of anything, but had defended them all the while. *"They were a wall* (i.e., a firm protection) *round us by night and by day, as long as we were with them feeding the sheep,"* i.e., a wall of defence against attacks from the Bedouins living in the desert.

1 Samuel 25:17. *"And now,"* continued the servant, *"know and see what thou doest; for evil is determined* (cf. 1 Samuel 20:9) *against our master and all his house: and he* (Nabal) *is a wicked man, that one cannot address him."*

1 Samuel 25:18, 19. Then Abigail took as quickly as possible a bountiful present of provisions,—*two hundred loaves, two bottles of wine, five prepared* (i.e., slaughtered) *sheep* (עֲשׂוּוֹת, a rare form for עֲשׂוּיוֹת: see Ewald, § 189, *a.*), *five seahs* (an ephah and two-thirds) *of roasted grains* (*Kali:* see 1 Samuel 17:17), *a hundred* צִמֻקִים (dried grapes, i.e., raisin-cakes: Ital. *simmuki*), *and two hundred fig-cakes* (consisting of pressed figs joined together),—and sent these gifts laden upon asses on before her to meet David whilst she herself followed behind to appease his anger by coming to meet him in a friendly manner, but without saying a word to her husband about what she intended to do.

1 Samuel 25:20. When she came down riding upon the ass by a hidden part of the mountain, David and his men came to meet her, so that she lighted upon them. סֵתֶר הָהָר, a hidden part of the mountain, was probably a hollow between two peaks of a mountain. This would explain the use of the word יָרַד, to come down, with reference both to Abigail, who approached on the one side, and David, who came on the other.

1 Samuel 25:21, 22. Vv. 21 and 22 contain a circumstantial clause introduced parenthetically to explain what follows: but David had said, *Only for deception* (i.e., for no other purpose than to be deceived in my expectation) *have I defended all that belongs to this man* (Nabal) *in the desert, so that nothing of his was missed, and* (for) *he hath repaid me evil for good. God do so to the enemies of David, if I leave,* etc.; i.e., "as truly as God will punish the enemies of David, so certainly will I not leave till the morning light, of all that belongeth to him, one that pisseth against the wall." This oath, in which the punishment of God is not called down upon the swearer himself (God do so *to me*), as it generally is, but upon the enemies of David, is analogous to that in 1 Samuel 3:17, where punishment is threatened upon the person addressed, who is there made to swear; except that here, as the oath could not be uttered in the ears of the person addressed, upon whom it was to fall, the enemies generally are mentioned instead of *"to thee."* There is no doubt, therefore, as to the correctness of the text. The substance of this imprecation may be explained from the fact that David is so full of the consciousness of fighting and suffering for the cause of the kingdom of God, that he discerns in the insult heaped upon him by Nabal an act of hostility to the Lord and the cause of His kingdom. The phrase מַשְׁתִּין בְּקִיר, *mingens in parietem,* is only met with in passages which speak of the destruction of a family or household to the very last man (viz., besides this passage, 1 Kings 14:10; 16:11; 21:21; 2 Kings 9:8), and neither refers primarily to dogs, as Ephraem Syrus, Juda ben Karish, and others maintain; nor to the lowest class of men, as Winer, Maurer, and others imagine; nor to little boys, as L. de Dieu, Gesenius, etc., suppose; but, as we may see from the explanatory clause appended to 1 Kings 14:10; 21:21, 2 Kings 9:8, to every male (*quemcumque masculi generis hominem:* vid., Bochart, *Hieroz.* i. pp. 776ff., and Rödiger on Ges. *Thes.* pp. 1397–8).

1 Samuel 25:23. V. 23 is connected with v. 20. When Abigail saw David, she descended hastily from the ass, fell upon her face before him, bowed to the ground, and fell at his feet, saying, *"Upon me, me, my lord, be the guilt; allow thy handmaid to reveal the thing to thee."* She takes the guilt upon herself, because she hopes that David will not avenge it upon her.

1 Samuel 25:25. She prayed that David would take no notice of Nabal, for he was what his name declared—*a fool, and folly in him;* but she (Abigail) had not seen the messengers of David. "The prudent woman uses a good argument; for a wise man should pardon a fool" (Seb. Schmidt). She then endeavours to bring David to a friendly state of mind by three arguments,

introduced with וְעַתָּה (vv. 26, 27), before asking for forgiveness (v. 28). She first of all pointed to the leadings of God, by which David had been kept from committing murder through her coming to meet him.[45] *"As truly as Jehovah liveth, and by the life of thy soul! yea, the Lord hath kept thee, that thou camest not into blood-guiltiness, and thy hand helped thee"* (i.e., and with thy hand thou didst procure thyself help). אֲשֶׁר, introducing her words, as in 1 Samuel 15:20, *lit.* "as truly as thou livest, (so true is it) that," etc. In the second place, she points to the fact that God is the avenger of the wicked, by expressing the wish that all the enemies of David may become fools like Nabal; in connection with which it must be observed, in order to understand her words fully, that, according to the Old Testament representation, folly is a correlate of ungodliness, which inevitably brings down punishment.[46] The predicate to the sentence *"and they that seek evil to my lord"* must be supplied from the preceding words, viz., *"may they become just such fools."*

1 Samuel 25:27. It is only in the third line that she finally mentions the present, but in such a manner that she does not offer it directly to David, but describes it as a gift for the men in his train. *"And now this blessing* (בְּרָכָה here and 1 Samuel 30:26, as in Gen. 33:11: cf. ἡ εὐλογία, 2 Cor. 9:5, 6), *which thine handmaid hath brought, let it be given to the young men in my lord's train"* (*lit.* "at the feet of:" cf. Ex. 11:8; Judg. 4:10, etc.).

1 Samuel 25:28. The shrewd and pious woman supports her prayer for forgiveness of the wrong, which she takes upon herself, by promises of the rich blessing with which the Lord would recompense David. She thereby gives such clear and distinct expression to her firm belief in the divine election of David as king of Israel, that her words almost amount to prophecy: *"For Jehovah will make my lord a lasting house* (cf. 1 Samuel 2:35; and for the fact itself, 2 Samuel 7:8ff., where the Lord confirms this pious wish by His own promises to David himself); *for my lord fighteth the wars of Jehovah* (vid., 1 Samuel 18:17), *and evil is not discovered in thee thy whole life long."* רָעָה, evil, i.e., misfortune, mischief; for the thought that he might also be preserved from wrong-doing is not expressed till v. 31. *"All thy days," lit.* "from thy days," i.e., from the beginning of thy life.

1 Samuel 25:29. *"And should any one rise up to pursue thee, … the soul of my lord will be bound up in the bundle of the living with the Lord thy God."* The metaphor is taken from the custom of binding up valuable things in a bundle, to prevent their being injured. The words do not refer primarily to eternal life with God in heaven, but only to the safe preservation of the righteous on this earth in the grace and fellowship of the Lord. But whoever is so hidden in the gracious fellowship of the Lord in this life, that no enemy can harm him or injure his life, the Lord will not allow to perish, even though temporal death should come, but will then receive him into eternal life. *"But the soul of thine enemies, He will hurl away in the cup of the sling." "The cup* (*caph:* cf. Gen. 32:26) *of the sling"* was the cavity in which the stone was placed for the purpose of hurling.

1 Samuel 25:30, 31. Abigail concluded her intercession with the assurance that the forgiveness of Nabal's act would be no occasion of anguish of heart to David when he should have become prince over Israel, on account of his having shed innocent blood and helped himself, and also with the hope that he would remember her. From the words, *"When Jehovah shall do to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning him, and shall make thee prince over Israel,"* it appears to follow that Abigail had received certain information of the anointing of David, and his designation to be the future king, probably through Samuel, or one of the pupils of the prophets. There is nothing to preclude this assumption, even if it cannot be historically sustained. Abigail manifests such an advance and maturity in the life of faith, as could only have been derived from intercourse with prophets. It is expressly stated with regard to Elijah and Elisha, that at

certain times the pious assembled together around the prophets. What prevents us from assuming the same with regard to Samuel? The absence of any distinct testimony to that effect is amply compensated for by the brief, and for the most part casual, notices that are given of the influence which Samuel exerted upon all Israel.

1 Samuel 25:31. V. 31 introduces the apodosis to v. 30: *"So will this* (i.e., the forgiveness of Nabal's folly, for which she had prayed in v. 28) *not be a stumbling-block* (*pukah:* anything in the road which causes a person to stagger) *and anguish of heart* (i.e., conscientious scruple) *to thee, and shedding innocent blood, and that my lord helps himself.* וְלִשְׁפֹּךְ וגו׳ is perfectly parallel to לְפוּקָה וגו׳, and cannot be taken as subordinate, as it is in the Vulgate, etc., in the sense of "that thou hast not shed blood innocently," etc. In this rendering not only is the *vav cop.* overlooked, but "not" is arbitrarily interpolated, to obtain a suitable sense, which the Vulgate rendering, *quod effuderis sanguinem innoxiam,* does not give. וְהֵיטִיב is to be taken conditionally: *"and if Jehovah shall deal well with my lord, then,"* etc.

1 Samuel 25:32–38. These words could not fail to appease David's wrath. In his reply he praised the Lord for having sent Abigail to meet him (v. 32), and then congratulated Abigail upon her understanding and her actions, that she had kept him from bloodshed (v. 33); otherwise he would certainly have carried out the revenge which he had resolved to take upon Nabal (v. 34). וְאוּלָם is strongly adversative: *nevertheless.* מֵהָרַע, *inf. constr. Hiph.* of רָעַע. כִּי, ὅτι, introduces the substance of the affirmation, and is repeated before the oath: כִּי אִם … כִּי לוּלֵי, (that) *if thou hadst not,* etc., (that) *truly there would not have been left* (cf. 2 Samuel 2:27). The very unusual form תָּבֹאתִי, an imperfect with the termination of the perfect, might indeed possibly be a copyist's error for תָּבֹאִי (Olsh. *Gr.* pp. 452, 525), but in all probability it is only an intensified form of the second pers. fem. imperf., like תָּבוֹאתָה (Deut. 33:16; cf. Ewald, § 191, *c.*).

1 Samuel 25:35. David then received the gifts brought for him, and bade Abigail return to her house, with the assurance that he had granted her request for pardon. נָשָׂא פָּנִים, as in Gen. 19:21, etc.

1 Samuel 25:36. When Abigail returned home, she found her husband *at a great feast, like a king's feast, very merry* (עָלָיו, "therewith," refers to מִשְׁתֵּה: cf. Prov. 23:30), *and drunken above measure,* so that she told him nothing of what had occurred until the break of day.

1 Samuel 25:37. Then, *"when the wine had gone from Nabal,"* i.e., when he had become sober, she related the matter to him; whereat he was so terrified, that he was smitten with a stroke. This is the meaning of the words, *"his heart died within him, and it became as stone."* The cause of it was not his anger at the loss he had sustained, or merely his alarm at the danger to which he had been exposed, and which he did not believe to be over yet, but also his vexation that his wife should have made him humble himself in such a manner; for he is described as a hard, i.e., an unbending, self-willed man.

1 Samuel 25:38. About ten days later *the Lord smote him so that he died,* i.e., the Lord put an end to his life by a second stroke.

1 Samuel 25:39–44. When David heard of Nabal's death, he praised Jehovah that He had avenged his shame upon Nabal, and held him back from self-revenge. אֲשֶׁר רָב וגו׳, *"who hath pleaded the cause of my reproach* (the disgrace inflicted upon me) *against Nabal." "Against Nabal"* does not belong to *"my reproach,"* but to *"pleaded the cause."* The construction of רִיב with מִן is a pregnant one, to fight (and deliver) out of the power of a person (vid., Ps. 43:1); whereas here the fundamental idea is that of taking vengeance upon a person.

1 Samuel 25:40. He then sent messengers to Abigail, and conveyed to her his wish to marry

her, to which she consented without hesitation. With deep reverence she said to the messengers (v. 41), *"Behold, thy handmaid as servant* (i.e., is ready to become thy servant) *to wash the feet of the servants of my lord;"* i.e., in the obsequious style of the East, "I am ready to perform the humblest possible services for thee."

1 Samuel 25:42. She then rose up hastily, and went after the messengers to David with five damsels in her train, and became his wife.

1 Samuel 25:43. The historian appends a few notices here concerning David's wives: *"And David had taken Ahinoam from Jezreel; thus they also both became his wives."* The expression *"also"* points to David's marriage with Michal, the daughter of Saul (1 Samuel 18:28). *Jezreel* is not the city of that name in the tribe of Issachar (Josh. 19:18), but the one in the mountains of Judah (Josh. 15:56).

1 Samuel 25:44. But Saul had taken his daughter Michal away from David, and given her to *Palti* of Gallim. *Palti* is called *Paltiel* in 2 Samuel 3:15. According to Isa. 10:30, *Gallim* was a place between Gibeah of Saul and Jerusalem. Valentiner supposes it to be the hill to the south of *Tuleil el Phul* (Gibeah of Saul) called *Khirbet el Jisr.* After the death of Saul, however, David persuaded Ishbosheth to give him Michal back again (see 2 Samuel 3:14ff.).

1 Samuel 26

David is Betrayed Again by the Ziphites, and Spares Saul a Second Time.—Ch. 26.

1 Samuel 26. The repetition not only of the treachery of the Ziphites, but also of the sparing of Saul by David, furnishes no proof in itself that the account contained in this chapter is only another legend of the occurrences already related in 1 Samuel 23:19–24:23. As the pursuit of David by Saul lasted for several years, in so small a district as the desert of Judah, there is nothing strange in the repetition of the same scenes. And the assertion made by Thenius, that "Saul would have been a moral monster, which he evidently was not, if he had pursued David with quiet deliberation, and through the medium of the same persons, and had sought his life again, after his own life had been so magnanimously spared by him," not only betrays a superficial acquaintance with the human heart, but is also founded upon the mere assertion, for which there is no proof, that Saul was *evidently* no so; and it is proved to be worthless by the fact, that after the first occasion on which his life was so magnanimously spared by David, he did not leave off seeking him up and down in the land, and that David was obliged to seek refuge with the Philistines in consequence, as may be seen from 1 Samuel 27, which Thenius himself assigns to the same source as 1 Samuel 24. The agreement between the two accounts reduces it entirely to outward and unessential things. It consists chiefly in the fact that the Ziphites came twice to Saul at Gibeah, and informed him that David was stopping in their neighbourhood, in the hill *Hachilah,* and also that Saul went out twice in pursuit of David with 3000 men. But the three thousand were the standing body of men that Saul had raised from the very beginning of his reign out of the whole number of those who were capable of bearing arms, for the purpose of carrying on his smaller wars (1 Samuel 13:2); and the hill of *Hachilah* appears to have been a place in the desert of Judah peculiarly well adapted for the site of an encampment. On the other hand, all the details, as well as the final results of the two occurrences, differ entirely from one another. When David was betrayed the first time, he drew back into the desert of Maon before the advance of Saul; and being completely surrounded by Saul upon one of the mountains there, was only saved from being taken prisoner by the circumstance that Saul was compelled suddenly to relinquish the pursuit of David on account of the report that the Philistines had invaded the land (1 Samuel 23:25–28). But on the second occasion Saul encamped upon the hill of Hachilah, whilst David had drawn back into the adjoining desert, from which he crept secretly into Saul's encampment, and might, if he had chosen, have

put his enemy to death (1 Samuel 26:3ff.). There is quite as much difference in the minuter details connected with the sparing of Saul. On the first occasion, Saul entered a cave in the desert of Engedi, whilst David and his men were concealed in the interior of the cave, without having the smallest suspicion that they were anywhere near (1 Samuel 24:2–4). The second time David went with Abishai into the encampment of Saul upon the hill of Hachilah, while the king and all his men were sleeping (1 Samuel 26:3, 5). It is true that on both occasions David's men told him that God had given his enemy into his hand; but the first time they added, Do to him what seemeth good in thy sight; and David cut off the lappet of Saul's coat, whereupon his conscience smote him, and he said, "Far be it from me to lay my hand upon the Lord's anointed" (1 Samuel 24:5–8). In the second instance, on the contrary, when David saw Saul in the distance lying by the carriage rampart and the army sleeping round him, he called to two of his heroes, Ahimelech and Abishai, to go with him into the camp of the sleeping foe, and then went thither with Abishai, who thereupon said to him, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand: let me alone, that I may pierce him with the spear." But David rejected this proposal, and merely took away the spear and water-bowl that were at Saul's head (1 Samuel 26:6–12). And lastly, notwithstanding the fact that the words of David and replies of Saul agree in certain general thoughts, yet they differ entirely in the main. On the first occasion David showed the king that his life had been in his power, and yet he had spared him, to dispel the delusion that he was seeking his life (1 Samuel 24:10–16). On the second occasion he asked the king why he was pursuing him, and called to him to desist from his pursuit (1 Samuel 26:18ff.). But Saul was so affected the first time that he wept aloud, and openly declared that David would obtain the kingdom; and asked him to promise on oath, that when he did, he would not destroy his family (1 Samuel 24:17–23). The second time, on the contrary, he only declared that he had sinned and acted foolishly, and would to David no more harm, and that David would undertake and prevail; but he neither shed tears, nor brought himself to speak of David's ascending the throne, so that he was evidently much more hardened than before (1 Samuel 27:21–25). These decided differences prove clearly enough that the incident described in this chapter is not the same as the similar one mentioned in 1 Samuel 23 and 24, but belongs to a later date, when Saul's enmity and hardness had increased.

1 Samuel 26:1–12. The second betrayal of David by the Ziphites occurred after David had married Abigail at Carmel, and when he had already returned to the desert of Judah. On vv. 1 and 2 compare the explanations of 1 Samuel 23:19 and 24:3. Instead of *"before* (in the face of) *Jeshimon"* (i.e., the wilderness), we find the situation defined more precisely in 1 Samuel 23:19, as *"to the right* (i.e., on the south) *of the wilderness"* (Jeshimon).

1 Samuel 26:3, 4. When David saw (i.e., perceived) in the desert that Saul was coming behind him, he sent out spies, and learned from them *that he certainly had come* (אֶל־נָכוֹן, for a certainty, as in 1 Samuel 23:23).

1 Samuel 26:5ff. Upon the receipt of this information, David rose up with two attendants (mentioned in v. 6) to reconnoitre the camp of Saul. When he saw the place where Saul and his general Abner were lying—Saul was lying *by the waggon rampart,* and the fighting men were encamped round about him—he said to Ahimelech and Abishai, *"Who will go down with me into the camp to Saul?"* Whereupon Abishai declared himself ready to do so; and they both went by night, and found Saul sleeping with all the people. *Ahimelech* the Hittite is never mentioned again; but *Abishai* the son of Zeruiah, David's sister (1 Chron. 2:16), and a brother of Joab, was afterwards a celebrated general of David, as was also his brother Joab (2 Samuel 16:9; 18:2; 21:17). Saul's spear was *pressed* (stuck) *into the ground at his head,* as a sign that the king was sleeping there, for the spear served Saul as a sceptre (cf. 1 Samuel 18:10).

1 Samuel 26:8. When Abishai exclaimed, *"God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand: now will I pierce him with the spear into the ground with a stroke, and will give no second"* (sc., stroke: the Vulgate rendering gives the sense exactly: *et secundo non opus erit,* there will be no necessity for a second), David replied, *"Destroy him not; for who hath stretched out his hand against the anointed of the Lord, and remained unhurt?"* נָקָה, as in Ex. 21:19, Num. 5:31. He then continued (in vv. 10, 11): *"As truly as Jehovah liveth, unless Jehovah smite him* (i.e., carry him off with a stroke; cf. 1 Samuel 25:38), *or his day cometh that he dies* (i.e., or he dies a natural death; 'his day' denoting the day of death, as in Job 14:6; 15:32), *or he goes into battle and is carried off, far be it from me with Jehovah* (מֵיְהוָֹה, as in 1 Samuel 24:7) *to stretch forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed."* The apodosis to v. 10 commences with חָלִילָה, "far be it," or "the Lord forbid," in v. 11. *"Take now the spear which is at his head, and the pitcher, and let us go."*

1 Samuel 26:12. They departed with these trophies, without any one waking up and seeing them, because they were all asleep, as a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them. מֵרַאֲשֹׁתֵי שָׁאוּל stands for מִמְּרַאֲשֹׁתֵי שׁ׳, "from the head of Saul," with ם dropped. The expression *"a deep sleep of Jehovah,"* i.e., a deep sleep sent or inflicted by Jehovah, points to the fact that the Lord favoured David's enterprise.

1 Samuel 26:13–20. *"And David went over to the other side, and placed himself upon the top of the mountain afar off* (*the space between them was great*), *and cried to the people,"* etc. Saul had probably encamped with his fighting men on the slope of the ill Hachilah, so that a valley separated him from the opposite hill, from which David had no doubt reconnoitred the camp and then *gone down* to it (v. 6), and to which he returned after the deed was accomplished. The statement that this mountain was far off, so that there was a great space between David and Saul, not only favours the accuracy of the historical tradition, but shows that David reckoned far less now upon any change in the state of Saul's mind than he had done before, when he followed Saul without hesitation from the cave and called after him (1 Samuel 24:9), and that in fact he rather feared lest Saul should endeavour to get him into his power as soon as he woke from his sleep.

1 Samuel 26:14. David called out to Abner, whose duty it was as general to defend the life of his king. And Abner replied, *"Who art thou, who criest out to the king?"* i.e., offendest the king by thy shouting, and disturbest his rest.

1 Samuel 26:15, 16. David in return taunted Abner with having watched the king carelessly, and made himself chargeable with his death. *"For one of the people came to destroy thy lord the king."* As a proof of this, he then showed him the spear and pitcher that he had taken away with him. רְאֵה is to be repeated in thought before אֵת־צַפַּחַת: *"look where the king's spear is; and* (look) *at the pitcher at his head,"* sc., where it is. These reproaches that were cast at Abner were intended to show to Saul, who might at any rate possibly hear, and in fact did hear, that David was the most faithful defender of his life, more faithful than his closest and most zealous servants.

1 Samuel 26:17, 18. When Saul heard David's voice (for he could hardly have seen David, as the occurrence took place before daybreak, at the latest when the day began to dawn), and David had made himself known to the king in reply to his inquiry, David said, *"Why doth my lord pursue his servant? for what have I done, and what evil is in my hand?"* He then gave him the well-meant advice, to seek reconciliation for his wrath against him, and not to bring upon himself the guilt of allowing David to find his death in a foreign land. The words, *"and now let my lord the king hear the saying of his servant,"* serve to indicate that what follows is important, and worthy of laying to heart. In his words, David supposes two cases as conceivable causes of Saul's hostility: (1) if Jehovah hath stirred thee up against me; (2) if men have done so. In the first case, he proposes as the

best means of overcoming this instigation, that He (Jehovah) should smell an offering. The *Hiphil* יָרַח only means to smell, not to cause to smell. The subject is Jehovah. Smelling a sacrifice is an anthropomorphic term, used to denote the divine satisfaction (cf. Gen. 8:21). The meaning of the words, *"let Jehovah smell sacrifice,"* is therefore, "let Saul appease the wrath of God by the presentation of acceptable sacrifices." What sacrifices they are which please God, is shown in Ps. 51:18, 19; and it is certainly not by accident merely that David uses the word *minchah,* the technical expression in the law for the bloodless sacrifice, which sets forth the sanctification of life in good works. The thought to which David gives utterance here, namely, that God instigates a man to evil actions, is met with in other passages of the Old Testament. It not only lies at the foundation of the words of David in Ps. 51:6 (cf. Hengstenberg on *Psalms*), but is also clearly expressed in 2 Samuel 24:1, where Jehovah instigates David to number the people, and where this instigation is described as a manifestation of the anger of God against Israel; and in 2 Samuel 16:10ff., where David says, with regard to Shimei, that God had bade him curse him. These passages also show that God only instigates those who have sinned against Him to evil deeds; and therefore that the instigation consists in the fact that God impels sinners to manifest the wickedness of their hearts in deeds, or furnishes the opportunity and occasion for the unfolding and practical manifestation of the evil desire of the heart, that the sinner may either be brought to the knowledge of his more evil ways and also to repentance, through the evil deed and its consequences, or, if the heart should be hardened still more by the evil deed, that it may become ripe for the judgment of death. The instigation of a sinner to evil is simply one peculiar way in which God, as a general rule, punishes sins through sinners; for God only instigates to evil actions such as have drawn down the wrath of God upon themselves in consequence of their sin. When David supposes the fact that Jehovah has instigated Saul against him, he acknowledges, implicitly at least, that he himself is a sinner, whom the Lord may be intending to punish, though without lessening Saul's wrong by this indirect confession.

The second supposition is: *"if, however, children of men"* (sc., have instigated thee against me); in which case *"let them be cursed before the Lord; for they drive me now* (this day) *that I dare not attach myself to the inheritance of Jehovah* (i.e., the people of God), *saying, Go, serve other gods."* The meaning is this: They have carried it so far now, that I am obliged to separate from the people of God, to fly from the land of the Lord, and, because far away from His sanctuary, to serve other gods. The idea implied in the closing words was, that Jehovah could only be worshipped in Canaan, at the sanctuary consecrated to Him, because it was only there that He manifested himself to His people, and revealed His face or gracious presence (vid., Ps. 42:2, 3; 84:11; 143:6ff.). "We are not to understand that the enemies of David were actually accustomed to use these very words, but David was thinking of deeds rather than words" (Calvin).

1 Samuel 26:20. *"And now let not my blood fall to the earth far away from the face of the Lord,"* i.e., do not carry it so far as to compel me to perish in a foreign land. *"For the king of Israel has gone out to seek a single flea* (vid., 1 Samuel 24:15), *as one hunts a partridge upon the mountains."* This last comparison does not of course refer to the first, so that "the object of comparison is compared again with something else," as Thenius supposes, but it refers rather to the whole of the previous clause. The king of Israel is pursuing something very trivial, and altogether unworthy of his pursuit, just as if one were hunting a partridge upon the mountains. "No one would think it worth his while to hunt a single partridge that had flown to the mountains, when they may be found in coveys in the fields" (Winer, *Bibl. R. W.* ii. p. 307). This comparison, therefore, does not presuppose that קֹרֵא must be a bird living upon the mountains, as Thenius maintains, so as to justify his altering the text according to the

Septuagint. These words of David were perfectly well adapted to sharpen Saul's conscience, and induce him to desist from his enmity, if he still had an ear for the voice of truth.

1 Samuel 26:21–25. Moreover, Saul could not help confessing, *"I have sinned: return, my son David; I will do thee harm no more, because my life was precious in thine eyes that day."* A good intention, which he never carried out. "He declared that he would never do any more what he had already so often promised not to do again; and yet he did not fail to do it again and again. He ought rather to have taken refuge with God, and appealed to Him for grace, that he might not fall into such sins again; yea, he should have entreated David himself to pray for him" (*Berleb. Bible*). He adds still further, *"Behold, I have acted foolishly, and have gone sore astray;"* but yet he persists in this folly. "There is no sinner so hardened, but that God gives him now and then some rays of light, which show him all his error. But, alas! when they are awakened by such divine movings, it is only for a few moments; and such impulses are no sooner past, than they fall back again immediately into their former life, and forget all that they have promised."

1 Samuel 26:22, 23. David then bade the king send a servant to fetch back the spear and pitcher, and reminded him again of the recompense of God: *"Jehovah will recompense His righteousness and His faithfulness to the man into whose hand Jehovah hath given thee to-day; and* (for) *I would not stretch out my hand against the anointed of the Lord."*

1 Samuel 26:24. *"Behold, as thy soul has been greatly esteemed in my eyes to-day, so will my soul be greatly esteemed in the eyes of Jehovah, that He will save me out of all tribulation."* These words do not contain any "sounding of his own praises" (Thenius), but are merely the testimony of a good conscience before God in the presence of an enemy, who is indeed obliged to confess his wrong-doing, but who no longer feels or acknowledges his need of forgiveness. For even Saul's reply to these words in v. 25 (*"Blessed art thou, my son David: thou wilt undertake, and also prevail:"* יָכֹל תּוּכַל, *lit.* to vanquish, i.e., to carry out what one undertakes) does not express any genuine goodwill towards David, but only an acknowledgment, forced upon him by this fresh experience of David's magnanimity, that God was blessing all his undertakings, so that he would prevail. Saul had no more thoughts of any real reconciliation with David. *"David went his way, and Saul turned to his place"* (cf. Num. 24:25). Thus they parted, and never saw each other again. There is nothing said about Saul returning to his house, as there was when his life was first spared (1 Samuel 24:23). On the contrary, he does not seem to have given up pursuing David; for, according to 1 Samuel 27, David was obliged to take refuge in a foreign land, and carry out what he had described in v. 19 as his greatest calamity.

1 Samuel 27

David at Ziklag in the Land of the Philistines.—Ch. 27.

1 Samuel 27. In his despair of being able permanently to escape the plots of Saul in the land of Israel, David betook himself, with his attendants, to the neighbouring land of the Philistines, to king Achish of Gath, and received from him the town of Ziklag, which was assigned him at his own request as a dwelling-place (vv. 1–7). From this point he made attacks upon certain tribes on the southern frontier of Canaan which were hostile to Israel, but described them to Achish as attacks upon Judah and its dependencies, that he might still retain the protection of the Philistian chief (vv. 8–12). David had fled to Achish at Gath once before; but on that occasion he had been obliged to feign insanity in order to preserve his life, because he was recognised as the conqueror of Goliath. This act of David was not forgotten by the Philistines even now. But as David had been pursued by Saul for many years, Achish did not hesitate to give a place of refuge in his land to the fugitive who had been outlawed by the king of Israel, the arch-enemy of the Philistines,

possibly with the hope that if a fresh war with Saul should break out, he should be able to reap some advantage from David's friendship.

1 Samuel 27:1–7. The result of the last affair with Saul, after his life had again been spared, could not fail to confirm David in his conviction that Saul would not desist from pursuing him, and that if he stayed any longer in the land, he would fall eventually into the hands of his enemy. With this conviction, he formed the following resolution: *"Now shall I be consumed one day by the hand of Saul: there is no good to me* (i.e., it will not be well with me if I remain in the land), *but* (כִּי after a negative) *I will flee into the land of the Philistines; so will Saul desist from me to seek me further* (i.e., give up seeking me) *in the whole of the territory of Israel, and I shall escape his hand."*

1 Samuel 27:2. Accordingly he went over with the 600 men who were with him to Achish, the king of Gath. *Achish,* the son of *Maoch,* is in all probability the same person not only as the king *Achish* mentioned in 1 Samuel 21:11, but also as *Achish* the son of *Maachah* (1 Kings 2:39), since *Maoch* and *Maachah* are certainly only different forms of the same name; and a fifty years' reign, which we should have in that case to ascribe to Achish, it not impossible.

1 Samuel 27:3, 4. Achish allotted dwelling-places in his capital, Gath, for David and his wives, and for all his retinue; and Saul desisted from any further pursuit of David when he was informed of his flight to Gath. The *Chethibh* יוסף is apparently only a copyist's error for יָסַף.

1 Samuel 27:5ff. In the capital of the kingdom, however, David felt cramped, and therefore entreated Achish to assign him one of the land (or provincial) towns to dwell in; whereupon he gave him *Ziklag* for that purpose. This town was given to the Simeonites in the time of Joshua (Josh. 19:5), but was afterwards taken by the Philistines, probably not long before the time of David, and appears to have been left without inhabitants in consequence of this conquest. The exact situation, in the western part of the Negeb, has not been clearly ascertained (see at Josh. 15:31). Achish appears to have given it to David. This is implied in the remark, *"Therefore Ziklag came to the kings of Judah* (i.e., became their property) *unto this day."*

1 Samuel 27:7. The statement that David remained a year and four months in the land of the Philistines, is a proof of the historical character of the whole narrative. The יָמִים before the "four months" signifies *a year;* strictly speaking, a term of days which amounted to a full year (as in Lev. 25:29: see also 1 Samuel 1:3, 20; 2:19).

1 Samuel 27:8–12. From Ziklag David made an attack upon the Geshurites, Gerzites, and Amalekites, smote them without leaving a man alive, and returned with much booty. The occasion of this attack is not mentioned, as being a matter of indifference in relation to the chief object of the history; but it is no doubt to be sought for in plundering incursions made by these tribes into the land of Israel. For David would hardly have entered upon such a war in the situation in which he was placed at that time without some such occasion, seeing that it would be almost sure to bring him into suspicion with Achish, and endanger his safety. וַיַּעַל, *"he advanced,"* the verb being used, as it frequently is, to denote the advance of an army against a people or town (see at Josh. 8:1). At the same time, the tribes which he attacked may have had their seat upon the mountain plateau in the northern portion of the desert of Paran, so that David was obliged to march *up* to reach them. פָּשַׁט, *to invade* for the purpose of devastation and plunder. *Geshuri* is a tribe mentioned in Josh. 13:2 as living in the south of the territory of the Philistines, and is a different tribe from the Geshurites in the north-east of Gilead (Josh. 12:5; 13:11, 13; Deut. 3:14). These are the only passages in which they are mentioned. The *Gerzites,* or *Gizrites* according to the *Keri,* are entirely unknown. Bonfrere and Clericus suppose them to be the *Gerreni* spoken of in 2 Macc. 13:24, who inhabited the town of *Gerra,* between Rhinocolura and Pelusium

(Strabo, xvi. 760), or *Gerron* (Ptol. iv. 5). This conjecture is a possible one, but is very uncertain nevertheless, as the Gerzites certainly dwelt somewhere in the desert of Arabia. At any rate Grotius and Ewald cannot be correct in their opinion that they were the inhabitants of *Gezer* (Josh. 10:33). The *Amalekites* were the remnant of this old hereditary foe of the Israelites, who had taken to flight on Saul's war of extermination, and had now assembled again (see at 1 Samuel 15:8, 9). *"For they inhabit the land, where you go from of old to Shur, even to the land of Egypt."* The אֲשֶׁר before מֵעוֹלָם may be explained from the fact that בּוֹאֶךָ is not adverbial here, but is construed according to its form as an infinitive: literally, *"where from of old thy coming is to Shur."* אֲשֶׁר cannot have crept into the text through a copyist's mistake, as such a mistake would not have found its way into all the MSS. The fact that the early translators did not render the word proves nothing against its genuineness, but merely shows that the translators regarded it as superfluous. Moreover, the Alexandrian text is decidedly faulty here, and עוֹלָם is confounded with עֵלָם, ἀπὸ Γελάμ. *Shur* is the desert of *Jifar,* which is situated in front of Egypt (as in 1 Samuel 15:7). These tribes were nomads, and had large flocks, which David took with him as booty when he had smitten the tribes themselves. After his return, David betook himself to Achish, to report to the Philistian king concerning his enterprise, and deceive him as to its true character.

1 Samuel 27:10. Achish said, *"Ye have not made an invasion to-day, have ye?"* אַל, like μὴ, is an interrogative sense; the הַ has dropped out: vid., Ewald, § 324, *b.* David replied, *"Against the south of Judah, and the south of the Jerahmeelites, and into the south of the Kenites,"* sc., we have made an incursion. This reply shows that the Geshurites, Gerzites, and Amalekites dwelt close to the southern boundary of Judah, so that David was able to represent the march against these tribes to Achish as a march against the south of Judah, to make him believe that he had been making an attack upon the southern territory of Judah and its dependencies. The *Negeb* of Judah is the land between the mountains of Judah and the desert of Arabia (see at Josh. 15:21). The *Jerahmeelites* are the descendants of Jerahmeel, the first-born of Hezron (1 Chron. 2:9, 25, 26), and therefore one of the three large families of Judah who sprang from Hezron. They probably dwelt on the southern frontier of the tribe of Judah (vid., 1 Samuel 30:29). The *Kenites* were *protégés* of Judah (see at 1 Samuel 15:6, and Judg. 1:16). In v. 11 the writer introduces the remark, that in his raid David left neither man nor woman of his enemies alive, to take them to Gath, because he thought *"they might report against us, and say, Thus hath David done."* There ought to be a major point under עָשָׂה דָוִד, as the following clause does not contain the words of the slaughtered enemies, but is a clause appended by the historian himself, to the effect that David continued to act in that manner as long as he dwelt in the land of the Philistines. מִשְׁפָּט, the mode of procedure; *lit.* the right which he exercised (see 1 Samuel 8:9).

1 Samuel 27:12. V. 12 is connected with v. 10; Achish believed David's words, and said (to himself), *"He hath made himself stinking* (i.e., hated) *among his own people, among Israel, and will be my servant* (i.e., subject to me) *for ever."*

1 Samuel 28

David in the Army of the Philistines. Attack Upon Israel. Saul and the Witch of Endor.—Ch. 28.

1 Samuel 28:1, 2. The danger into which David had plunged through his flight into the land of the Philistines, and still more through the artifice with which he had deceived the king Achish as to his real feelings, was to be very soon made apparent to him. For example, when the Philistines went to war again with Israel, Achish summoned him to go with his men in the army of the Philistines to the war against his own people and land, and David could not disregard the summons. But even if he had not

brought himself into this danger without some fault of his own, he had at any rate only taken refuge with the Philistines in the greatest extremity; and what further he had done, was only done to save his own life. The faithful covenant God helped him therefore out of this trouble, and very soon afterwards put an end to his persecution by the fact that Saul lost his life in the war.

1 Samuel 28:1. *"In those days,"* i.e., whilst David was living in the land of the Philistines, it came to pass that the Philistines gathered their armies together for a campaign against Israel. And Achish sent word to David that he was to go with him in his army along with his men; and David answered (v. 2), *"Thereby* (on this occasion) *thou shalt learn what thy servant will do."* This reply was ambiguous. The words "what thy servant will do" contained no distinct promise of faithful assistance in the war with the Israelites, as the expression *"thy servant"* is only the ordinary periphrasis for *"I"* in conversation with a superior. And there is just as little ground for inferring from 1 Samuel 29:8 that David was disposed to help the Philistines against Saul and the Israelites; for, as Calovius has observed, even there he gives no such promise, but "merely asks for information, that he may discover the king's intentions and feelings concerning him: he simply protests that he has done nothing to prevent his placing confidence in him, or to cause him to shut him out of the battle." Judging from his previous acts, it would necessarily have been against his conscience to fight against his own people. Nevertheless, in the situation in which he was placed he did not venture to give a distinct refusal to the summons of the king. He therefore gave an ambiguous answer, in the hope that God would show him a way out of this conflict between his inmost conviction and his duty to obey the Philistian king. He had no doubt prayed earnestly for this in his heart. And the faithful God helped His servant: first of all by the fact that Achish accepted his indefinite declaration as a promise of unconditional fidelity, as his answer *"so* (לָכֵן, *itaque,* i.e., that being the case, if thy conduct answers to thy promise) *"I will make thee the keeper of my head"* (i.e., of my person) implies; and still more fully by the fact that the princes of the Philistines overturned the decision of their king (1 Samuel 29:3ff.).

1 Samuel 28:3–25. *Saul with the witch at Endor.*—The invasion of Israel by the Philistines, which brought David into so difficult a situation, drove king Saul to despair, so that in utter helplessness he had recourse to ungodly means of inquiring into the future, which he himself had formerly prohibited, and to his horror had to hear the sentence of his own death. This account is introduced with the remark in v. 3 that Samuel was dead and had been buried at Ramah (cf. 1 Samuel 25:1; וּבְעִירוֹ, with an explanatory *vav,* and indeed in his own city), and that Saul had expelled *"those that had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land"* (on the terms employed, *oboth* and *yiddonim,* see at Lev. 19:31). He had done this in accordance with the law in Lev. 19:31; 20:27, and Deut. 18:10ff.

1 Samuel 28:4, 5. When the Philistines advanced and encamped at *Shunem,* Saul brought all Israel together and encamped at *Gilboa,* i.e., upon the mountain of that name on the north-eastern edge of the plain of Jezreel, which slopes off from a height of about 1250 feet into the valley of the Jordan, and is not far from Beisan. On the north of the western extremity of this mountain was *Shunem,* the present *Sulem* or *Solam* (see at Josh. 19:18); it was hardly two hours distant, so that the camp of the Philistines might be seen from Gilboa. When Saul saw this, he was thrown into such alarm that his heart greatly trembled. As Saul had been more than once victorious in his conflicts with the Philistines, his great fear at the sight of the Philistian army can hardly be attributed to any other cause than the feeling that God had forsaken him, by which he was suddenly overwhelmed.

1 Samuel 28:6. In his anxiety he inquired of the Lord; but the Lord neither answered him by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets, that is to

say, not by any of the three media by which He was accustomed to make known His will to Israel. שָׁאַל בַּיהוָה is the term usually employed to signify inquiring the will and counsel of God through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest (see at Judg. 1:1); and this is the case here, with the simple difference that here the other means of inquiring the counsel of God are also included. On dreams, see at Num. 12:6. According to Num. 27:21, *Urim* denotes divine revelation through the high priest *by means of the ephod.* But the high priest Abiathar had been with the ephod in David's camp ever since the murder of the priests at Nob (1 Samuel 22:20ff., 23:6; 30:7). How then could Saul inquire of God through the Urim? This question, which was very copiously discussed by the earlier commentators, and handled in different ways, may be decided very simply on the supposition, that after the death of Ahimelech and the flight of his son, another high priest had been appointed at the tabernacle, and another ephod made for him, with the *choshen* or breastplate, and the Urim and Thummim. It is no proof to the contrary that there is nothing said about this. We have no continuous history of the worship at the tabernacle, but only occasional notices. And from these it is perfectly clear that the public worship at the tabernacle was not suspended on the murder of the priests, but was continued still. For in the first years of David's reign we find the tabernacle at Gibeon, and Zadok the son of Ahitub, of the line of Eleazar, officiating there as high priest (1 Chron. 16:39, compared with 1 Samuel 5:38 and 6:38); from which it follows with certainty, that after the destruction of Nob by Saul the tabernacle was removed to Gibeon, and the worship of the congregation continued there. From this we may also explain in a very simple manner the repeated allusions to two high priests in David's time (2 Samuel 18:17; 15:24, 29, 35; 1 Chron. 15:11; 18:16). The reason why the Lord did not answer Saul is to be sought for in the wickedness of Saul, which rendered him utterly unworthy to find favour with God.

1 Samuel 28:7–14. Instead of recognising this, however, and searching his own heart, Saul attempted to obtain a revelation of the future in ungodly ways. He commanded his servants (v. 7) to seek for a woman that had a familiar spirit. *Baalath-ob:* the mistress (or possessor) of a conjuring spirit, i.e., of a spirit with which the dead were conjured up, for the purpose of making inquiry concerning the future (see at Lev. 19:31). There was a woman of this kind at *Endor,* which still exists as a village under the old name upon the northern shoulder of the *Duhy* or Little Hermon (see at Josh. 17:11), and therefore only two German (ten English) miles from the Israelitish camp at Gilboa.

1 Samuel 28:8. Saul went to this person by night and in disguise, that he might not be recognised, accompanied by two men; and said to her, *"Divine to me through necromancy, and bring me up whomsoever I tell thee."* The words "bring me up," etc., are an explanation or more precise definition of "divine unto me," etc. Prophesying by the *Ob* was probably performed by calling up a departed spirit from Sheol, and obtaining prophecies, i.e., disclosures concerning one's own fate, through the medium of such a spirit. On the form קְסוֹמִי (*Chethibh*), see at Judg. 9:8.

1 Samuel 28:9. Such a demand placed the woman in difficulty. As Saul had driven the necromantists out of the land, she was afraid that the unknown visitor (for it is evident from v. 12 that she did not recognise Saul at first) might be laying a snare for her soul with his request, to put her to death, i.e., might have come to her merely for the purpose of spying her out as a conjurer of the dead, and then inflicting capital punishment upon her according to the law (Lev. 20:27).

1 Samuel 28:10, 11. But when Saul swore to her that no punishment should fall upon her on that account (אִם יִקָּרֶךְ, *"shall assuredly not fall upon thee"*), an oath which showed how utterly hardened Saul was, she asked him, *"Whom shall I bring up to thee?"* and Saul replied, *"Bring me up Samuel,"* sc., from the region of the dead, or *Sheol,* which was thought to be under the

ground. This idea arose from the fact that the dead were buried in the earth, and was connected with the thought of heaven as being above the earth. Just as heaven, regarded as the abode of God and the holy angels and blessed spirits, is above the earth; so, on the other hand, the region of death and the dead is beneath the ground. And with our modes of thought, which are so bound up with time and space, it is impossible to represent to ourselves in any other way the difference and contrast between blessedness with God and the shade-life in death.

1 Samuel 28:12. The woman then commenced her conjuring arts. This must be supplied from the context, as v. 12 merely states what immediately ensued. *"When the woman saw Samuel, she cried aloud,"* sc., at the form which appeared to her so unexpectedly. These words imply most unquestionably that the woman saw an apparition which she did not anticipate, and therefore that she was not really able to conjure up departed spirits or persons who had died, but that she either merely pretended to do so, or if her witchcraft was not mere trickery and delusion, but had a certain demoniacal background, that the appearance of Samuel differed essentially from everything she had experienced and effected before, and therefore filled her with alarm and horror. The very fact, whoever, that she recognised Saul as soon as Samuel appeared, precludes us from declaring her art to have been nothing more than jugglery and deception; for she said to him, *"Why hast thou cheated me, as thou art certainly Saul?"* i.e., why hast thou deceived me as to thy person? why didst thou not tell me that thou wast king Saul? Her recognition of Saul when Samuel appeared may be easily explained, if we assume that the woman had fallen into a state of *clairvoyance,* in which she recognised persons who, like Saul in his disguise, were unknown to her by face.

1 Samuel 28:13. The king quieted her fear, and then asked her what she had seen; whereupon she gave him a fuller description of the apparition: *"I saw a celestial being come up from the earth." Elohim* does not signify gods here, nor yet God; still less an angel or a ghost, or even a person of superior rank, but a celestial (super-terrestrial), heavenly, or spiritual being.

1 Samuel 28:14. Upon Saul's further inquiry as to his form, she replied, *"An old man is ascending, and he is wrapped in a mantle." Me•l* is the prophet's mantle, such as Samuel was accustomed to wear when he was alive (see 1 Samuel 15:27). Saul recognised from this that the person who had been called up was Samuel, and he fell upon his face to the ground, to give expression to his reverence. Saul does not appear to have seen the apparition itself. But it does not follow from this that there was no such apparition at all, and the whole was an invention on the part of the witch. It needs an opened eye, such as all do not possess, to see a departed spirit or celestial being. The eyes of the body are not enough for this.

1 Samuel 28:15–22. Then Samuel said, *"Why hast thou disturbed me* (sc., from my rest in Hades; cf. Isa. 14:9), *to bring me up?"* It follows, no doubt, from this that Samuel had been disturbed from his rest by Saul; but whether this had been effected by the conjuring arts of the witch, or by a miracle of God himself, is left undecided. Saul replied, *"I am sore oppressed, for the Philistines fight against me, and God has departed from me, and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams; then I had thee called* (on the intensified form וָאֶקְרָאֶה, vid., Ewald, § 228, *c.*), *to make known to me what I am to do."* The omission of any reference to the Urim is probably to be interpreted very simply from the brevity of the account, and not from the fact that Saul shrank from speaking about the oracle of the high priest, on account of the massacre of the priests which had taken place by his command. There is a contradiction, however, in Saul's reply: for if God had forsaken him, he could not expect any answer from Him; and if God did not reply to his inquiry through the regularly appointed media of His revelation, how could he hope to obtain any divine revelation through the help of a witch? "When living prophets gave no answer, he thought that

a dead one might be called up, as if a dead one were less dependent upon God than the living, or that, even in opposition to the will of God, he might reply through the arts of a conjuring woman. Truly, if he perceived that God was hostile to him, he ought to have been all the more afraid, lest His enmity should be increased by his breach of His laws. But fear and superstition never reason" (Clericus). Samuel points out this contradiction (v. 16): *"Why dost thou ask me, since Jehovah hath departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?"* The meaning is: How canst thou expect an answer under these circumstances from me, the prophet of Jehovah? עָרֶךָ, from עָר, signifies an enemy here (from עִיר, *fervour*); and this meaning is confirmed by Ps. 139:20 and Dan. 4:16 (Chald.). There is all the less ground for any critical objection to the reading, as the Chaldee and Vulgate give a periphrastic rendering of "enemy," whilst the LXX, Syr., and Arab. have merely paraphrased according to conjectures. Samuel then announced his fate (vv. 17–19): *"Jehovah hath performed for himself, as He spake by me* (לוֹ, for himself, which the LXX and Vulg. have arbitrarily altered into לְךָ, σοί, *tibi* (to thee), is correctly explained by Seb. Schmidt, 'according to His grace, or to fulfil and prove His truth'); *and Jehovah hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbour David."* The perfects express the purpose of God, which had already been formed, and was now about to be fulfilled.

1 Samuel 28:18. The reason for Saul's rejection is then given, as in 1 Samuel 15:23: *"Because* (כַּאֲשֶׁר, according as) *thou … hast not executed the fierceness of His anger upon Amalek, therefore hath Jehovah done this thing to thee this day." "This thing"* is the distress of which Saul had complained, with its consequences. וְיִתֵּן, *that Jehovah may give* (= for He will give) *Israel also with thee into the hand of the Philistines. "To-morrow wilt thou and thy sons be with me* (*i.e.* in Sheol, with the dead); *also the camp of Israel will Jehovah give into the hand of the Philistines,"* i.e., give up to them to plunder. The overthrow of the people was to heighten Saul's misery, when he saw the people plunged with him into ruin through his sin (O. v. Gerlach). Thus was the last hope taken from Saul. His day of grace was gone, and judgment was now to burst upon him without delay.

1 Samuel 28:20. These words so alarmed him, that he fell his whole length upon the ground; for he had been kneeling hitherto (v. 14). *He "fell straightway* (*lit.* he hastened and fell) *upon the ground. For he was greatly terrified at the words of Samuel: there was also no strength in him, because he had eaten no food the whole day and the whole night,"* sc., from mental perturbation or inward excitement. Terror and bodily exhaustion caused him to fall powerless to the ground.

1 Samuel 28:21, 22. The woman then came to him and persuaded him to strengthen himself with food for the journey which he had to take. It by no means follows from the expression *"came unto Saul,"* that the woman was in an adjoining room during the presence of the apparition, and whilst Samuel was speaking, but only that she was standing at some distance off, and came up to him to speak to him when he had fallen fainting to the ground. As she had fulfilled his wish at the risk of her own life, she entreated him now to gratify her wish, and let her set a morsel of bread before him and eat. *"That strength may be in thee when thou goest thy way"* (i.e., when thou returnest).

This narrative, when read without prejudice, makes at once and throughout the impression conveyed by the Septuagint at 1 Chron. 10:13: ἐπηρώτησε Σαοὺλ ἐν τῷ ἐγγαστριμύθῳ τοῦ ζητῆσαι καὶ ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ Σαμουὴλ ὁ προφήτης; and still more clearly at Ecclus. 46:20, where it is said of Samuel: "And after his death he prophesied, and showed the king his end, and lifted up his voice from the earth in prophecy, to blot out the wickedness of the people." Nevertheless the fathers, reformers, and earlier Christian theologians, with very few exceptions, assumed that there was not a real appearance of Samuel, but only an imaginary one. According to the explanation given by

Ephraem Syrus, an apparent image of Samuel was presented to the eye of Saul through demoniacal arts. Luther and Calvin adopted the same view, and the earlier Protestant theologians followed them in regarding the apparition as nothing but a diabolical spectre, a phantasm, or diabolical spectre in the form of Samuel, and Samuel's announcement as nothing but a diabolical revelation made by divine permission, in which truth is mixed with falsehood.[47] It was not till the seventeenth century that the opinion was expressed, that the apparition of Samuel was merely a delusion produced by the witch, without any real background at all. After Reginald Scotus and Balth. Becker had given expression to this opinion, it was more fully elaborated by Ant. van Dale, in his *dissert. de divinationibus idololatricis sub V. T.;* and in the so-called age of enlightenment this was the prevailing opinion, so that Thenius still regards it as an established fact, not only that the woman was an impostor, but that the historian himself regarded the whole thing as an imposture. There is no necessity to refute this opinion at the present day. Even Fr. Boettcher (*de inferis,* pp. 111ff.), who looks upon the thing as an imposture, admits that the first recorder of the occurrence "believed that Samuel appeared and prophesied, *contrary to the expectation* of the witch;" and that the author of the books of Samuel was convinced that the prophet was raised up and prophesied, so that after his death he was proved to be the true prophet of Jehovah, although through the intervention of ungodly arts (cf. Ezek. 14:7, 9). But the view held by the early church does not do justice to the scriptural narrative; and hence the more modern orthodox commentators are unanimous in the opinion that the departed prophet did really appear and announce the destruction of Saul, not, however, in consequence of the magical arts of the witch, but through a miracle wrought by the omnipotence of God.

This is most decidedly favoured by the fact, that the prophetic historian speaks throughout of the appearance, not of a ghost, but of Samuel himself. He does this not only in v. 12, "When the woman saw Samuel she cried aloud," but also in vv. 14, 15, 16, and 20. It is also sustained by the circumstance, that not only do the words of Samuel to Saul, in vv. 16–19, create the impression that it is Samuel himself who is speaking; but his announcement contains so distinct a prophecy of the death of Saul and his sons, that it is impossible to imagine that it can have proceeded from the mouth of an impostor, or have been an inspiration of Satan. On the other hand, the remark of Calvin, to the effect that "God sometimes give to devils the power of revealing secrets to us, which they have learned from the Lord," could only be regarded as a valid objection, provided that the narrative gave us some intimation that the apparition and the speaking were nothing but a diabolical delusion. But it does nothing of the kind. It is true, the opinion that the witch conjured up the prophet Samuel was very properly disputed by the early theologians, and rejected by Theodoret as "unholy, and even impious;" and the text of Scripture indicates clearly enough that the very opposite was the case, by the remark that the witch herself was terrified at the appearance of Samuel (v. 12). Shöbel is therefore quite correct in saying: "It was not at the call of the idolatrous king, nor at the command of the witch,—neither of whom had the power to bring him up, or even to make him hear their voice in his rest in the grave,—that Samuel came; nor was it merely by divine 'permission,' which is much too little to say. No, rather it was by the special command of God that he left his grave (?), like a faithful servant whom his master arouses at midnight, to let in an inmate of the house who has wilfully stopped out late, and has been knocking at the door. 'Why do you disturb me out of my sleep?' would always be the question put to the unwelcome comer, although it was not by his noise, but really by his master's command, that he had been aroused. Samuel asked the same question." The prohibition of witchcraft and necromancy (Deut. 18:11; Isa. 8:19), which the earlier writers quote against this, does not preclude the possibility of God having, for His

own special reasons, caused Samuel to appear. On the contrary, the appearance itself was of such a character, that it could not fail to show to the witch and the king, that God does not allow His prohibitions to be infringed with impunity. The very same thing occurred here, which God threatened to idolaters through the medium of Ezekiel (Ezek. 14:4, 7, 8): "If they come to the prophet, I will answer them in my own way." Still less is there any force in the appeal to Luke 16:27ff., where Abraham refuses the request of the rich man in Hades, that he would send Lazarus to his father's house to preach repentance to his brethren who were still living, saying, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." For this does not affirm that the appearance of a dead man is a thing impossible in itself, but only describes it as useless and ineffectual, so far as the conversion of the ungodly is concerned.

The reality of the appearance of Samuel from the kingdom of the dead cannot therefore be called in question, especially as it has an analogon in the appearance of Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration of Christ (Matt. 17:3; Luke 9:30, 31); except that this difference must not be overlooked, namely, that Moses and Elijah appeared "in glory," i.e., in a glorified form, whereas Samuel appeared in earthly corporeality with the prophet's mantle which he had worn on earth. Just as the transfiguration of Christ was a phenomenal anticipation of His future heavenly glory, into which He was to enter after His resurrection and ascension, so may we think of the appearance of Moses and Elijah "in glory" upon the mount of transfiguration as an anticipation of their heavenly transfiguration in eternal life with God. It was different with Samuel, whom God brought up from Hades through an act of His omnipotence. This appearance is not to be regarded as the appearance of one who had risen in a glorified body; but though somewhat spirit-like in its external manifestation, so that it was only to the witch that it was visible, and not to Saul, it was merely an appearance of the soul of Samuel, that had been at rest in Hades, in the clothing of the earthly corporeality and dress of the prophet, which were assumed for the purpose of rendering it visible. In this respect the appearance of Samuel rather resembled the appearances of incorporeal angels in human form and dress, such as the three angels who came to Abraham in the grove at Mamre (Gen. 18), and the angel who appeared to Manoah (Judg. 13); with this exception, however, that these angels manifested themselves in a human form, which was visible to the ordinary bodily eye, whereas Samuel appeared in the spirit-like form of the inhabitants of Hades. In all these cases the bodily form and clothing were only a dress assumed for the soul or spirit, and intended to facilitate perception, so that such appearances furnish no proof that the souls of departed men possess an immaterial corporeality.[48]

1 Samuel 28:23–25. On Saul's refusing to take food, his servants (i.e., his two attendants) also pressed him, so that he yielded, rose up from the ground, and sat down upon the bed (*Mittah:* i.e., a bench by the wall of the room provided with pillows); whereupon the woman quickly sacrificed (served up) a stalled calf, baked unleavened cakes, and set the food she had prepared before the king and his servants. The woman did all this from natural sympathy for the unhappy king, and not, as Thenius supposes, to remove all suspicion of deception from Saul's mind; for she had not deceived the king at all.

1 Samuel 28:25. When Saul and his servants had eaten, they started upon their way, and went back that night to Gilboa, which was about ten miles distant, where the battle occurred the next day, and Saul and his sons fell. "Saul was too hardened in his sin to express any grief or pain, either on his own account or because of the fate of his sons and his people. In stolid desperation he went to meet his fate. This was the terrible end of a man whom the Spirit of God had once taken possession of and turned into another man, and whom he had endowed

with gifts to be the leader of the people of God" (O. v. Gerlach).

1 Samuel 29

Removal of David from the Army of the Philistines.—Ch. 29.

1 Samuel 29:1–5. Whilst Saul derived no comfort from his visit to the witch at Endor, but simply heard from the mouth of Samuel the confirmation of his rejection on the part of God, and an announcement of his approaching fate, David was delivered, through the interposition of God, from the danger of having to fight against his own people.

1 Samuel 29:1. The account of this is introduced by a fuller description of the position of the hostile army. *"The Philistines gathered all their armies together towards Aphek, but Israel encamped at the fountain in* (at) *Jezreel."* This fountain is the present *Ain Jalûd* (or *Ain Jalût,* i.e., Goliath's fountain, probably so called because it was regarded as the scene of the defeat of Goliath), a very large fountain, which issues from a cleft in the rock at the foot of the mountain on the north-eastern border of Gilboa, forming a beautifully limpid pool of about forty or fifty feet in diameter, and then flowing in a brook through the valley (Rob. *Pal.* iii. p. 168). Consequently *Aphek,* which must be carefully distinguished from the towns of the same name in Asher (Josh. 19:30; Judg. 1:31) and upon the mountains of Judah (Josh. 15:53) and also at Ebenezer (1 Samuel 4:1), is to be sought for not very far from *Shunem,* in the plain of Jezreel; according to Van de Velde's *Mem.,* by the side of the present *el Afûleh,* though the situation has not been exactly determined. The statement in the *Onom.,* "near Endor of Jezreel where Saul fought," is merely founded upon the Septuagint, in which בְּעֵין is erroneously rendered ἐνΕνδώρ.

1 Samuel 29:2, 3. When the princes of the Philistines (*sarne,* as in Josh. 13:3) advanced by hundreds and thousands (i.e., arranged in companies of hundreds and thousands), and David and his men came behind with Achish (i.e., forming the rear-guard), the (other) princes pronounced against their allowing David and his men to go with them. The did not occur at the time of their setting out, but on the road, when they had already gone some distance (compare v. 11 with 1 Samuel 30:1), probably when the five princes (Josh. 13:3) of the Philistines had effected a junction. To the inquiry, *"What are these Hebrews doing?"* Achish replied, *"Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me days already, or years already? and I have found nothing in him since his coming over unto this day."* מְאוּמָה, anything at all that could render his suspicious, or his fidelity doubtful. נָפַל, to fall away and go over to a person; generally construed with אֶל (Jer. 37:13; 38:19, etc.) or עַל (Jer. 21:9; 37:14; 1 Chron. 12:19, 20), but here absolutely, as the more precise meaning can be gathered from the context.

1 Samuel 29:4. But the princes, i.e., the four other princes of the Philistines, not the courtiers of Achish himself, were angry with Achish, and demanded, *"Send the man back, that he may return to his place, which thou hast assigned him; that he may not go down with us into the war, and may not become an adversary* (*satan*) *to us in the war; for wherewith could he show himself acceptable to his lord* (viz., Saul), *if not with the heads of these men?"* הֲלוֹא, *nonne,* strictly speaking, introduces a new question to confirm the previous question. *"Go down to the battle:"* this expression is used as in 1 Samuel 26:10; 30:24, because battles were generally fought in the plains, into which the Hebrews were obliged to come down from their mountainous land. *"These men,"* i.e., the soldiers of the Philistines, to whom the princes were pointing.

1 Samuel 29:5. To justify their suspicion, the princes reminded him of their song with which the women in Israel had celebrated David's victory over Goliath (1 Samuel 18:7).

1 Samuel 29:6–11. After this declaration on the part of the princes, Achish was obliged to send David back.

1 Samuel 29:6, 7. With a solemn assertion,—swearing by Jehovah to convince David all the more thoroughly of the sincerity of his declaration,—Achish said to him, *"Thou art honourable, and good in my eyes* (i.e., quite right in my estimation) *are thy going out and coming in* (i.e., all thy conduct) *with me in the camp, for I have not found anything bad in thee; but in the eyes of the princes thou art not good* (i.e., the princes do not think thee honourable, do not trust thee). *Turn now, and go in peace, that thou mayest do nothing displeasing to the princes of the Philistines."*

1 Samuel 29:8. Partly for the sake of vindicating himself against this suspicion, and partly to put the sincerity of Achish's words to the test, David replied, *"What have I done, and what hast thou found in thy servant, since I was with thee till this day, that I am not to come and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"* These last words are also ambiguous, since the king whom David calls his lord might be understood as meaning either Achish or Saul. Achish, in his goodness of heart, applies them without suspicion to himself; for he assures David still more earnestly (v. 9), that he is firmly convinced of his uprightness. *"I know that thou art good in my eyes as an angel of God,"* i.e., I have the strongest conviction that thou hast behaved as well towards me as an angel could; but the princes have desired thy removal.

1 Samuel 29:10. *"And now get up early in the morning with the servants of thy lord* (i.e., Saul, whose subjects David's men all were), *who have come with thee; get ye up in the morning when it gets light for you* (so that ye can see), *and go."*

1 Samuel 29:11. In accordance with this admonition, David returned the next morning into the land of the Philistines, i.e., to Ziklag; no doubt very light of heart, and praising God for having so graciously rescued him out of the disastrous situation into which he had been brought and not altogether without some fault of his own, rejoicing that "he had not committed either sin, i.e., had neither violated the fidelity which he owed to Achish, nor had to fight against the Israelites" (Seb. Schmidt).

1 Samuel 30

David Avenges Upon the Amalekites the Plundering and Burning of Ziklag.—Ch. 30.

1 Samuel 30:1–10. During David's absence the Amalekites had invaded the south country, smitten Ziklag and burnt it down, and carried off the women and children whom they found there; whereat not only were David and his men plunged into great grief on their return upon the third day but David especially was involved in very great trouble, inasmuch as the people wanted to stone him. But he strengthened himself in the Lord his God (vv. 1–6).

1 Samuel 30:1–4. Vv. 1–4 form one period, which is expanded by the introduction of several circumstantial clauses. The apodosis to "It came to pass, when," etc. (v. 1), does not follow till v. 4, "Then David and the people," etc. But this is formally attached to v. 3, "so David and his men came," with which the protasis commenced in v. 1 is resumed in an altered form. *"It came to pass, when David and his men came to Ziklag … the Amalekites had invaded … and had carried off the wives … and had gone their way, and David and his men came into the town* (for 'when David and his men came,' etc.), *and behold it was burned … Then David and the people with him lifted up their voice." "On the third day:"* after David's dismission by Achish, not after David's departure from Ziklag. David had at any rate gone with Achish beyond Gath, and had not been sent back till the whole of the princes of the Philistines had united their armies (1 Samuel 29:2ff.), so that he must have been absent from Ziklag more than two days, or two days and a half. This is placed beyond all doubt by vv. 11ff., since the Amalekites are there described as having gone off with their booty three days before David followed them, and therefore they had taken Ziklag and burned it three days before David's return. These foes had therefore taken advantage of the absence of David and his warriors, to avenge themselves

for David's invasions and plunderings (1 Samuel 27:8). Of those who were carried off, *"the women"* alone expressly mentioned in v. 2, although the female population and all the children had been removed, as we may see from the expression *"small and great"* (vv. 3, 6). The LXX were therefore correct, so far as the sense is concerned, in introducing the words καὶ πάντα before אֲשֶׁר בָּהּ. *"They had killed no one, but* (only) *carried away."* נָהַג, to carry away captive, as in Isa. 20:4. Among those who had been carried off were David's two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail (vid., 1 Samuel 25:42, 43; 27:3).

1 Samuel 30:6. David was greatly distressed in consequence; *"for the people thought* ('said,' sc., in their hearts) *to stone him,"* because they sought the occasion of their calamity in his connection with Achish, with which many of his adherents may very probably have been dissatisfied. *"For the soul of the whole people was embittered* (i.e., all the people were embittered in their souls) *because of their sons and daughters,"* who had been carried away into slavery. *"But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God,"* i.e., sought consolation and strength in prayer and believing confidence in the Lord (vv. 7ff.). This strength he manifested in the resolution to follow the foes and rescue their booty from them. To this end he had the ephod brought by the high priest Abiathar (cf. 1 Samuel 23:9), and inquired by means of the Urim of the Lord, *"Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake it?"* These questions were answered in the affirmative; and the promise was added, *"and thou wilt rescue."* So David pursued the enemy with his six hundred men as far as the brook *Besor,* where the rest, i.e., two hundred, remained standing (stayed behind). The words וְהַנּוֹתָרִים עָמְדוּ, which are appended in the form of a circumstantial clause, are to be connected, so far as the facts are concerned, with what follows: whilst the others remained behind, David pursued the enemy still farther with four hundred men. By the word הַנּוֹתָרִים the historian has somewhat anticipated the matter, and therefore regards it as necessary to define the expression still further in v. 10*b.* We are precluded from changing the text, as Thenius suggests, by the circumstance that all the early translators read it in this manner, and have endeavoured to make the expression intelligible by paraphrasing it. These two hundred men were too tired to cross the brook and go any farther. (פָּגַר, which only occurs here and in v. 21, signifies, in Syriac, to be weary or exhausted.) As Ziklag was burnt down, of course they found no provisions there, and were consequently obliged to set out in pursuit of the foe without being able to provide themselves with the necessary supplies. The brook *Besor* is supposed to be the Wady *Sheriah,* which enters the sea below Ashkelon (see v. Raumer, *Pal.* p. 52).

1 Samuel 30:11–20. On their further march they found an Egyptian lying exhausted upon the field; and having brought him to David, they gave him food and drink, namely *"a slice of fig-cake* (cf. 1 Samuel 25:18), *and raisin-cakes to eat; whereupon his spirit of life returned* (i.e., he came to himself again), *as he had neither eaten bread nor drunk water for three days."*

1 Samuel 30:13. When David asked him whence he had come (*to whom,* i.e., to what people or tribe, *dost thou belong?*), the young man said that he was an Egyptian, and servant of an Amalekite, and that he had been left behind by his master when he fell sick three days before ("to-day three," sc., days): he also said, *"We invaded the south of the Crethites, and what belongs to Judah, and the south of Caleb, and burned Ziklag with fire."* הַכְּרֵתִי, identical with כְּרֵתִים (Ezek. 25:16, Zeph. 2:5), denotes those tribes of the Philistines who dwelt in the south-west of Canaan, and is used by Ezekiel and Zephaniah as synonymous with Philistim. The origin of the name is involved in obscurity, as the explanation which prevailed for a time, viz., that it was derived from *Creta,* is without sufficient foundation (vid., Stark, *Gaza,* pp. 66 and 99ff.). The Negeb "belonging to Judah" is the eastern portion of the Negeb. One part of it

belonged to the family of Caleb, and was called Caleb's Negeb (vid., 1 Samuel 25:3).

1 Samuel 30:15, 16. This Egyptian then conducted David, at his request, when he had sworn that he would neither kill him nor deliver him up to his master, down to the hostile troops, who were spread over the whole land, eating, drinking, and making merry, on account of all the great booty which they had brought out of the land of the Philistines and Judah.

1 Samuel 30:17. David surprised them in the midst of their security, and smote them from the evening twilight till the evening of the next day, so that no one escaped, with the exception of four hundred young men, who fled upon camels. *Nesheph* signifies the evening twilight here, not the dawn,—a meaning which is not even sustained by Job 7:4. The form מָחֳרָתָם appears to be an adverbial formation, like יוֹמָם.

1 Samuel 30:18, 19. Through this victory David rescued all that the Amalekites had taken, his two wives, and all the children great and small; also the booty that they had taken with them, so that nothing was missing.

1 Samuel 30:20. V. 20 is obscure: *"And David took all the sheep and the oxen: they drove them before those cattle, and said, This is David's booty."* In order to obtain any meaning whatever from this literal rendering of the words, we must understand by the sheep and oxen those which belonged to the Amalekites, and the flocks taken from them as booty; and by *"those cattle,"* the cattle belonging to David and his men, which the Amalekites had driven away, and the Israelites had now recovered from them: so that David had the sheep and oxen which he had taken from the Amalekites as booty driven in front of the rest of the cattle which the Israelites had recovered; whereupon the drovers exclaimed, *"This* (the sheep and oxen) *is David's booty."* It is true that there is nothing said in what goes before about any booty that David had taken from the Amalekites, in addition to what they had taken from the Israelites; but the fact that David had really taken such booty is perfectly obvious from vv. 26–31, where he is said to have sent portions of the booty of the enemies of Jehovah to different places in the land. If this explanation be not accepted, there is no other course open than to follow the Vulgate, alter לִפְנֵי into לְפָנָיו, and render the middle clause thus: *"they drove those cattle* (viz., the sheep and oxen already mentioned) *before him,"* as Luther has done. But even in that case we could hardly understand anything else by the sheep and oxen than the cattle belonging to the Amalekites, and taken from them as booty.

1 Samuel 30:21–31. When David came back to the two hundred men whom he had left by the brook Besor (יוֹשִׁיבֵם, they made them sit, remain), they went to meet him and his warriors, and were heartily greeted by David.

1 Samuel 30:22. Then all kinds of evil and worthless men of those who had gone with David to the battle replied: *"Because they have not gone with us* (*lit.* with me, the person speaking), *we will not give them any of the booty that we have seized, except to every one his wife and his children: they may lead them away, and go."*

1 Samuel 30:23, 24. David opposed this selfish and envious proposal, saying, *"Do not so, my brethren, with that* (אֵת, the sign of the accusative, not the preposition; see Ewald, § 329, *a.: lit.* with regard to that) *which Jehovah hath done to us, and He hath guarded us* (since He hath guarded us), *and given this troop which came upon us into our hand.* And who will hearken to you in this matter? *But* (כִּי, according to the negation involved in the question) *as the portion of him that went into the battle, so be the portion of him that stayed by the things; they shall share together."* הורד is a copyist's error for הַיֵּרֵד.

1 Samuel 30:25. So was it from that day and forward; and he (David) made it (this regulation as to the booty) *"the law and right for Israel unto this day."*

1 Samuel 30:26–31. When David returned to Ziklag, he sent portions of the booty to the elders of Judah, to his friends, with this message: *"Behold, here ye have a blessing of the booty of the enemies of Jehovah"* (which we took from the enemies of Jehovah); and this he did, according to v. 31, to all the places in which he had wandered with his men, i.e., where he had wandered about during his flight from Saul, and in which he had no doubt received assistance. Sending these gifts could not fail to make the elders of these cities well disposed towards him, and so to facilitate his recognition as king after the death of Saul, which occurred immediately afterwards. Some of these places may have been plundered by the Amalekites, since they had invaded the *Negeb* of Judah (v. 14). The cities referred to were *Bethel,*—not the Bethel so often mentioned, the present *Beitin,* in the tribe of Benjamin, but *Betheul* (1 Chron. 4:30) or *Bethul,* in the tribe of Simeon (Josh. 19:4), which Knobel supposes to be *Elusa* or *el Khalasa* (see at Josh. 15:30). The reading Βαιθσούρ in the LXX is a worthless conjecture. *Ramah* of the south, which was allotted to the tribe of Simeon, has not yet been discovered (see at Josh. 19:8). *Jattir* has been preserved in the ruins of *Attir,* on the southern portion of the Mountains of Judah (see at Josh. 15:48). *Aroër* is still to be seen in ruins, viz., in the foundations of walls built in enormous stones in Wady Arara, where there are many cavities for holding water, about three hours E.S.E. of Bersaba, and twenty miles to the south of Hebron (vid., Rob. *Pal.* ii. p. 620, and v. de Velde, *Mem.* p. 288). *Siphmoth* (or *Shiphmoth,* according to several MSS) is altogether unknown. It may probably be referred to again in 1 Chron. 27:27, where Zabdi is called the *Shiphmite;* but it is certainly not to be identified with *Sepham,* on the north-east of the sea of Galilee (Num. 34:10, 11), as Thenius supposes. *Eshtemoa* has been preserved in the village of *Semua,* with ancient ruins, on the south-western portion of the mountains of Judah (see at Josh. 15:50). *Racal* is never mentioned again, and is entirely unknown. The LXX have five different names instead of this, the last being *Carmel,* into which Thenius proposes to alter *Racal.* But this can hardly be done with propriety, as the LXX also introduced the Philistian *Gath,* which certainly does not belong here; whilst in v. 30 they have totally different names, some of which are decidedly wrong. The cities of the *Jerahmeelites* and *Kenites* were situated in the Negeb of Judah (1 Samuel 27:10), but their names cannot be traced.

1 Samuel 30:30. *Hormah* in the Negeb (Josh. 15:30) is *Zephath,* the present *Zepáta,* on the western slope of the *Rakhma* plateau (see at Josh. 12:14). *Cor-ashan,* probably the same place as *Ashan* in the *Shephelah,* upon the border of the Negeb, has not yet been discovered (see at Josh. 15:42). *Athach* is only mentioned here, and quite unknown. According to Thenius, it is probably a mistaken spelling for *Ether* in the tribe of Simeon (Josh. 19:7; 15:43). *Hebron,* the present *el Khulil,* Abraham's city (see at Josh. 10:3; Gen. 23:17).

1 Samuel 31

Death and Burial of Saul and His Sons.—Ch. 31.

1 Samuel 31. The end of the unhappy king corresponded to his life ever since the day of his rejection as king. When he had lost the battle, and saw his three sons fallen at his side, and the archers of the enemy pressing hard upon him, without either repentance or remorse he put an end to his life by suicide, to escape the disgrace of being wounded and abused by the foe (vv. 1–7). But he did not attain his object; for the next day the enemy found his corpse and those of his sons, and proceeded to plunder, mutilate, and abuse them (vv. 8–10). However, the king of Israel was not to be left to perish in utter disgrace. The citizens of Jabesh remembered the deliverance which Saul had brought to their city after his election as king, and showed their gratitude by giving an honourable burial to Saul and his sons (vv. 11–13). There is a parallel to this chapter in 1 Chron. 10, which agrees exactly with the account before us, with very few deviations indeed, and those mostly verbal, and merely

introduces a hortatory clause at the end (vv. 13, 14).

1 Samuel 31:1–7. The account of the war between the Philistines and Israel, the commencement of which has already been mentioned in 1 Samuel 28:1, 4ff., and 29:1, is resumed in v. 1 in a circumstantial clause; and to this there is attached a description of the progress and result of the battle, more especially with reference to Saul. Consequently, in 1 Chron. 10:1, where there had been no previous allusion to the war, the participle נִלְחָמִים is changed into the perfect. The following is the way in which we should express the circumstantial clause: "Now when the Philistines were fighting against Israel, the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and slain men fell in the mountains of Gilboa" (vid., 1 Samuel 28:4). The principal engagement took place in the plain of Jezreel. But when the Israelites were obliged to yield, they fled up the mountains of Gilboa, and were pursued and slain there.

1 Samuel 31:2–4. The Philistines followed Saul, smote (i.e., put to death) his three sons (see at 1 Samuel 14:49), and fought fiercely against Saul himself. *When the archers* (אֲנָשִׁים הַמּוֹרִים) בַּקֶּשֶׁת is an explanatory apposition to *hit him,* i.e., overtook him, *he was greatly alarmed at them* (יָחֶל, from חִיל or חוּל),[49] and called upon his armour-bearer to pierce him with the sword, *"lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and play with me,"* i.e., cool their courage upon me by maltreating me. But as the armour-bearer would not do this, because he was very much afraid, since he was supposed to be answerable for the king's life, Saul inflicted death upon himself with his sword; whereupon the armour-bearer also fell upon his sword and died with his king, so that on that day Saul and this three sons and his armour-bearer all died; also *"all his men"* (for which we have "all his house" in the Chronicles), i.e., not all the warriors who went out with him to battle, but all the king's servants, or all the members of his house, sc., who had taken part in the battle. Neither Abner nor his son Ishbosheth was included, for the latter was not in the battle; and although the former was Saul's cousin and commander-in-chief (see 1 Samuel 14:50, 51), he did not belong to his house or servants.

1 Samuel 31:7. When the men of Israel upon the sides that were opposite to the valley (Jezreel) and the Jordan saw that the Israelites (the Israelitish troop) fled, and Saul and his sons were dead, they took to flight out of the cities, whereupon the Philistines took possession of them. עֵבֶר is used here to signify the side opposite to the place of conflict in the valley of Jezreel, which the writer assumed as his standpoint (cf. 1 Samuel 14:40); so that עֵבֶר הָעֵמֶק is the country to the west of the valley of Jezreel, and עֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן the country to the west of the Jordan, i.e., between Gilboa and the Jordan. These districts, i.e., the whole of the country round about the valley of Jezreel, the Philistines took possession of, so that the whole of the northern part of the land of Israel, in other words the whole land with the exception of Peraea and the tribe-land of Judah, came into their hands when Saul was slain.

1 Samuel 31:8–10. On the day following the battle, when the Philistines tripped the slain, they found Saul and his three sons lying upon Gilboa; and having cut off their heads and plundered their weapons, they went them (the heads and weapons) as trophies into the land of the Philistines, i.e., round about to the different towns and hamlets of their land, to announce the joyful news in their idol-temples (the writer of the Chronicles mentions the idols themselves) and to the people, and then deposited their weapons (the weapons of Saul and his sons) in the Astarte-houses. But the corpses they fastened to the town-wall of Beth-shean, i.e., Beisan, in the valley of the Jordan (see at Josh. 17:11). *Beth-azabbim* and *Beth-ashtaroth* are composite words; the first part is indeclinable, and the plural form is expressed by the second word: *idol-houses* and *Astarte-houses,* like *beth-aboth* (father's-houses: see at

Ex. 6:14). On the *Astartes,* see at Judg. 2:13. It is not expressly stated indeed in vv. 9, 10, that the Philistines plundered the bodies of Saul's sons as well, and mutilated them by cutting off their heads; but רֹאשׁוֹ and כֵּלָיו, *his* (i.e., Saul's) *head* and *his weapons,* alone are mentioned. At the same time, it is every evident from v. 12, where the Jabeshites are said to have taken down from the wall of Beth-shean not Saul's body only, but the bodies of his sons also, that the Philistines had treated the corpses of Saul's sons in just the same manner as that of Saul himself. The writer speaks distinctly of the abuse of Saul's body only, because it was his death that he had chiefly in mind at the time. To the word וַיְשַׁלְּחוּ we must supply in thought the object רֹאשׁוֹ and כֵּלָיו from the preceding clause. גְּוִיַּת and גְּוִיֹּת (vv. 10 and 12) are the corpses without the heads. The fact that the Philistines nailed them to the town-wall of Beth-shean presupposes the capture of that city, from which it is evident that they had occupied the land as far as the Jordan. The definite word *Beth-ashtaroth* is changed by the writer of the Chronicles into *Beth-elohim,* temples of the gods; or rather he has interpreted it in this manner without altering the sense, as the Astartes are merely mentioned as the principal deities for the idols generally. The writer of the Chronicles has also omitted to mention the nailing of the corpses to the wall of Beth-shean, but he states instead that "they fastened his skull in the temple of Dagon," a fact which is passed over in the account before us. From this we may see how both writers have restricted themselves to the principal points, or those which appeared to them of the greatest importance (vid., Bertheau on 1 Chron. 10:10).

1 Samuel 31:11–13. When the inhabitants of Jabesh in Gilead heard this, all the brave men of the town set out to Beth-shean, took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall, brought them to Jabesh, and burned them there. *"But their bones they buried under the tamarisk at Jabesh, and fasted seven days,"* to mourn for the king their former deliverer (see 1 Samuel 11). These statements are given in a very condensed form in the Chronicles (vv. 11, 12). Not only is the fact that "they went the whole night" omitted, as being of no essential importance to the general history; but the removal of the bodies from the town-wall is also passed over, because their being fastened there had not been mentioned, and also the burning of the bodies. The reason for the last omission is not to be sought for in the fact that the author of the Chronicles regarded burning as ignominious, according to Lev. 20:14; 21:9, but because he did not see how to reconcile the burning of the bodies with the burial of the bones. It was not the custom in Israel to burn the corpse, but to bury it in the ground. The former was restricted to the worst criminals (see at Lev. 20:14). Consequently the Chaldee interpreted the word "burnt" as relating to the burning of spices, a custom which we meet with afterwards as a special honour shown to certain of the kings of Judah on the occasion of their burial (2 Chron. 16:14; 21:19; Jer. 34:5). But this is expressed by שָׂרַף לוֹ שְׂרֵפָה, "to make a burning for him," whereas here it is stated distinctly that "they burnt them." The reason for the burning of the bodies in the case of Saul and his sons is to be sought for in the peculiarity of the circumstances; viz., partly in the fact that the bodies were mutilated by the removal of the heads, and therefore a regular burial of the dead was impossible, and partly in their anxiety lest, if the Philistines followed up their victory and came to Jabesh, they should desecrate the bodies still further. But even this was not a complete burning to ashes, but merely a burning of the skin and flesh; so that the bones still remained, and they were buried in the ground under a shady tree. Instead of "under the (well-known) tamarisk" (*eshel*), we have תַּחַת הָאֵלָה (under the strong tree) in 1 Chron. 10:11. David afterwards had them fetched away and buried in Saul's family grave at Zela, in the land of Benjamin (2 Samuel 21:11ff.). The seven days' fast kept by the Jabeshites was a sign of public and general mourning on the part of the inhabitants of that

town at the death of the king, who had once rescued them from the most abominable slavery.

In this ignominious fate of Saul there was manifested the righteous judgment of God in consequence of the hardening of his heart. But the love which the citizens of Jabesh displayed in their treatment of the corpses of Saul and his sons, had reference not to the king as rejected by God, but to the king as anointed with the Spirit of Jehovah, and was a practical condemnation, not of the divine judgment which had fallen upon Saul, but of the cruelty of the enemies of Israel and its anointed. For although Saul had waged war almost incessantly against the Philistines, it is not known that in any one of his victories he had ever been guilty of such cruelties towards the conquered and slaughtered foe as could justify this barbarous revenge on the part of the uncircumcised upon his lifeless corpse.