

**Matthew Henry's Commentary (Condensed)
on 1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 24**

1 Samuel 16

Samuel sent to Bethlehem to Jesse. (1-5) David is anointed. (6-13) Saul troubled with an evil spirit, is quieted by David. (14-23)

1 Samuel 16:1-5 It appears that Saul was grown very wicked. Of what would he not be guilty, who durst think to kill Samuel? The elders of Bethlehem trembled at Samuel's coming. It becomes us to stand in awe of God's messengers, and to tremble at his word. His answer was, I come peaceably, for I come to sacrifice. When our Lord Jesus came into the world, though men had reason to fear that his errand was to condemn the world, yet he gave full assurance that he came peaceably, for he came to sacrifice, and he brought his offering with him; A body hast thou prepared me. Let us sanctify ourselves, and depend upon His sacrifice.

1 Samuel 16:6-13 It was strange that Samuel, who had been so disappointed in Saul, whose countenance and stature recommended him, should judge of another man by that rule. We can tell how men look, but God can tell what they are. He judges of men by the heart. We often form a mistaken judgment of characters; but the Lord values only the faith, fear, and love, which are planted in the heart, beyond human discernment. And God does not favour our children according to our fond partiality, but often most honours and blesses those who have been least regarded. David at length was pitched upon. He was the youngest of the sons of Jesse; his name signifies Beloved; he was a type of God's beloved Son. It should seem, David was least set by of all the sons of Jesse. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. His anointing was not an empty ceremony, a Divine power went with that instituted sign; he found himself advanced in wisdom and courage, with all the qualifications of a prince, though not advanced in his outward circumstances. This would satisfy him that his election was of God. The best evidence of our being predestinated to the kingdom of glory, is, our being sealed with the Spirit of promise, and experience of a work of grace in our hearts.

1 Samuel 16:14-23 Saul is made a terror to himself. The Spirit of the Lord departed from him. If God and his grace do not rule us, sin and Satan will have possession of us. The devil, by the Divine permission, troubled and terrified Saul, by the corrupt humours of his body, and passions of his mind. He grew fretful, peevish, and discontented, and at times a madman. It is a pity that music, which may be serviceable to the good temper of the mind, should ever be abused, to support vanity and luxury, and made an occasion of drawing the heart from God and serious things. That is driving away the good Spirit, not the evil spirit. Music, diversions, company, or business, have for a time often been employed to quiet the wounded conscience; but nothing can effect a real cure but the blood of Christ, applied in faith, and the sanctifying Spirit sealing the pardon, by his holy comforts. All other plans to dispel religious melancholy are sure to add to distress, either in this world or the next.

1 Samuel 17

Goliath's challenge. (1-11) David comes to the camp. (12-30) David undertakes to fight Goliath. (31-39) and goes to meet him. (40-47) He kills Goliath. (48-58)

1 Samuel 17:1-11 Men so entirely depend upon God in all things, that when he withdraws his help, the most valiant and resolute cannot find their hearts or hands, as daily experience shows.

1 Samuel 17:12-30 Jesse little thought of sending his son to the army at that critical juncture; but the wise God orders actions and affairs, so as to serve his designs. In times of general formality and lukewarmness, every degree of zeal which implies readiness to go further, or to venture more in the cause of God than others, will be blamed as pride and ambition, and by none more than by near relations, like Eliab, or negligent superiors. It was a trial of David's meekness, patience, and constancy. He had right and reason on his side, and did not render railing for railing; with a soft answer he turned away his brother's wrath. This conquest of his own passion was more honourable than that of Goliath. Those who undertake great and public services, must not think it strange if they are spoken ill of, and opposed by those from whom they expect support and assistance. They must humbly go on with their work, in the face not only of enemies' threats, but of friends' slights and suspicions.

1 Samuel 17:31-39 A shepherd lad, come the same morning from keeping sheep, had more courage than all the mighty men of Israel. Thus God often sends good words to his Israel, and does great things for them, by the weak and foolish things of the world. As he had answered his brother's passion with meekness, so David answered Saul's fear with faith. When David kept sheep, he proved himself very careful and tender of his flock. This reminds us of Christ, the good Shepherd, who not only ventured, but laid down his life for the sheep. Our experience ought to encourage us to trust in God, and be bold in the way of duty. He that has delivered, does and will continue to do so. David gained leave to fight the Philistine. Not being used to such armour as Saul put upon him, he was not satisfied to go in that manner; this was from the Lord, that it might more plainly appear he fought and conquered in faith, and that the victory was from Him who works by the feeblest and most despised means and instruments. It is not to be inquired how excellent any thing is, but how proper. Let Saul's coat be ever so rich, and his armour ever so strong, what is David the better if they fit him not? But faith, prayer, truth, and righteousness; the whole armour of God, and the mind that was in Christ; are equally needful for all the servants of the Lord, whatever may be their work.

1 Samuel 17:40-47 The security and presumption of fools destroy them. Nothing can excel the humility, faith, and piety which appear in David's words. He expressed his assured expectation of success; he gloried in his mean appearance and arms, that the victory might be ascribed to the Lord alone.

1 Samuel 17:48-58 See how frail and uncertain life is, even when a man thinks himself best fortified; how quickly, how easily, and by how small a matter, the passage may be opened for life to go out, and death to enter! Let not the strong man glory in his strength,

nor the armed man in his armour. God resists the proud, and pours contempt on those who defy him and his people. No one ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. The history is recorded, that all may exert themselves for the honour of God, and the support of his cause, with bold and unshaken reliance on him. There is one conflict in which all the followers of the Lamb are, and must be engaged; one enemy, more formidable than Goliath, still challenges the armies of Israel. But “resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Go forth to battle with the faith of David, and the powers of darkness shall not stand against you. But how often is the Christian foiled through an evil heart of unbelief!

1 Samuel 18

Jonathan’s friendship for David. (1-5) Saul seeks to kill David. (6-11) Saul’s fear of David. (12-30)

1 Samuel 18:1-5 The friendship of David and Jonathan was the effect of Divine grace, which produces in true believers one heart and one soul, and causes them to love each other. This union of souls is from partaking in the Spirit of Christ. Where God unites hearts, carnal matters are too weak to separate them. Those who love Christ as their own souls, will be willing to join themselves to him in an everlasting covenant. It was certainly a great proof of the power of God’s grace in David, that he was able to bear all this respect and honour, without being lifted up above measure.

1 Samuel 18:6-11 David’s troubles not only immediately follow his triumphs, but arise from them; such is the vanity of that which seems greatest in this world. It is a sign that the Spirit of God is departed from men, if, like Saul, they are peevish, envious, suspicious, and ill-natured. Compare David, with his harp in his hand, aiming to serve Saul, and Saul, with his javelin in his hand, aiming to slay David; and observe the sweetness and usefulness of God’s persecuted people, and the barbarity of their persecutors. But David’s safety must be ascribed to God’s providence.

1 Samuel 18:12-30 For a long time David was kept in continual apprehension of falling by the hand of Saul, yet he persevered in meek and respectful behaviour towards his persecutor. How uncommon is such prudence and discretion, especially under insults and provocations! Let us inquire if we imitate this part of the exemplary character before us. Are we behaving wisely in all our ways? Is there no sinful omission, no rashness of spirit, nothing wrong in our conduct? Opposition and perverseness in others, will not excuse wrong tempers in us, but should increase our care, and attention to the duties of our station. Consider Him that endured contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds, Hebrews 12:3. If David magnified the honour of being son-in-law to king Saul, how should we magnify the honour of being sons to the King of kings!

1 Samuel 19

Jonathan reconciles his father to David, Saul again tries to slay him. (1-10) David flees to Samuel. (11-24)

1 Samuel 19:1-10 How forcible are right words! Saul was, for a time, convinced of the unreasonableness of his enmity to David; but he continued his malice against David. So incurable is the hatred of the seed of the serpent against that of the woman; so deceitful and desperately wicked is the heart of man without the grace of God, Jeremiah 17:9.

1 Samuel 19:11-24 Michal's stratagem to gain time till David got to a distance was allowable, but her falsehood had not even the plea of necessity to excuse it, and manifests that she was not influenced by the same spirit of piety which had dictated Jonathan's language to Saul. In flying to Samuel, David made God his refuge. Samuel, as a prophet, was best able to advise him what to do in this day of distress. He met with little rest or satisfaction in Saul's court, therefore went to seek it in Samuel's church. What little pleasure is to be had in this world, those have who live a life of communion with God; to that David returned in the time of trouble. So impatient was Saul after David's blood, so restless against him, that although baffled by one providence after another, he could not see that David was under the special protection of God. And when God will take this way to protect David, even Saul prophesies. Many have great gifts, yet no grace; they may prophesy in Christ's name, yet are disowned by him. Let us daily seek for renewing grace, which shall be in us as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Let us cleave to truth and holiness with full purpose of heart. In every danger and trouble, let us seek protection, comfort, and direction in God's ordinances.

1 Samuel 20

David consults Jonathan. (1-10) Jonathan's covenant with David. (11-23) Saul, missing David, seeks to kill Jonathan. (24-34) Jonathan takes leave of David. (35-42)

1 Samuel 20:1-10 The trials David met with, prepared him for future advancement. Thus the Lord deals with those whom he prepares unto glory. He does not put them into immediate possession of the kingdom, but leads them to it through much tribulation, which he makes the means of fitting them for it. Let them not murmur at his gracious appointment, nor distrust his care; but let them look forward with joyful expectation to the crown which is laid up for them. Sometimes it appears to us that there is but a step between us and death; at all times it may be so, and we should prepare for the event. But though dangers appear most threatening, we cannot die till the purpose of God concerning us is accomplished; nor till we have served our generation according to his will, if we are believers. Jonathan generously offers David his services. This is true friendship. Thus Christ testifies his love to us, Ask, and it shall be done for you; and we must testify our love to him, by keeping his commandments.

1 Samuel 20:11-23 Jonathan faithfully promises that he would let David know how he found his father affected towards him. It will be kindness to ourselves and to ours, to secure an interest in those whom God favours, and to make his friends ours. True friendship rests on a firm basis, and is able to silence ambition, self-love, and undue regard for others. But who can fully understand the love of Jesus, who gave himself as a sacrifice for rebellious, polluted sinners! how great then ought to be the force and effects of our love to him, to his cause, and his people!

1 Samuel 20:24-34 None were more constant than David in attending holy duties; nor had he been absent, but self-preservation obliged him to withdraw. In great peril present opportunities for Divine ordinances may be waved. But it is bad for us, except in case of necessity, to omit any opportunity of stately attending on them. Jonathan did wisely and well for himself and family, to secure an interest in David, yet for this he is blamed. It is good to take God's people for our people. It will prove to our advantage at last, however it may now be thought against our interest. Saul was outrageous. What savage beasts, and worse, does anger make men!

1 Samuel 20:35-42 The separation of two such faithful friends was grievous to both, but David's case was the more deplorable, for David was leaving all his comforts, even those of God's sanctuary. Christians need not sorrow, as men without hope; but being one with Christ, they are one with each other, and will meet in his presence ere long, to part no more; to meet where all tears shall be wiped from their eyes.

1 Samuel 21

David with Ahimelech. (1-9) David at Gath feigns himself mad. (10-15)

1 Samuel 21:1-9 David, in distress, fled to the tabernacle of God. It is great comfort in a day of trouble, that we have a God to go to, to whom we may open our cases, and from whom we may ask and expect direction. David told Ahimelech a gross untruth. What shall we say to this? The Scripture does not conceal it, and we dare not justify it; it was ill done, and proved of bad consequence; for it occasioned the death of the priests of the Lord. David thought upon it afterward with regret. David had great faith and courage, yet both failed him; he fell thus foully through fear and cowardice, and owing to the weakness of his faith. Had he trusted God aright, he would not have used such a sorry, sinful shift for his own preservation. It is written, not for us to do the like, no, not in the greatest straits, but for our warning. David asked of Ahimelech bread and a sword. Ahimelech supposed they might eat the shew-bread. The Son of David taught from it, that mercy is to be preferred to sacrifice; that ritual observances must give way to moral duties. Doeg set his foot as far within the tabernacle as David did. We little know with what hearts people come to the house of God, nor what use they will make of pretended devotion. If many come in simplicity of heart to serve their God, others come to observe their teachers and to prove accusers. Only God and the event can distinguish between a David and a Doeg, when both are in the tabernacle.

1 Samuel 21:10-15 God's persecuted people have often found better usage from Philistines than from Israelites. David had reason to put confidence in Achish, yet he began to be afraid. His conduct was degrading, and discovered wavering in his faith and courage. The more simply we depend on God, and obey him, the more comfortably and surely we shall walk through this troublesome world.

1 Samuel 22

David at Adullam, Many resort to him. (1-5) Saul destroys the priests of Nob. (6-19) Abiathar escapes to David. (20-23)

1 Samuel 22:1-5 See what weak instruments God sometimes uses, to bring about his own purposes. The Son of David is ready to receive distressed souls, who will be commanded by him. He receives all who come unto Him, however vile and miserable; he changes them into a holy people, and employs them in his service: those who would reign with him must be contented first to suffer with and for him. Observe with what tender concern David provided for his aged parents. The first thing he does is to find them a quiet habitation, whatever became of himself. Let children learn to honour their parents, in every thing consulting their ease and satisfaction. Though highly preferred, and much employed, let them not forget their aged parents. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. And the Lord will preserve his people for their appointed work, however they may be hated and exposed.

1 Samuel 22:6-19 See the nature of jealous malice and its pitiful arts. Saul looks upon all about him as his enemies, because they do not just say as he says. In Ahimelech's answer to Saul we have the language of conscious innocence. But what wickedness will not the evil spirit hurry men to when he gets the dominion! Saul alleges that which was utterly false and unproved. But the most bloody tyrants have found instruments of their cruelty as barbarous as themselves. Doeg, having murdered the priests, went to the city, Nob, and put all to the sword there. Nothing so vile but those may do it, who have provoked God to give them up to their hearts' lusts. Yet this was the accomplishment of the threatenings against the house of Eli. Though Saul was unrighteous in doing this, yet God was righteous in permitting it. No word of God shall fall to the ground.

1 Samuel 22:20-23 David greatly lamented the calamity. It is great trouble to a good man to find himself any way the cause of evil to others. He must have been much pained, when he considered that his falsehood was one cause of this fatal event. David speaks with assurance of his own safety, and promises that Abiathar should have his protection. With the Son of David, all who are his may be sure they shall be in safeguard, Psalms 91:1. In the hurry and distraction David was continually in, he found time for communion with God, and found comfort in it.

1 Samuel 23

David rescues Keilah. (1-6) God warns him to escape from Keilah. (7-13) Jonathan comforts David. (14-18) He is rescued from Saul by an invasion of the Philistines. (19-29)

1 Samuel 23:1-6 When princes persecute God's people, let them expect vexation on all sides. The way for any country to be quiet, is to let God's church be quiet in it: if Saul fight against David, the Philistines fight against his country. David considered himself the protector of the land. Thus did the Saviour Jesus, and left us an example. Those are unlike David, who sullenly decline to do good, if they are not rewarded for services.

1 Samuel 23:7-13 Well might David complain of his enemies, that they rewarded him evil for good, and that for his love they were his adversaries. Christ was used thus basely.

David applied to his great Protector for direction. No sooner was the ephod brought him than he made use of it. We have the Scriptures in our hands, let us take advice from them in doubtful cases. Say, Bring hither the Bible. David's address to God is very solemn, also very particular. God allows us to be so in our addresses to him; Lord, direct me in this matter, about which I am now at a loss. God knows not only what will be, but what would be, if it were not hindered; therefore he knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and how to render to every man according to his works.

1 Samuel 23:14-18 David made no attempt against Saul; he kept God's way, waited God's time, and was content to secure himself in woods and wildernesses. Let it make us think the worse of this world, which often gives such bad treatment to its best men: let it make us long for that kingdom where goodness shall for ever be in glory, and holiness in honour. We find Jonathan comforting David. As a pious friend, he directed him to God, the Foundation of his comfort. As a self-denying friend, he takes pleasure in the prospect of David's advancement to the throne. As a constant friend, he renewed his friendship with him. Our covenant with God should be often renewed, and therein our communion with him kept up. If the converse of one friend, at one meeting, gives comfort and strengthens our hearts, what may not be expected from the continual supports and powerful love of the Saviour of sinners, the covenanted Friend of believers!

1 Samuel 23:19-29 In the midst of his wickedness, Saul affected to speak the language of piety. Such expressions, without suitable effects, can only amuse or deceive those who hear, and those who use them. This mountain was an emblem of the Divine Providence coming between David and the destroyer. Let us not be dismayed at the prospect of future difficulties, but stay ourselves upon Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. Sooner than his promise shall fail, he will commission Philistines to effect our escape, at the very moment when our case appears most desperate. God requires entire dependence on him, If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established, Isaiah 7:9.

1 Samuel 24

David spares Saul's life. (1-7) David shows his innocence. (8-15) Saul acknowledges his fault. (16-22)

1 Samuel 24:1-7 God delivered Saul into David's hand. It was an opportunity given to David to exercise faith and patience. He had a promise of the kingdom, but no command to slay the king. He reasons strongly, both with himself and with his men, against doing Saul any hurt. Sin is a thing which it becomes us to startle at, and to resist temptations thereto. He not only would not do this bad thing himself, but he would not suffer those about him to do it. Thus he rendered good for evil, to him from whom he received evil for good; and was herein an example to all who are called Christians, not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good.

1 Samuel 24:8-15 David was falsely charged with seeking Saul's hurt; he shows Saul that God's providence had given him opportunity to do it. And it was upon a good principle that he refused to do it. He declares his fixed resolution never to be his own avenger. If men wrong us, God will right us, at farthest, in the judgment of the great day.

1 Samuel 24:16-22 Saul speaks as quite overcome with David's kindness. Many mourn for their sins, who do not truly repent of them; weep bitterly for them, yet continue in love and in league with them. Now God made good to David that word on which he had caused him to hope, that he would bring forth his righteousness as the light, Psalms 37:6. Those who take care to keep a good conscience, may leave it to God to secure them the credit of it. Sooner or later, God will force even those who are of the synagogue of Satan to know and to own those whom he has loved. They parted in peace. Saul went home convinced, but not converted; ashamed of his envy to David, yet retaining in his breast that root of bitterness; vexed that when at last he had found David, he could not find in his heart to destroy him, as he had designed. Malice often seems dead when it is only asleep, and will revive with double force. Yet, whether the Lord bind men's hands, or affect their hearts, so that they do not hurt us, the deliverance is equally from him; it is an evidence of his love, and an earnest of our salvation, and should make us thankful.

1 Samuel 25

Death of Samuel. (1) David's request; Nabal's churlish refusal. (2-11) David's intention to destroy Nabal. (12-17) Abigail takes a present to David. (18-31) He is pacified, Nabal dies. (32-39) David takes Abigail to wife. (39-44)

1 Samuel 25:1 All Israel lamented Samuel, and they had reason. He prayed daily for them. Those have hard hearts, who can bury faithful ministers without grief; who do not feel their loss of those who have prayed for them, and taught them the way of the Lord.

1 Samuel 25:2-11 We should not have heard of Nabal, if nothing had passed between him and David. Observe his name, Nabal, "A fool;" so it signifies. Riches make men look great in the eye of the world; but to one that takes right views, Nabal looked very mean. He had no honour or honesty; he was churlish, cross, and ill-humoured; evil in his doings, hard and oppressive; a man that cared not what fraud and violence he used in getting and saving. What little reason have we to value the wealth of this world, when so great a churl as Nabal abounds, and so good a man as David suffers want!, David pleaded the kindness Nabal's shepherds had received. Considering that David's men were in distress and debt, and discontented, and the scarcity of provisions, it was by good management that they were kept from plundering. Nabal went into a passion, as covetous men are apt to do, when asked for any thing, thinking thus to cover one sin with another; and, by abusing the poor, to excuse themselves from relieving them. But God will not thus be mocked. Let this help us to bear reproaches and misrepresentations with patience and cheerfulness, and make us easy under them; it has often been the lot of the excellent ones of the earth. Nabal insists much on the property he had in the provisions of his table. May he not do what he will with his own? We mistake, if we think we are absolute lords of what we have, and may do what we please with it. No; we are but stewards, and must use it as we are directed, remembering it is not our own, but His who intrusted us with it.

1 Samuel 25:12-17 God is kind to the evil and unthankful, and why may not we be so? David determined to destroy Nabal, and all that belonged to him. Is this thy voice, O David? Has he been so long in the school of affliction, where he should have learned

patience, and yet is so passionate? He at other times was calm and considerate, but is put into such a heat by a few hard words, that he seeks to destroy a whole family. What are the best of men, when God leaves them to themselves, that they may know what is in their hearts? What need to pray, Lord, lead us not into temptation!

1 Samuel 25:18-31 By a present Abigail atoned for Nabal's denial of David's request. Her behaviour was very submissive. Yielding pacifies great offences. She puts herself in the place of a penitent, and of a petitioner. She could not excuse her husband's conduct. She depends not upon her own reasonings, but on God's grace, to soften David, and expects that grace would work powerfully. She says that it was below him to take vengeance on so weak and despicable an enemy as Nabal, who, as he would do him no kindness, so he could do him no hurt. She foretells the glorious end of David's present troubles. God will preserve thy life; therefore it becomes not thee unjustly and unnecessarily to take away the lives of any, especially of the people of thy God and Saviour. Abigail keeps this argument for the last, as very powerful with so good a man; that the less he indulged his passion, the more he consulted his peace and the repose of his own conscience. Many have done that in a heat, which they have a thousand times wished undone again. The sweetness of revenge is soon turned into bitterness. When tempted to sin, we should consider how it will appear when we think upon it afterwards.

1 Samuel 25:32-39 David gives God thanks for sending him this happy check in a sinful way. Whoever meet us with counsel, direction, comfort, caution, or seasonable reproof, we must see God sending them. We ought to be very thankful for those happy providences which are the means of keeping us from sinning. Most people think it enough, if they take reproof patiently; but few will take it thankfully, and commend those who give it, and accept it as a favour. The nearer we are to committing sin, the greater is the mercy of a seasonable restraint. Sinners are often most secure when most in danger. He was very drunk. A sign he was Nabal, a fool, that could not use plenty without abusing it; who could not be pleasant with his friends without making a beast of himself. There is not a surer sign that a man has but little wisdom, nor a surer way to destroy the little he has, than drinking to excess. Next morning, how he is changed! His heart overnight merry with wine, next morning heavy as a stone; so deceitful are carnal pleasures, so soon passes the laughter of the fool; the end of that mirth is heaviness. Drunkards are sad, when they reflect upon their own folly. About ten days after, the Lord smote Nabal, that he died. David blessed God that he had been kept from killing Nabal. Worldly sorrow, mortified pride, and an affrighted conscience, sometimes end the joys of the sensualist, and separate the covetous man from his wealth; but, whatever the weapon, the Lord smites men with death when it pleases him.

1 Samuel 25:39-44 Abigail believed that David would be king over Israel, and greatly esteemed his pious and excellent character. She deemed his proposal of marriage honourable, and advantageous to her, notwithstanding his present difficulties. With great humility, and doubtless agreeably to the customs of those times, she consented, being willing to share his trials. Thus those who join themselves to Christ, must be willing now to suffer with him, believing that hereafter they shall reign with him.

1 Samuel 26

Saul goes after David, who again spares Saul's life. (1-12) David exhorts Saul. (13-20) Saul acknowledges his sin. (21-25)

1 Samuel 26:1-12 How soon do unholy hearts lose the good impressions convictions have made upon them! How helpless were Saul and all his men! All as though disarmed and chained, yet nothing is done to them; they are only asleep. How easily can God weaken the strongest, befool the wisest, and baffle the most watchful! David still resolved to wait till God thought fit to avenge him on Saul. He will by no means force his way to the promised crown by any wrong methods. The temptation was very strong; but if he yielded, he would sin against God, therefore he resisted the temptation, and trusted God with the event.

1 Samuel 26:13-20 David reasoned seriously and affectionately with Saul. Those who forbid our attendance on God's ordinances, do what they can to estrange us from God, and to make us heathens. We are to reckon that which exposes us to sin the greatest injury that can be done us. If the Lord stirred thee up against me, either in displeasure to me, taking this way to punish me for my sins against him, or in displeasure to thee, if it be the effect of that evil spirit from the Lord which troubles thee; let Him accept an offering from us both. Let us join in seeking peace, and to be reconciled with God by sacrifice.

1 Samuel 26:21-25 Saul repeated his good words and good wishes. But he showed no evidence of true repentance towards God. David and Saul parted to meet no more. No reconciliation among men is firm, which is not founded in an cemented by peace with God through Jesus Christ. In sinning against God, men play the fool, and err exceedingly. Many obtain a passing view of these truths, who hate and close their eyes against the light. Fair professions do not entitle those to confidence who have long sinned against the light, yet the confessions of obstinate sinners may satisfy us that we are in the right way, and encourage us to persevere, expecting our recompence from the Lord alone.

1 Samuel 27

David retires to Gath. (1-7) David deceives Achish. (8-12)

1 Samuel 27:1-7 Unbelief is a sin that easily besets even good men, when without are fightings, and within are fears; and it is a hard matter to get over them. Lord, increase our faith! We may blush to think that the word of a Philistine should go further than the word of an Israelite, and that the city of Gath should be a place of refuge for a good man, when the cities of Israel refuse him a safe abode. David gained a comfortable settlement, not only at a distance from Gath, but bordering upon Israel, where he might keep up a correspondence with his own countrymen.

1 Samuel 27:8-12 While David was in the land of the Philistines, he attacked some remains of the devoted nations. The people whom he cut off were long before doomed to destruction. It is often wisdom to shun public notice, but we must in no situation be idle. We must always try to do somewhat in the cause of God. This expedition David hid from Achish. But an equivocation which serves the purpose of a lie, is as like to it as a hypocrite

is to a profane person, it is only better in appearance, therefore more dangerous. Yet, though believers often manifest imperfections, they can never be prevailed upon to renounce the service of God, and to unite interests with his enemies, or finally to become the servants of sin and Satan. But what a train of evils follow from unbelief! When we forget the Lord's past mercies, and his gracious assurances, we shall be overwhelmed with desponding fears, and probably be led to adopt some dishonourable method to get rid of our troubles. Nothing can so effectually establish us in holy tempers and practices, and preserve us from perplexities, as firm, unshaken dependence upon the promises of God in Christ Jesus.

1 Samuel 28

Achish puts confidence in David, Saul's fear. (1-6) Saul consults a witch at Endor. (7-19) Saul's terror. (20-25)

1 Samuel 28:1-6 David could not refuse Achish without danger. If he promised assistance, and then stood neuter, or went over to the Israelites, he would behave with ingratitude and treachery. If he fought against Israel, he would sin greatly. It seemed impossible that he should get out of this difficulty with a clear conscience; but his evasive answer, intended to gain time, was not consistent with the character of an Israelite indeed. Troubles are terrors to the children of disobedience. In his distress, Saul inquired of the Lord. He did not seek in faith, but with a double, unstable mind. Saul had put the law in force against those that had familiar spirits, Exodus 22:18. Many seem zealous against sin, when they are any way hurt by it, who have no concern for the glory of God, nor any dislike of sin as sin. Many seem enemies to sin in others, while they indulge it in themselves. Saul will drive the devil out of his kingdom, yet harbours him in his heart by envy and malice. How foolish to consult those whom, according to God's law, he had endeavoured to root out!

1 Samuel 28:7-19 When we go from the plain path of duty, every thing draws us further aside, and increases our perplexity and temptation. Saul desires the woman to bring one from the dead, with whom he wished to speak; this was expressly forbidden, Deuteronomy 18:11. All real or pretended witchcraft or conjuration, is a malicious or an ignorant attempt to gain knowledge or help from some creature, when it cannot be had from the Lord in the path of duty. While Samuel was living, we never read of Saul's going to advise with him in any difficulties; it had been well for him if he had. But now he is dead, "Bring me up Samuel." Many who despise and persecute God's saints and ministers when living, would be glad to have them again, when they are gone. The whole shows that it was no human fraud or trick. Though the woman could not cause Samuel's being sent, yet Saul's inquiry might be the occasion of it. The woman's surprise and terror proved that it was an unusual and unexpected appearance. Saul had despised Samuel's solemn warnings in his lifetime, yet now that he hoped, as in defiance of God, to obtain some counsel and encouragement from him, might not God permit the soul of his departed prophet to appear to Saul, to confirm his former sentence, and denounce his doom? The expression, "Thou and thy sons shall be with me," means no more than that they shall be in the eternal world. There appears much solemnity in God's permitting the

soul of a departed prophet to come as a witness from heaven, to confirm the word he had spoken on earth.

1 Samuel 28:20-25 Those that expect any good counsel or comfort, otherwise than from God, and in the way of his institutions, will be as wretchedly disappointed as Saul. Though terrified even to despair, he was not humbled. He confessed not his sins, offered no sacrifices, and presented no supplications. He does not seem to have cared about his sons or his people, or to have attempted any escape; but in sullen despair he rushed upon his doom. God sets up a few such beacons, to warn men not to stifle convictions, or despise his word. But while one repenting thought remains, let no sinner suppose himself in this case. Let him humble himself before God, determined to live and die beseeching his favour, and he will succeed.

1 Samuel 29

David objected to by the Philistines. (1-5) He is dismissed by Achish. (6-11)

1 Samuel 29:1-5 David waited with a secret hope that the Lord would help him out of his difficulty. But he seems to have been influenced too much by the fear of man, in consenting to attend Achish. It is hard to come near to the brink of sin, and not to fall in. God inclined the princes of the Philistines to oppose David's being employed in the battle. Thus their dislike befriended him, when no friend could do him such a kindness.

1 Samuel 29:6-11 David scarcely ever had a greater deliverance than when dismissed from such insnaring service. God's people should always behave themselves so, as, if possible, to get the good word of all they have dealings with: and it is due to those who have acted well, to speak well of them.

1 Samuel 30

Ziklag spoiled by the Amalekites. (1-6) David overtakes the Amalekites. (7-15) He recovers what had been lost. (16-20) David's distribution of the spoil. (21-31)

1 Samuel 30:1-6 When we go abroad in the way of our duty, we may comfortably hope that God will take care of our families in our absence, but not otherwise. If, when we come off a journey, we find our abode in peace, and not laid waste, as David here found his, let the Lord be praised for it. David's men murmured against him. Great faith must expect such severe trials. But, observe, that David was brought thus low, only just before he was raised to the throne. When things are at the worst with the church and people of God, then they begin to mend. David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. His men fretted at their loss, the soul of the people was bitter; their own discontent and impatience added to the affliction and misery. But David bore it better, though he had more reason than any of them to lament it. They gave liberty to their passions, but he set his graces to work; and while they dispirited each other, he, by encouraging himself in God, kept his spirit calm. Those who have taken the Lord for their God, may take encouragement from him in the worst times.

1 Samuel 30:7-15 If in all our ways, even when, as in this case, there can be no doubt they are just, we acknowledge God, we may expect that he will direct our steps, as he did those of David. David, in tenderness to his men, would by no means urge them beyond their strength. The Son of David thus considers the frames of his followers, who are not all alike strong and vigorous in their spiritual pursuits and conflicts; but, where we are weak, there he is kind; nay more, there he is strong, 2 Corinthians 12:9,10. A poor Egyptian lad, scarcely alive, is made the means of a great deal of good to David. Justly did Providence make this poor servant, who was basely used by his master, an instrument in the destruction of the Amalekites; for God hears the cry of the oppressed. Those are unworthy the name of true Israelites, who shut up their compassion from persons in distress. We should neither do an injury nor deny a kindness to any man; some time or other it may be in the power of the lowest to return a kindness or an injury.

1 Samuel 30:16-20 Sinners are nearest to ruin, when they cry, Peace and safety, and put the evil day far from them. Nor does any thing give our spiritual enemies more advantage than sensuality and indulgence. Eating and drinking, and dancing, have been the soft and pleasant way in which many have gone down to the congregation of the dead. The spoil was recovered, and brought off; nothing was lost, but a great deal gained.

1 Samuel 30:21-31 What God gives us, he designs we should do good with. In distributing the spoil, David was just and kind. Those are men of Belial indeed, who delight in putting hardships upon their brethren, and care not who is starved, so that they may be fed to the full. David was generous and kind to all his friends. Those who consider the Lord as the Giver of their abundance, will dispose of it with fairness and liberality.

1 Samuel 31

Saul's defeat and death. (1-7) Saul's body rescued by the men of Jabesh-gilead. (8-13)

1 Samuel 31:1-7 We cannot judge of the spiritual or eternal state of any by the manner of their death; for in that, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked. Saul, when sorely wounded, and unable to resist or to flee, expressed no concern about his never-dying soul; but only desired that the Philistines might not insult over him, or put him to pain, and he became his own murderer. As it is the grand deceit of the devil, to persuade sinners, under great difficulties, to fly to this last act of desperation, it is well to fortify the mind against it, by a serious consideration of its sinfulness before God, and its miserable consequences in society. But our security is not in ourselves. Let us seek protection from Him who keepeth Israel. Let us watch and pray; and take unto us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

1 Samuel 31:8-13 The Scripture makes no mention what became of the souls of Saul and his sons, after they were dead; but of their bodies only: secret things belong not to us. It is of little consequence by what means we die, or what is done with our dead bodies. If our souls are saved, our bodies will be raised incorruptible and glorious; but not to fear His wrath, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell, is the extreme of folly and wickedness. How useless is the respect of fellow-creatures to those who are suffering the

wrath of God! While pompous funerals, grand monuments, and he praises of men, honour the memory of the deceased, the soul may be suffering in the regions of darkness and despair! Let us seek that honour which cometh from God only.

2 Samuel 1

This book is the history of the reign of king David. It relates his victories, the growth of the prosperity of Israel, and his reformation of the state of religion. With these events are recorded the grievous sins he committed, and the family as well as public troubles with which he was punished. We here meet with many things worthy of imitation, and many that are written for our warning. The history of king David is given in Scripture with much faithfulness, and from it he appears, to those who fairly balance his many virtues and excellent qualities against his faults, to have been a great and good man.

Tidings brought to David of the death of Saul. (1-10) The Amalekite is put to death. (11-16) David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan. (17-27)

2 Samuel 1:1-10 The blow which opened David's way to the throne was given about the time he had been sorely distressed. Those who commit their concerns to the Lord, will quietly abide his will. It shows that he desired not Saul's death, and he was not impatient to come to the throne.

2 Samuel 1:11-16 David was sincere in his mourning for Saul; and all with him humbled themselves under the hand of God, laid so heavily upon Israel by this defeat. The man who brought the tidings, David put to death, as a murderer of his prince. David herein did not do unjustly; the Amalekite confessed the crime. If he did as he said, he deserved to die for treason; and his lying to David, if indeed it were a lie, proved, as sooner or later that sin will prove, lying against himself. Hereby David showed himself zealous for public justice, without regard to his own private interest.

2 Samuel 1:17-27 Kasheth, or "the bow," probably was the title of this mournful, funeral song. David does not commend Saul for what he was not; and says nothing of his piety or goodness. Jonathan was a dutiful son, Saul an affectionate father, therefore dear to each other. David had reason to say, that Jonathan's love to him was wonderful. Next to the love between Christ and his people, that affection which springs from it, produces the strongest friendship. The trouble of the Lord's people, and triumphs of his enemies, will always grieve true believers, whatever advantages they may obtain by them.

2 Samuel 2

David made king in Hebron. (1-7) Abner makes Ishbosheth king Battle between Abner's men and those of Joab. (8-17) Asahel slain by Abner: 25-32. Both parties retreat. (18-24)

2 Samuel 2:1-7. After the death of Saul, many went to David at Ziklag, 1 Chronicles 12:22, but he trusted in God who promised him the kingdom, to give it in his own time and manner. Yet assurance of hope in God's promise, will quicken pious endeavours. If I be chosen to the crown of life, it does not follow, Then I will do nothing; but, Then I will do all that God directs me. This good use David made of his election, and so will all whom God has chosen. In all our journeys and removes, it is comfortable to see God going before us; and we may do so, if by faith and prayer we set Him before us. God, according to the promise, directed David's path. David rose gradually: thus the kingdom of the Messiah, the Son of David, is set up by degrees; he is Lord of all, but we see not yet all things put under him.

2 Samuel 2:8-17. The nation in general refused David. By this the Lord trained up his servant for future honour and usefulness; and the tendency of true godliness was shown in his behaviour while passing through various difficulties. David was herein a type of Christ, whom Israel would not submit to, though anointed of the Father to be a Prince and a Saviour to them. Abner meant, Let the young men fight before us, when he said, Let them play before us: fools thus make a mock at sin. But he is unworthy the name of a man, that can thus trifle with human blood.

2 Samuel 2:18-24 Death often comes by ways we least suspect. We are often betrayed by the accomplishments we are proud of! Asahel's swiftness, which he presumed so much upon, did him no service, but hastened his end.

2 Samuel 2:25-32 Abner appeals to Joab concerning the miserable consequences of a civil war. Those who make light of such unnatural contests, will find that they are bitterness to all concerned. How easy it is for men to use reason, when it makes for them, who would not use it, if it made against them! See how the issue of things alter men's minds! The same thing which looked pleasant in the morning, at night looked dismal. Those who are most forward to enter into contention, will repent before they have done with it, and had better leave it off before it be meddled with, as Solomon advises. This is true of every sin, oh that men would consider it in time, that it will be bitterness in the latter end! Asahel's funeral is here mentioned. Distinctions are made between the dust of some and that of others; but in the resurrection no difference will be made, but between the godly and ungodly, which will remain for ever.

2 Samuel 3

David's power increases His family. (1-6) Abner revolts to David. (7-21) Joab kills Abner David mourns for him. (22-39)

2 Samuel 3:1-6 The length of this war tried the faith and patience of David, and made his settlement at last the more welcome. The contest between grace and corruption in the hearts of believers, may fitly be compared to this warfare. There is a long war between them, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; but as the work of holiness is carried on, corruption, like the house of Saul, grows weaker and weaker; while grace, like the house of David, grows stronger and stronger.

2 Samuel 3:7-21 Many, like Abner, are not above committing base crimes, who are too proud to bear reproof, or even the suspicion of being guilty. While men go on in sin, and apparently without concern, they are often conscious that they are fighting against God. Many mean to serve their own purposes; and will betray those who trust them, when they can get any advantage. Yet the Lord serves his own designs, even by those who are thus actuated by revenge, ambition, or lust; but as they intend not to honour him, in the end they will be thrown aside with contempt. There was real generosity both to Michal and to the memory of Saul, in David's receiving the former, remembering probably how once he owed his life to her affection, and knowing that she was separated from him partly by her father's authority. Let no man set his heart on that which he is not entitled to. If any disagreement has separated husband and wife, as they expect the blessing of God, let them be reconciled, and live together in love.

2 Samuel 3:22-39 Judgments are prepared for such scorers as Abner; but Joab, in what he did, acted wickedly. David laid Abner's murder deeply to heart, and in many ways expressed his detestation of it. The guilt of blood brings a curse upon families: if men do not avenge it, God will. It is a sad thing to die like a fool, as they do that any way shorten their own days, and those who make no provision for another world. Who would be fond of power, when a man may have the name of it, and must be accountable for it, yet is hampered in the use of it? David ought to have done his duty, and then trusted God with the issue. Carnal policy spared Joab. The Son of David may long delay, but never fails to punish impenitent sinners. He who now reigns upon the throne of David, has a kingdom of a nobler kind. Whatever He doeth, is noticed by all his willing people, and is pleasing to them.

2 Samuel 4

Ishbosheth murdered. (1-7) David puts to death the murderers. (8-12)

2 Samuel 4:1-7 See how Ishbosheth was murdered! When those difficulties dispirit us, which should sharpen our endeavours, we betray both our heavenly crowns and our earthly lives. Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty and ruin. The idle soul is an easy prey to the destroyer. We know not when and where death will meet us. When we lie down to sleep, we are not sure that we may not sleep the sleep of death before we awake; nor do we know from what hand the death-blow may come.

2 Samuel 4:8-12 A person may be glad to obtain his just wishes, and yet really regret the means by which he receives them. He may be sorry for the death of a person by which he is a gainer. These men shed innocent blood, from the basest motives. David justly executed vengeance upon them. He would not be beholden to any to help him by unlawful practices. God had helped him over many a difficulty, and through many a danger, therefore he depended upon him to crown and complete his own work. He speaks of his redemption from all adversity, as a thing done; though he had many storms yet before him, he knew that He who had delivered, would deliver.

2 Samuel 5

David king over all Israel. (1-5) He takes the strong-hold of Zion. (6-10) David's kingdom established. (11-16) He defeats the Philistines. (17-25)

2 Samuel 5:1-5 David was anointed king a third time. His advances were gradual, that his faith might be tried, and that he might gain experience. Thus his kingdom typified that of the Messiah, which was to come to its height by degrees. Thus Jesus became our Brother, took upon him our nature, dwelt in it that he might become our Prince and Saviour: thus the humbled sinner takes encouragement from the endearing relation, applies for his salvation, submits to his authority, and craves his protection.

2 Samuel 5:6-10 The enemies of God's people are often very confident of their own strength, and most secure when their day to fall draws nigh. But the pride and insolence of the Jebusites animated David, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. Thus in the day of God's power, Satan's strong-hold, the human heart, is changed into a habitation of God through the Spirit, and into a throne on which the Son of David rules, and brings every thought into obedience to himself. May He thus come, and claim, and cleanse, each of our hearts; and, destroying every idol, may he reign there for ever!

2 Samuel 5:11-16 David's house was not the worse, nor the less fit to be dedicated to God, for being built by the sons of the stranger. It is prophesied of the gospel church, The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee, Isaiah 60:10. David's government was rooted and built up. David was established king; so is the Son of David, and all who, through him, are made to our God kings and priests. Never had the nation of Israel appeared so great as it began now to be. Many have the favour and love of God, yet do not perceive it, and so want the comfort of it; but to be exalted to that, and to perceive it, is happiness. David owned it was for his people's sake God had done great things for him; that he might be a blessing to them, and that they might be happy under him.

2 Samuel 5:17-25 The Philistines considered not that David had the presence of God with him, which Saul had forfeited and lost. The kingdom of the Messiah, as soon as it was set up in the world, was thus attacked by the powers of darkness. The heathen raged, and the kings of the earth set themselves to oppose it; but all in vain, Psalms 2:1, &c. The destruction will turn, as this did, upon Satan's own kingdom. David owns dependence on God for victory; and refers himself to the good pleasure of God, Wilt thou do it? The assurance God has given us of victory over our spiritual enemies, should encourage us in our spiritual conflicts. David waited till God moved; he stirred then, but not till then. He was trained up in dependence on God and his providence. God performed his promise, and David failed not to improve his advantages. When the kingdom of the Messiah was to be set up, the apostles, who were to beat down the devil's kingdom, must not attempt any thing till they received the promise of the Spirit; who came with a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, Acts 2:2.

2 Samuel 6

The ark removed from Kirjath-jearim. (1-5) Uzzah smitten for touching the ark, Obed-edom blessed. (6-11) David brings the ark to Zion. (12-19) Michal's ill conduct. (20-23)

2 Samuel 6:1-5 God is present with the souls of his people, when they want the outward tokens of his presence; but now David is settled in the throne, the honour of the ark begins to revive. Let us learn hence, to think and to speak highly of God; and to think and speak honourably of holy ordinances, which are to us as the ark was unto Israel, the tokens of God's presence, Matthew 28:20. Christ is our Ark; in and by him God manifests his favour, and accepts our prayers and praises. The ark especially typified Christ and his mediation, in which the name of Jehovah and all his glories are displayed. The priests should have carried the ark upon their shoulders. Philistines may carry the ark in a cart without suffering for it; but if Israelites do so, it is at their peril, because this was not what God appointed.

2 Samuel 6:6-11 Uzzah was struck dead for touching the ark. God saw presumption and irreverence in Uzzah's heart. Familiarity, even with that which is most awful, is apt to breed contempt. If it were so great a crime for one to lay hold on the ark of the covenant who had no right to do so, what is it for those to lay claim to the privileges of the covenant that come not up to the terms of it? Obed-edom opened his doors without fear, knowing the ark was a savour of death unto death to those only who treated it wrong. The same hand that punished Uzzah's proud presumption, rewarded Obed-edom's humble boldness. Let none think the worse of the gospel for the judgments on those that reject it, but consider the blessings it brings to all who receive it. Let masters of families be encouraged to keep up religion in their families. It is good to live in a family that entertains the ark, for all about it will fare the better.

2 Samuel 6:12-19 It became evident, that happy was the man who had the ark near him. Christ is indeed a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offence, to those that are disobedient; but to those that believe, he is a Corner-stone, elect, precious, 1 Peter 2:6-8. Let us be religious. Is the ark a blessing to others' houses? We may have it, and the blessing of it, without fetching it away from our neighbours. David, at first setting out, offered sacrifices to God. We are likely to speed in our enterprises, when we begin with God, and give diligence to seek peace with him. And we are so unworthy, and our services are so defiled, that all our joy in God must be connected with repentance and faith in the Redeemer's atoning blood. David attended with high expressions of joy. We ought to serve God with our whole body and soul, and with every endowment and power we possess. On this occasion David laid aside his royal robes, and put on a plain linen dress. David prayed with and for the people, and as a prophet, solemnly blessed them in the name of the Lord.

2 Samuel 6:20-23 David returned to bless his household, to pray with them, and for them, and to offer up family thanksgiving for this national mercy. It is angels' work to worship God, surely that cannot lower the greatest of men. But even the palaces of princes are not free from family troubles. Exercises of religion appear mean in the eyes of those who have little or no religion themselves. If we can approve ourselves to God in what we do in religion, and do it as before the Lord, we need not heed reproach. Piety will have its praise: let us not be indifferent in it, nor afraid or ashamed to own it. David was contented to justify himself, and he did not further reprove or blame Michal's

insolence; but God punished her. Those that honour God, he will honour; but those that despise him, and his servants and service, shall be lightly esteemed.

2 Samuel 7

David's care for the ark. (1-3) God's covenant with David. (4-17) His prayer and thanksgiving. (18-29)

2 Samuel 7:1-3 David being at rest in his palace, considered how he might best employ his leisure and prosperity in the service of God. He formed a design to build a temple for the ark. Nathan here did not speak as a prophet, but as a godly man, encouraging David by his private judgment. We ought to do all we can to encourage and promote the good purposes and designs of others, and, as we have opportunity, to forward a good work.

2 Samuel 7:4-17 Blessings are promised to the family and posterity of David. These promises relate to Solomon, David's immediate successor, and the royal line of Judah. But they also relate to Christ, who is often called David and the Son of David. To him God gave all power in heaven and earth, with authority to execute judgment. He was to build the gospel temple, a house for God's name; the spiritual temple of true believers, to be a habitation of God through the Spirit. The establishing of his house, his throne, and his kingdom for ever, can be applied to no other than to Christ and his kingdom: David's house and kingdom long since came to an end. The committing iniquity cannot be applied to the Messiah himself, but to his spiritual seed; true believers have infirmities, for which they must expect to be corrected, though they are not cast off.

2 Samuel 7:18-29 David's prayer is full of the breathings of devout affection toward God. He had low thoughts of his own merits. All we have, must be looked upon as Divine gifts. He speaks very highly and honourably of the Lord's favours to him. Considering what the character and condition of man is, we may be amazed that God should deal with him as he does. The promise of Christ includes all; if the Lord God be ours, what more can we ask, or think of? Ephesians 3:20. He knows us better than we know ourselves; therefore let us be satisfied with what he has done for us. What can we say more for ourselves in our prayers, than God has said for us in his promises? David ascribes all to the free grace of God. Both the great things He had done for him, and the great things He had made known to him. All was for his word's sake, that is, for the sake of Christ the eternal Word. Many, when they go to pray, have their hearts to seek, but David's heart was found, that is, it was fixed; gathered in from its wanderings, entirely engaged to the duty, and employed in it. That prayer which is from the tongue only, will not please God; it must be found in the heart; that must be lifted up and poured out before God. He builds his faith, and hopes to speed, upon the sureness of God's promise. David prays for the performance of the promise. With God, saying and doing are not two things, as they often are with men; God will do as he hath said. The promises of God are not made to us by name, as to David, but they belong to all who believe in Jesus Christ, and plead them in his name.

2 Samuel 8

David subdues the Philistines, the Moabites, and the Syrians. (1-8) The spoil dedicated. (9-14) David's government and officers. (15-18)

2 Samuel 8:1-8. David subdued the Philistines. They had long been troublesome to Israel. And after the long and frequent struggles the saints have with the powers of darkness, like Israel with the Philistines, the Son of David shall tread them all under foot, and make the saints more than conquerors. He smote the Moabites, and made them tributaries to Israel. Two parts he destroyed, the third part he spared. The line that was to keep alive, though it was but one, is ordered to be a full line. Let the line of mercy be stretched to the utmost. He smote the Syrians. In all these wars David was protected, for this in his psalms he often gives glory to God.

2 Samuel 8:9-14 All the precious things David was master of, were dedicated things; they were designed for building the temple. The idols of gold David destroyed, 2 Samuel 5:21, but the vessels of gold he dedicated. Thus, in the conquest of a soul by the grace of the Son of David, what stands in opposition to God must be destroyed, every lust must be mortified and crucified, but what may glorify him must be dedicated; thus the property of it is altered. God employs his servants in various ways; some, as David, in spiritual battles; others, as Solomon, in spiritual buildings; and one prepares work for the other, that God may have the glory of all.

2 Samuel 8:15-18 David neither did wrong, nor denied or delayed right to any. This speaks his close application to business; also his readiness to admit all addresses and appeals made to him. He had no respect of persons in judgment. Herein he was a type of Christ. To Him let us submit, his friendship let us seek, his service let us count our pleasure, diligently attending to the work he assigns to each of us. David made his sons chief rulers; but all believers, Christ's spiritual seed, are better preferred, for they are made kings and priests to our God, Revelation 1:6.

2 Samuel 9

David sends for Mephibosheth. (1-8) And provides for him. (9-13)

2 Samuel 9:1-8 Amidst numerous affairs we are apt to forget the gratitude we owe, and the engagements we are under, not only to our friends, but to God himself. Yet persons of real godliness will have no rest till they have discharged them. And the most proper objects of kindness and charity, frequently will not be found without inquiry. Jonathan was David's sworn friend, therefore he shows kindness to his son Mephibosheth. God is faithful to us; let us not be unfaithful to one another. If Providence has raised us, and our friends and their families are brought low, we must look upon that as giving us the fairer opportunity of being kind to them.

2 Samuel 9:9-13 As David was a type of Christ, his Lord and Son, his Root and Offspring, let his kindness to Mephibosheth remind us of the kindness and love of God our Saviour to fallen man, to whom he was under no obligation, as David was to Jonathan. The Son of God seeks this lost and ruined race, who sought not after him. He comes to seek and to save them!

2 Samuel 10

David's messengers ill-treated by Hanun. (1-5) The Ammonites defeated. (6-14) The Syrians defeated. (15-19)

2 Samuel 10:1-5 Nahash had been an enemy to Israel, yet had showed kindness to David. David therefore resolves gratefully to return it. If a Pharisee gives alms in pride, though God will not reward it, yet he that receives the alms ought to return thanks for it. Those who bear ill-will to their neighbours, are resolved not to believe that their neighbours bear any good-will to them. There is nothing so well meant, but it may be ill interpreted, and is wont to be so, by men who love nobody but themselves. The best men must not think it strange if they are thus misrepresented. Charity thinketh no evil. According to the usages of those days and countries, Hanun treated David's ambassadors in the most contemptuous manner. David showed much concern for his servants. Let us learn not to lay unjust reproaches to heart; they will wear off, and turn only to the shame of those who utter or do them; while the reputation wrongfully hurt in a little time grows again, as these beards did. God will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, therefore wait patiently for him, Psalms 37:6,7.

2 Samuel 10:6-14 They that are at war with the Son of David, not only give the provocation, but begin the war. God has forces to send against those that set his wrath at defiance, Isaiah 5:19, which will convince them that none ever hardened his heart against God, and prospered. Christ's soldiers should strengthen one another's hands in their spiritual warfare. Let nothing be wanting in us, whatever the success be. When we make conscience of doing our duty, we may, with satisfaction, leave the event with God, assuredly hoping for his salvation in his own way and time.

2 Samuel 10:15-19 Here is a new attempt of the Syrians. Even the baffled cause will make head as long as there is any life in it; the enemies of the Son of David do so. But now the promise made to Abraham, Genesis 15:18, and repeated to Joshua, Joshua 1:4, that the borders of Israel should extend to the river Euphrates, was performed. Learn hence, that it is dangerous to help those who have God against them; for when they fall, their helpers will fall with them.

2 Samuel 11

David's adultery. (1-5) He tries to conceal his crime. (6-13) Uriah murdered. (14-27)

2 Samuel 11:1-5 Observe the occasions of David's sin; what led to it. 1. Neglect of his business. He tarried at Jerusalem. When we are out of the way of our duty, we are in temptation. 2. Love of ease: idleness gives great advantage to the tempter. 3. A wandering eye. He had not, like Job, made a covenant with his eyes, or, at this time, he had forgotten it. And observe the steps of the sin. See how the way of sin is down-hill; when men begin to do evil, they cannot soon stop. Observe the aggravations of the sin. How could David rebuke or punish that in others, of which he was conscious that he himself was guilty?

2 Samuel 11:6-13 Giving way to sin hardens the heart, and provokes the departure of the Holy Spirit. Robbing a man of his reason, is worse than robbing him of his money; and drawing him into sin, is worse than drawing him into any wordly trouble whatever.

2 Samuel 11:14-27 Adulteries often occasion murders, and one wickedness is sought to be covered by another. The beginnings of sin are much to be dreaded; for who knows where they will end? Can a real believer ever tread this path? Can such a person be indeed a child of God? Though grace be not lost in such an awful case, the assurance and consolation of it must be suspended. All David's life, spirituality, and comfort in religion, we may be sure were lost. No man in such a case can have evidence to be satisfied that he is a believer. The higher a man's confidence is, who has sunk in wickedness, the greater his presumption and hypocrisy. Let not any one who resembles David in nothing but his transgressions, bolster up his confidence with this example. Let him follow David in his humiliation, repentance, and his other eminent graces, before he thinks himself only a backslider, and not a hypocrite. Let no opposer of the truth say, These are the fruits of faith! No; they are the effects of corrupt nature. Let us all watch against the beginnings of self-indulgence, and keep at the utmost distance from all evil. But with the Lord there is mercy and plenteous redemption. He will cast out no humble, penitent believer; nor will he suffer Satan to pluck his sheep out of his hand. Yet the Lord will recover his people, in such a way as will mark his abhorrence of their crimes, to hinder all who regard his word from abusing the encouragements of his mercy.

2 Samuel 12

Nathan's parable-David confesses his sin. (1-14) The birth of Solomon. (15-25) David's severity to the Ammonites. (26-31)

2 Samuel 12:1-14 God will not suffer his people to lie still in sin. By this parable Nathan drew from David a sentence against himself. Great need there is of prudence in giving reproofs. In his application, he was faithful. He says in plain terms, Thou art the man. God shows how much he hates sin, even in his own people; and wherever he finds it, he will not let it go unpunished. David says not a word to excuse himself or make light of his sin, but freely owns it. When David said, I have sinned, and Nathan perceived that he was a true penitent, he assured him his sin was forgiven. Thou shalt not die: that is, not die eternally, nor be for ever put away from God, as thou wouldest have been, if thou hadst not put away the sin. Though thou shalt all thy days be chastened of the Lord, yet thou shalt not be condemned with the world. There is this great evil in the sins of those who profess religion and relation to God, that they furnish the enemies of God and religion with matter for reproach and blasphemy. And it appears from David's case, that even where pardon is obtained, the Lord will visit the transgression of his people with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. For one momentary gratification of a vile lust, David had to endure many days and years of extreme distress.

2 Samuel 12:15-25 David now penned the 51st Psalm, in which, though he had been assured that his sin was pardoned, he prays earnestly for pardon, and greatly laments his sin. He was willing to bear the shame of it, to have it ever before him, to be continually

upbraided with it. God gives us leave to be earnest with him in prayer for particular blessings, from trust in his power and general mercy, though we have no particular promise to build upon. David patiently submitted to the will of God in the death of one child, and God made up the loss to his advantage, in the birth of another. The way to have creature comforts continued or restored, or the loss made up some other way, is cheerfully to resign them to God. God, by his grace, particularly owned and favoured that son, and ordered him to be called Jedidiah, Beloved of the Lord. Our prayers for our children are graciously and as fully answered when some of them die in their infancy, for they are well taken care of, and when others live, “beloved of the Lord.”

2 Samuel 12:26-31 To be thus severe in putting the children of Ammon to slavery was a sign that David’s heart was not yet made soft by repentance, at the time when this took place. We shall be most compassionate, kind, and forgiving to others, when we most feel our need of the Lord’s forgiving love, and taste the sweetness of it in our own souls.

2 Samuel 13

Ammon’s violence to his sister. (1-20) Absalom murders his brother Ammon. (21-29) David’s grief, Absalom flees to Geshur. (30-39)

2 Samuel 13:1-20 From henceforward David was followed with one trouble after another. Adultery and murder were David’s sins, the like sins among his children were the beginnings of his punishment: he was too indulgent to his children. Thus David might trace the sins of his children to his own misconduct, which must have made the anguish of the chastisement worse. Let no one ever expect good treatment from those who are capable of attempting their seduction; but it is better to suffer the greatest wrong than to commit the least sin.

2 Samuel 13:21-29 Observe the aggravations of Absalom’s sin: he would have Ammon slain, when least fit to go out of the world. He engaged his servants in the guilt. Those servants are ill-taught who obey wicked masters, against God’s commands. Indulged children always prove crosses to godly parents, whose foolish love leads them to neglect their duty to God.

2 Samuel 13:30-39 Jonadab was as guilty of Ammon’s death, as of his sin; such false friends do they prove, who counsel us to do wickedly. Instead of loathing Absalom as a murderer, David, after a time, longed to go forth to him. This was David’s infirmity: God saw something in his heart that made a difference, else we should have thought that he, as much as Eli, honoured his sons more than God.

2 Samuel 14

Joab procures Absalom’s recall. (1-20) Absalom recalled. (21-24) His personal beauty. (25-27) He is admitted to his father’s presence. (28-33)

2 Samuel 14:1-20 We may notice here, how this widow pleads God’s mercy, and his clemency toward poor guilty sinners. The state of sinners is a state of banishment from

God. God pardons none to the dishonour of his law and justice, nor any who are impenitent; nor to the encouragement of crimes, or the hurt of others.

2 Samuel 14:21-24 David was inclined to favour Absalom, yet, for the honour of his justice, he could not do it but upon application made for him, which may show the methods of Divine grace. It is true that God has thoughts of compassion toward poor sinners, not willing that any should perish; yet he is only reconciled to them through a Mediator, who pleads on their behalf. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and Christ came to this land of our banishment, to bring us to God.

2 Samuel 14:25-27 Nothing is said of Absalom's wisdom and piety. All here said of him is, that he was very handsome. A poor commendation for a man that had nothing else in him valuable. Many a polluted, deformed soul dwells in a fair and comely body. And we read that he had a very fine head of hair. It was a burden to him, but he would not cut it as long as he could bear the weight. That which feeds and gratifies pride, is not complained of, though uneasy. May the Lord grant us the beauty of holiness, and the adorning of a meek and quiet spirit! Only those who fear God are truly happy.

2 Samuel 14:28-33 By his insolent carriage toward Joab, Absalom brought Joab to plead for him. By his insolent message to the king, he gained his wishes. When parents and rulers countenance such characters, they will soon suffer the most fatal effects. But did the compassion of a father prevail to reconcile him to an impenitent son, and shall penitent sinners question the compassion of Him who is the Father of mercies?

2 Samuel 15

Absalom's ambition. (1-6) His conspiracy. (7-12) David leaves Jerusalem. (13-23) David sends back the ark. (24-30) He prays against Ahithophel's counsel. (31-37)

2 Samuel 15:1-6 David allows Absalom's pomp. Those parents know not what they do, who indulge a proud humour in their children: many young people are ruined by pride. And those commonly are most eager for authority who least understand its duties.

2 Samuel 15:7-12 See how willing tender parents are to believe the best concerning their children. But how easy and how wicked is it, for children to take advantage of good parents, and to deceive them with the show of religion! The principal men of Jerusalem joined Absalom's feast upon his sacrifice. Pious persons are glad to see others appear religious, and this gives occasion for deceptions. The policy of wicked men, and the subtlety of Satan, are exerted to draw good persons to countenance base designs.

2 Samuel 15:13-23 David determined to quit Jerusalem. He took this resolve, as a penitent submitting to the rod. Before unrighteous Absalom he could justify himself, and stand out; but before the righteous God he must condemn himself, and yield to his judgments. Thus he accepts the punishment of his sin. And good men, when they themselves suffer, are anxious that others should not be led to suffer with them. He compelled none; those whose hearts were with Absalom, to Absalom let them go, and so shall their doom be. Thus Christ enlists none but willing followers. David cannot bear to

think that Ittai, a stranger and an exile, a proselyte and a new convert, who ought to be encouraged and made easy, should meet with hard usage. But such value has Ittai for David's wisdom and goodness, that he will not leave him. He is a friend indeed, who loves at all times, and will adhere to us in adversity. Let us cleave to the Son of David, with full purpose of heart, and neither life nor death shall separate us from his love.

2 Samuel 15:24-30 David is very careful for the safety of the ark. It is right to be more concerned for the church's prosperity than our own; to prefer the success of the gospel above our own wealth, credit, ease, and safety. Observe with what satisfaction and submission David speaks of the Divine disposal. It is our interest, as well as our duty, cheerfully to acquiesce in the will of God, whatever befalls us. Let us see God's hand in all events; and that we may not be afraid of what shall be, let us see all events in God's hand. David's sin was ever before him, Psalms 51:3; but never so plain, nor ever appearing so black as now. He never wept thus when Saul hunted him, but a wounded conscience makes troubles lie heavy, Psalms 38:4.

2 Samuel 15:31-37 David prays not against Ahithophel's person, but against his counsel. He prayed this, in firm belief that God has all hearts in his hand, and tongues also. But we must second our prayers with endeavours, and David did so, else we tempt God. But we do not find wisdom and simplicity so united in any mere man, that we can perceive nothing which needs forgiveness. Yet, when the Son of David was treated with all possible treachery and cruelty, his wisdom, meekness, candour, and patience, were perfect. Him let us follow, cleave to, and serve, in life and in death.

2 Samuel 16

Ziba's falsehood. (1-4) David cursed by Shimei. (5-14) Ahithophel's counsel. (15-23)

2 Samuel 16:1-4 Ziba belied Mephibosheth. Great men ought always to be jealous of flatterers, and to be careful that they hear both sides.

2 Samuel 16:5-14 David bore Shimei's curses much better than Ziba's flatteries; by these he was brought to pass a wrong judgment on another, by those to pass a right judgment on himself: the world's smiles are more dangerous than its frowns. Once and again David spared Saul's life, while Saul sought his. But innocence is no defence against malice and falsehood; nor are we to think it strange, if we are charged with that which we have been most careful to keep ourselves from. It is well for us, that men are not to be our judges, but He whose judgment is according to truth. See how patient David was under this abuse. Let this remind us of Christ, who prayed for those who reviled and crucified him. A humble spirit will turn reproaches into reproofs, and get good from them, instead of being provoked by them. David the hand of God in it, and comforts himself that God would bring good out of his affliction. We may depend upon God to repay, not only our services, but our sufferings.

2 Samuel 16:15-23 The wisest counsellors of that age were Ahithophel and Hushai: Absalom thinks himself sure of success, when he has both; on them he relies, and consults not the ark, though he had that with him. But miserable counsellors were they both.

Hushai would never counsel him to do wisely. Ahithophel counselled him to do wickedly; and so did as effectually betray him, as he did, who was designedly false to him: for they that advise men to sin, certainly advise them to their hurt. After all, honesty is the best policy, and will be found so in the long run. Ahithophel gave wicked counsel to Absalom; to render himself so hateful to his father, that he would never be reconciled to him; this cursed policy was of the devil. How desperately wicked is the human heart!

2 Samuel 17

Ahithophel's counsel overthrown. (1-21) He hangs himself, Absalom pursues David. (22-29)

2 Samuel 17:1-21 Here was a wonderful effect of Divine Providence blinding Absalom's mind and influencing his heart, that he could not rest in Ahithophel's counsel, and that he should desire Hushai's advice. But there is no contending with that God who can arm a man against himself, and destroy him by his own mistakes and passions. Ahithophel's former counsel was followed, for God intended to correct David; but his latter counsel was not followed, for God meant not to destroy him. He can overrule all counsels. Whatever wisdom or help any man employs or affords, the success is from God alone, who will not let his people perish.

2 Samuel 17:22-29 Ahithophel hanged himself for vexation that his counsel was not followed. That will break a proud man's heart which will not break a humble man's sleep. He thought himself in danger, concluding, that, because his counsel was not followed, Absalom's cause would fail; and to prevent a possible public execution, he does justice upon himself. Thus the breath is stopped, and the head laid low, from which nothing could be expected but mischief. Absalom chased his father. But observe how God sometimes makes up to his people that comfort from strangers, which they are disappointed of in their own families. Our King needs not our help; but he assures us, that what we do for the least of his brethren, who are sick, poor, and destitute, shall be accepted and recompensed as if done to himself

2 Samuel 18

Absalom's army defeated. (1-8) He is slain. (9-18) David's over-sorrow. (19-33)

2 Samuel 18:1-8 How does David render good for evil! Absalom would have only David smitten; David would have only Absalom spared. This seems to be a resemblance of man's wickedness towards God, and God's mercy to man, of which it is hard to say which is most amazing. Now the Israelites see what it is to take counsel against the Lord and his anointed.

2 Samuel 18:9-18 Let young people look upon Absalom, hanging on a tree, accursed, forsaken of heaven and earth; there let them read the Lord's abhorrence of rebellion against parents. Nothing can preserve men from misery and contempt, but heavenly wisdom and the grace of God.

2 Samuel 18:19-33 By directing David to give God thanks for his victory, Ahimaaz prepared him for the news of his son's death. The more our hearts are fixed and enlarged, in thanksgiving to God for our mercies, the better disposed we shall be to bear with patience the afflictions mixed with them. Some think David's wish arose from concern about Absalom's everlasting state; but he rather seems to have spoken without due thought. He is to be blamed for showing so great fondness for a graceless son. Also for quarrelling with Divine justice. And for opposing the justice of the nation, which, as king, he had to administer, and which ought to be preferred before natural affection. The best men are not always in a good frame; we are apt to over-grieve for what we over-loved. But while we learn from this example to watch and pray against sinful indulgence, or neglect of our children, may we not, in David, perceive a shadow of the Saviour's love, who wept over, prayed for, and even suffered death for mankind, though vile rebels and enemies.

2 Samuel 19

Joab causes David to cease mourning. (1-8) David returns to Jordan. (9-15) He pardons Shimei. (16-23) Mephibosheth excused. (24-30) David's parting with Barzillai. (31-39) Israel quarrels with Judah. (40-43)

2 Samuel 19:1-8 To continue to lament for so bad a son as Absalom, was very unwise, and very unworthy. Joab censures David, but not with proper respect and deference to his sovereign. A plain case may be fairly pleaded with those above us, and they may be reprov'd for what they do amiss, but it must not be with rudeness and insolence. Yet David took the reproof and the counsel, prudently and mildly. Timely giving way, usually prevents the ill effects of mistaken measures.

2 Samuel 19:9-15 God's providence, by the priests' persuasions and Amasa's interest, brought the people to resolve the recall of the king. David stirred not till he received this invitation. Our Lord Jesus will rule in those that invite him to the throne in their hearts, and not till he is invited. He first bows the heart, and makes it willing in the day of his power, then rules in the midst of his enemies, Psalms 110:2,3.

2 Samuel 19:16-23 Those who now slight and abuse the Son of David, would be glad to make their peace when he shall come in his glory; but it will be too late. Shimei lost no time. His abuse had been personal, and with the usual right feeling of good men, David could more easily forgive it.

2 Samuel 19:24-30 David recalls the forfeiture of Mephibosheth's estate; and he expressed joy for the king's return. A good man contentedly bears his own losses, while he sees Israel in peace, and the Son of David exalted.

2 Samuel 19:31-39 Barzillai thought he had done himself honour in doing the king any service. Thus, when the saints shall be called to inherit the kingdom, they will be amazed at the recompence being so very far beyond the service, Matthew 25:37. A good man would not go any where to be burdensome; or, will rather be so to his own house than to

another's. It is good for all, but especially becomes old people, to think and speak much of dying. The grave is ready for me, let me go and get ready for it.

2 Samuel 19:40-43 The men of Israel though themselves despised, and the fiercer words of the men of Judah produced very bad effects. Much evil might be avoided, if men would watch against pride, and remember that a soft answer turneth away wrath. Though we have right and reason on our side, if we speak it with fierceness, God is displeased.

2 Samuel 20

Sheba's rebellion. (1-3) Amasa slain by Joab. (4-13) Sheba takes refuge in Abel. (14-22) David's officers. (23-26)

2 Samuel 20:1-3 One trial arises after another for our good, till we reach the place where sin and sorrow are for ever done away. Angry disputers misunderstand or misconstrue one another's words; proud men will have every thing their own way, or wholly refuse their assistance. The favour of the many is not to be depended upon; and what have others to expect, when Hosanna to the Son of David was soon changed to Crucify him, crucify him?

2 Samuel 20:4-13 Joab barbarously murdered Amasa. The more plot there is in a sin, the worse it is. Joab contentedly sacrificed the interest both of the king and the kingdom to his personal revenge. But one would wonder with what face a murderer could pursue a traitor; and how, under such a load of guilt, he had courage to enter upon danger: his conscience was seared.

2 Samuel 20:14-22 Justly is that place attacked, which dares to harbour a traitor; nor will the heart fare better which indulges rebellious lusts, that will not have Christ to reign over them. A discreet woman, by her prudent management, satisfied Joab, and yet saved the city. Wisdom is not confined to rank or sex; it consists not in deep knowledge; but in understanding how to act as matters arise, that troubles may be turned away and benefits secured. A great deal of mischief would be prevented, if contending parties would understand one another. Let both sides be undeceived. The single condition of peace is, the surrender of the traitor. It is so in God's dealing with the soul, when besieged by conviction and distress; sin is the traitor; the beloved lust is the rebel: part with that, cast away the transgression, and all shall be well. There is no peace on any other terms.

2 Samuel 20:23-26 Here is the state of David's court, after his restoration. It is well when able men are appointed to discharge public duties; let all seek to perform those duties, as faithful servants to the Son of David.

2 Samuel 21

The Gibeonites avenged. (1-9) Rizpah's care for the bodies of Saul's descendants. (10-14) Battles with the Philistines. (15-22)

2 Samuel 21:1-9 Every affliction arises from sin, and should lead us to repent and humble ourselves before God; but some troubles especially show that they are sent to bring sin to remembrance. God's judgments often look a great way back, which requires us to do so, when we are under his rebukes. It is not for us to object against the people's smarting for the sin of their king; perhaps they helped him. Nor against this generation suffering for the sin of the last. God often visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, and he gives no account of any matters. Time does not wear out the guilt of sin; nor can we build hopes of escape upon the delay of judgments. If we cannot understand all the reasons of Providence in this matter, still we have no right to demand that God should acquaint us with those reasons. It must be right, because it is the will of God, and in the end it will be proved to be so. Money is no satisfaction for blood. It should seem, Saul's posterity trod in his steps, for it is called a bloody house. It was the spirit of the family, therefore they are justly reckoned with for his sin, as well as for their own. The Gibeonites did not require this out of malice against Saul or his family. It was not to gratify any revenge, but for the public good. They were put to death at the beginning of harvest; they were thus sacrificed to turn away the wrath of Almighty God, who had withheld the harvest-mercies for some years past, and to obtain his favour in the present harvest. In vain do we expect mercy from God, unless we do justice upon our sins. Executions must not be thought cruel, which are for the public welfare.

2 Samuel 21:10-14 That a guilty land should enjoy many years of plenty, calls for gratitude; and we need not wonder misused abundance should be punished with scarcity; yet how few are disposed to ask of the Lord concerning the sinful cause, while numbers search for the second causes by which he is pleased to work! But the Lord will plead the cause of those who cannot or will not avenge themselves; and the prayers of the poor are of great power. When God sent rain to water the earth, these bodies were buried, for then it appeared that God was entreated for the land. When justice is done on earth, vengeance from heaven ceases. God is pacified, and is entreated for us through Christ, who was hanged on a tree, and so made a curse for us, to do away our guilt, though he was himself guiltless.

2 Samuel 21:15-22 These events seem to have taken place towards the end of David's reign. David fainted, but he did not flee, and God sent help in the time of need. In spiritual conflicts, even strong saints sometimes wax faint; then Satan attacks them furiously; but those who stand their ground and resist him, shall be relieved and made more than conquerors. Death is a Christian's last enemy, and a son of Anak; but through Him that triumphed for us, believers shall be more than conquerors at last, even over that enemy.

2 Samuel 22

David's psalm of thanksgiving. — This chapter is a psalm of praise; we find it afterwards nearly as Psalms 18. They that trust God in the way of duty, shall find him a present help in their greatest dangers: David did so. Remarkable preservations should be particularly mentioned in our praises. We shall never be delivered from all enemies till we get to heaven. God will preserve all his people, 2 Timothy 4:18. Those who receive signal mercies from God, ought to give him the glory. In the day that God delivered David, he sang this song. While the mercy is fresh, and we are most affected with it, let the thank-offering

be brought, to be kindled with the fire of that affection. All his joys and hopes close, as all our hopes should do, in the great Redeemer.

2 Samuel 23

David's last words. (1-7) David's mighty men. (8-39)

2 Samuel 23:1-7 These words of David are very worthy of regard. Let those who have had long experience of God's goodness, and the pleasantness of heavenly wisdom, when they come to finish their course, bear their testimony to the truth of the promise. David avows his Divine inspiration, that the Spirit of God spake by him. He, and other holy men, spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. In many things he had his own neglect and wrong conduct to blame. But David comforted himself that the Lord had made with him an everlasting covenant. By this he principally intended the covenant of mercy and peace, which the Lord made with him as a sinner, who believed in the promised Saviour, who embraced the promised blessing, who yielded up himself to the Lord, to be his redeemed servant. Believers shall for ever enjoy covenant blessings; and God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall be for ever glorified in their salvation. Thus pardon, righteousness, grace, and eternal life, are secured as the gift of God through Jesus Christ. There is an infinite fulness of grace and all blessings treasured up in Christ, for those who seek his salvation. This covenant was all David's salvation, he so well knew the holy law of God and the extent of his own sinfulness, that he perceived what was needful for his own case in this salvation. It was therefore all his desire. In comparison, all earthly objects lost their attractions; he was willing to give them up, or to die and leave them, that he might enjoy full happiness, Psalms 73:24-28. Still the power of evil, and the weakness of his faith, hope, and love, were his grief and burden. Doubtless he would have allowed that his own slackness and want of care were the cause; but the hope that he should soon be made perfect in glory, encouraged him in his dying moments.

2 Samuel 23:8-39 David once earnestly longed for the water at the well of Bethlehem. It seems to be an instance of weakness. He was thirsty; with the water of that well he had often refreshed himself when a youth, and it was without due thought that he desired it. Were his valiant men so forward to expose themselves, upon the least hint of their prince's mind, and so eager to please him, and shall not we long to approve ourselves to our Lord Jesus, by ready compliance with his will, as shown us by his word, Spirit, and providence? But David poured out the water as a drink-offering to the Lord. Thus he would cross his own foolish fancy, and punish himself for indulging it, and show that he had sober thoughts to correct his rash ones, and knew how to deny himself. Did David look upon that water as very precious which was got at the hazard of these men's blood, and shall not we much more value those benefits for purchasing which our blessed Saviour shed his blood? Let all beware of neglecting so great salvation.

2 Samuel 24

David numbers the people. (1-9) He chooses the pestilence. (10-15) The staying the pestilence. (16,17) David's sacrifice, The plague removed. (18-25)

2 Samuel 24:1-9 For the people's sin David was left to act wrong, and in his chastisement they received punishment. This example throws light upon God's government of the world, and furnishes a useful lesson. The pride of David's heart, was his sin in numbering of the people. He thought thereby to appear the more formidable, trusting in an arm of flesh more than he should have done, and though he had written so much of trusting in God only. God judges not of sin as we do. What appears to us harmless, or, at least, but a small offence, may be a great sin in the eye of God, who discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. Even ungodly men can discern evil tempers and wrong conduct in believers, of which they themselves often remain unconscious. But God seldom allows those whom he loves the pleasures they sinfully covet.

2 Samuel 24:10-15 It is well, when a man has sinned, if he has a heart within to smite him for it. If we confess our sins, we may pray in faith that God would forgive them, and take away, by pardoning mercy, that sin which we cast away by sincere repentance. What we make the matter of our pride, it is just in God to take from us, or make bitter to us, and make it our punishment. This must be such a punishment as the people have a large share in, for though it was David's sin that opened the sluice, the sins of the people all contributed to the flood. In this difficulty, David chose a judgment which came immediately from God, whose mercies he knew to be very great, rather than from men, who would have triumphed in the miseries of Israel, and have been thereby hardened in their idolatry. He chose the pestilence; he and his family would be as much exposed to it as the poorest Israelite; and he would continue for a shorter time under the Divine rebuke, however severe it was. The rapid destruction by the pestilence shows how easily God can bring down the proudest sinners, and how much we owe daily to the Divine patience.

2 Samuel 24:16,17 Perhaps there was more wickedness, especially more pride, and that was the sin now chastised, in Jerusalem than elsewhere, therefore the hand of the destroyer is stretched out upon that city; but the Lord repented him of the evil, changed not his mind, but his way. In the very place where Abraham was stayed from slaying his son, this angel, by a like countermand, was stayed from destroying Jerusalem. It is for the sake of the great Sacrifice, that our forfeited lives are preserved from the destroying angel. And in David is the spirit of a true shepherd of the people, offering himself as a sacrifice to God, for the salvation of his subjects.

2 Samuel 24:18-25 God's encouraging us to offer to him spiritual sacrifices, is an evidence of his reconciling us to himself. David purchased the ground to build the altar. God hates robbery for burnt-offering. Those know not what religion is, who chiefly care to make it cheap and easy to themselves, and who are best pleased with that which costs them least pains or money. For what have we our substance, but to honour God with it; and how can it be better bestowed? See the building of the altar, and the offering proper sacrifices upon it. Burnt-offerings to the glory of God's justice; peace-offerings to the glory of his mercy. Christ is our Altar, our Sacrifice; in him alone we may expect to escape his wrath, and to find favour with God. Death is destroying all around, in so many forms, and so suddenly, that it is madness not to expect and prepare for the close of life.