COMMENTARIES
ON
THE FOUR LAST BOOKS OF MOSES
ARRANGED
IN THE FORM OF A HARMONY
BY JOHN CALVIN
TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN, AND COMPARED WITH THE FRENCH EDITION; WITH ANNOTATIONS, ETC.
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against God, and thus their security, audacity, and perverseness take away from them the excuse of ignorance or error. Wherefore this example warns us not to slumber when God arouses us, but attentively to consider His works, which may instruct us to reverence and fear Him. The statement that the Egyptians dug wells for themselves increases the certainty of the miracle, as does also what is added as to the seven days; for if the corruption of the water had only been momentary, some suspicion of delusion might have crept in, which was removed both by the continued taste and appearance. Therefore it was said before, that the Egyptians would suffer inconvenience and pain from the want of water; for thus I explain it, that they should be sorrowful and afflicted, viz., because they had nothing to drink.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

2. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs:

3. And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up, and come into thine house, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs:

4. And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.

5. And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt.

6. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and

1 He seems to allude to verse 18, which he translates "et molestia afflicentur Aegypti, bibendo aqua ex flumine."
the magicians did so with their enchantments;" as if the flashes, as of lightning, dazzled the eyes of the spectators; for this I have shewn to be the meaning of the word. Yet I do not question but that God altogether preserved His people from this calamity, so that these guests and strangers were supplied with the water of Egypt, whilst not a drop was left for the natives of the land. Thus was the king convicted of obstinacy, because he was not more attentive to observe this distinction; nay, he must have been doubly mad and foolish, to the destruction of himself and his kingdom, to set the delusion of the magicians against the power of God. But this often happens to the proflate, that they rush eagerly as it were to their own destruction, whilst they are borne away by satanic impulse in opposition to God. Yet this was no slight temptation to God's servants, to see the ministers of Satan almost rivalling themselves. For, if God chose to bear witness to their deliverance by miracles,—when they saw their enemies endued with a similar power, how could their own vocation be ratified and sure? And indeed it is probable that their faith was shaken by these machinations; yet I count it certain that it did not yield and give way; for, if Moses had been overcome by doubt, he would have confessed it, as it was his custom to do. But God opened their eyes, so that they should regard with contempt the tricks and deceptions of the magicians; besides, the divine vision had shone upon them together with the word, so that it was no marvel that, thus supported, they should repel, or sustain, every assault with firmness.

23. And Pharaoh turned. In this word Moses teaches us that the hardness of heart, to which God had devoted Pharaoh, was voluntary; so that the sin rested in himself, nor did the secret appointment of God avail anything to lessen his culpability, for his folly is condemned, because he did not "set his heart to this also." Whence it follows that the author of his own obstinacy, because, being blinded by pride and contempt, he took no account of the glory of God. Thus the wicked, although as being vessels of wrath, they are cast of God into a reprobate mind, still harden themselves, because wittingly and wilfully they run against God, and thus their security, audacity, and perverseness take away from them the excuse of ignorance or error. Wherefore this example warns us not to slumber when God arouses us, but attentively to consider His works, which may instruct us to reverence and fear Him. The statement that the Egyptians dug wells for themselves increases the certainty of the miracle, as does also what is added as to the seven days; for if the corruption of the water had only been momentary, some suspicion of delusion might have crept in, which was removed both by the continued taste and appearance. Therefore it was said before, that the Egyptians would suffer inconvenience and pain from the want of water; for thus I explain it, that they should be sorrowful and afflicted, viz., because they had nothing to drink.

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the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. 7. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

1. And the Lord spake. Again, as if the matter were only now begun, God demands of Pharaoh His own peculiar right, viz., that His people should serve Him, but out of the land of Egypt, that His worship might be separate and pure from all defilement, for He desired (as was before said) by this separation of His people to condemn the superstitions of the Egyptians. Meanwhile there was no excuse for the tyrant, when, with sacrilegious boldness, he presumed to deprive God of His just honour. Therefore, in refusing to let them go, he was declared not only to be cruel, but also a despiser of God. Threatening is also added, that at least he may, however unwillingly, be driven to obey; for thus must the stubborn be dealt with, who never are brought to duty except when forced by fear or punishment. Indeed, God sometimes also threatens His own servants, in order to stimulate their laziness; but especially is He more severe towards the perverse and disobedient. Thus is it said, (Ps. xviii. 26,) “With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.” This is the reason why He sanctions His command with threats when He addresses Pharaoh. In this second plague there are, besides, two things to be remarked by us; for, first, God shows that the Egyptians had hitherto held their lives by a precarious tenure, as it were, because He had protected them from the incursion of frogs by His special mercy. We know that Egypt, on account of its many marshes, and the sluggish and almost stagnant Nile, was full of frogs and venomous animals; now, when great multitudes of them come forth suddenly, cover the surface of the fields, penetrate even to the houses and bed-chambers, and finally ascend even into the royal palace, it plainly appears that they were before only restrained by God’s hand, and thus that the God of the Hebrews was the guardian and keeper of that kingdom. Secondly, God chose not only to inflict a punishment upon the Egyptians, but to expose them to mockery by its ignominious nature; nor can we doubt that their pain must have been much embittered by this contumely, when they saw that they were thus evil-entreated not by some victorious army, but by filthy reptiles; and besides this, that their calamity had its origin in the Nile, which enriched their country with so many advantages. But let us learn from this history that there are many deaths mixed up with our life, and that it is not otherwise lengthened out to us, except as God restrains the dangers which everywhere beset us; and again, although He may not openly strike us with lightning from heaven, nor arm his angels for the destruction of men, still, at His slightest nod, all creatures are ready to execute His judgments; and, therefore, we must ascribe it to His kindness and long-suffering, if the wicked do not perish at each moment. Finally, if we are ever galled by ignominy or disgrace, let us remember that this happens designally, that the shame itself may mortify our pride.

5. And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron. It is questionable whether God thus enjoined Moses in a continuous address, or whether He waited until Pharaoh contumaciously despised His command. It is probable, indeed, that after Pharaoh had paid no attention to the threats, the execution of the punishment was commanded. Meantime, we must recollect what I before said, that Moses moved not even a finger; but, as he had been commanded, transferred the active measures to his inferior minister, that thus Pharaoh might be treated more contemptuously. It was thus that he overwhelmed the whole land, as it were, by a breath. But although in this way God cast down the fierce tyrant in his swelling pride to be trampled beneath their feet, still the wickedness of the magicians did not rest. Thus was it requisite that the servants of God should be exercised by constant contests one after another.

1 In the Fr. the word here used is miracles, probably a misprint for menaces.
frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.

9. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?

10. And he said, To-morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God.

11. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only.

12. And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh; and Moses cried unto the Lord because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh.

13. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.

15. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

8. Then Pharaoh called for Moses. Pharaoh at last appears to be softened, and to lay aside some of his fierceness; but it will soon appear that he was not really tamed. It may indeed have been that, seized with terror, he seriously took refuge in cries for pardon; but that he lied to God, and to himself, is plain from his very inconstancy; because, as soon as a reprieve was granted, he returned to his natural disposition, nay, he effectually manifested that his malice was only repressed by fear, since it presently began to vent itself again. Thus do hypocrites, when they are beneath God’s affliction, hand, or tremble under the apprehension of His chastenings, humbly and submissively implore His mercy; but when the evil has been withdrawn for a little while, this short truce puffs up their hearts, as if they had attained an eternal peace. The Prophet complains in the psalm, that thus also it happened with the Jews, “When he slow them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God; and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer; nevertheless, they did but flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.” (Ps. lxxxvii. 33-37.) In fine, this is a disease common to all hypocrites, that, having found by experience their frowardness to be destructive to them, they feign penitence for the sake of obtaining pardon, because they cannot escape the judgments of God; but, when they fancy themselves escaped, they hasten back to the same pride, they kick against God, and even wantonly insult Him; in a word, it is only their trouble that humbles them and that only for a short time. But although Pharaoh’s fear extorted this from him, that he sought for Moses to entreat for him, and was anxious to appease God, yet was it a token of his deceitful and double mind, that he made it, as it were, a bargain, that the frogs should be taken away before he let the people go. His impiety, therefore, lay concealed in his heart, so long as he thought that he could not defy God with impunity; but, relying confidently on impunity, he manifested his deceit and perfidy. Although it was not with any sincere feeling of repentance that he now humbly speaks of Jehovah by name, yet it shows that the stoutness of his spirit was broken, of which mention was made before, when he inquired in mockery, “Who is the Lord?”

9. And Moses said unto Pharaoh. Commentators differ as to the meaning of this passage. They are too speculative who expound it, that this honour was granted to Pharaoh, that he should fix the time in which Moses was to pray. Again, there is a flatness in the exposition, that Pharaoh might glory because the frogs were to die. Those who expound it, that Pharaoh should be freed from the frogs, so that he might glory in safety, express part of the meaning, but not the whole. It rather appears to me that there is an
implied antithesis between the perverse boasting, wherewith Pharaoh had exulted, and that pious glorying which he ought to seek for in the mercy of God; as if Moses had said, "Thus far you have exalted yourself improperly, trusting in your power, and afterwards when bewitched by the enchantments; now rather glory, because you have an intercessor and patron to plead for you to God." For it was needful that the arrogance, which had so falsely elevated him, that he dared to contend with God, should be crushed, and that no hope should be left him, save in the mercy of God. But to "glory over" Moses means, that he should seek his glory in the advocacy of Moses, and should account it a very great happiness that he should deign to interpose for his reconciliation with God. For the particle גָּדוֹל, gned, is often so taken. Yet Moses by no means wished to detract at all from the glory of God; but (as I have lately said) desiring to humble the pride of the haughty king, he told him that nothing would be better and more glorious for him than to have a good hope of pardon, when he had obtained as his advocate the servant of the living God, whom he so cordially hated. He only affirms that the frogs should "remain in the river," as much as to say that they should be content with their ordinary habitation and bounds; for we know that frogs, although they sometimes jump out on the bank, still do not go far from the water, because they are nourished by humidity. Thus he hints that they were to be free by God's command to cover the ground, and that it was still in His power, if He chose, that they should invade the fields and houses again in new multitudes; and that it must be ascribed to His blessing, if they kept themselves in the waters, and did not make incursions beyond their own boundaries.

10. And he said, To-morrow. If you refer this to Moses, there is ambiguity in the sense; but, it being probable that they were Pharaoh's words, I think that he is asking for a respite till to-morrow, before he lets the people go. For they fall into an absurdity, who think that he asked Moses to drive away the frogs by his prayers on the morrow, as if Pharaoh went quietly to sleep, and put off the remedy of the evil. There is, then, no pretence for understanding it, that Pharaoh, as if his mind were quite tranquil and unmoved, desired to have his land delivered from the frogs on the following day; but rather it means, that if he be released from this difficulty, he promises the discharge of the people, but yet suspends it till the next day, for the purpose of deceit. For there was no other reason for this procrastination, except that, having obtained what he wanted, he might depart from his engagement, as he actually did; but Moses, satisfied with this promise, undertakes to bring it about that God should disperse the frogs; and this, I doubt not, was performed on the same day. For this was the cause of the tyrant's changing his determination, that, by the interposition of the night, his fear departed. And, certainly, it is gathered from the following words, that the frogs were soon after removed; for it is said that Moses and Aaron prayed after they had gone out; which would be but little in accordance with the notion, that the next day was waited for. It is not by any rash or presumptuous impulse that Moses affirms that Pharaoh should obtain his desire; because it appears from his success that he was assured of its being God's will. Thus often are the prophets, although no spoken revelation may intervene, directed nevertheless by the secret inspiration of the Spirit. In this confidence, also, Moses declares that Pharaoh should know that there is none other God to be compared with the God of Israel. This, moreover, is the true knowledge of God, when whatsoever lifts itself up to obscure His glory, is reduced to its proper level, and every high thing yields or is cast down, so that He alone may be exalted.

15. But when Pharaoh saw. Hence it appears that the wretched tyrant, like a winding serpent, twisted and turned his mind to crooked counsels; for when he was trembling beneath the present feeling of God's power, he dared not obstinately resist any longer; he only sought a little breath-
ing time; now, being freed from fear, he returns to his former contumacy. But this is a sign of a perverse and crooked disposition, not to submit willingly, but to pay only a temporary deference, when necessity is more than usually urgent. God foreknew, and had foretold to Moses, that this perfidy was hidden in the recesses of his heart; but he was willing to bring it to light, and therefore remitted the punishment; and hence was the opportunity for dissembling.

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

17. And they did so: for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and in beast: all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

18. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man and upon beast.

19. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

16. **And the Lord said unto Moses**. In this place again, as before, Aaron is commanded to act as the inferior of Moses in punishing the tyrant; and this as being more ignominious than as if Moses alone had been employed. The nature of this third plague is very remarkable. God troubles Egypt not only with frogs, but with lice; for although the Hebrews are not entirely agreed as to the דדה kinin, yet they admit that they were little animals or insects, which produced shame together with annoyance even to the meanest of men. We see then how magnificently God trampled upon the pride of Egypt, by inflicting a punishment full of affront and disgrace; for although it would have been painful to sink under a powerful and warlike enemy, yet was it far more sad to be basely destroyed by lice. Nor can we doubt that God prepared such an army as this, principally that He might openly manifest how easily He can bring to nought in derision all earthly strength and power. And surely, unless the Egyptians had been something more than stupid and beside themselves, this calculation would have come into their minds: what would hereafter happen, if the Maker of heaven and earth should apply Himself to their destruction with all His might, when they perceived themselves to be wasted away in this almost ludicrous contest with Him? But let us learn from this history, that all creatures are ready at God's lightest command, whenever He chooses to make use of them to chastise His enemies; and again, that no animal is so vile and contemptible as not to have the power of doing injury when God employs it; and, finally, that reprobates obtain this at last by their proud doings, viz., that they are, with the greatest infamy, made to yield to the worms themselves, or to lice.

18. **And the magicians did so.** They did this, that they might try to do it; for they did not succeed, as presently appears. They are therefore said to have done, what they were vainly attempting, or what they essayed, but without success. And in this way God took away from Pharaoh whatever excuse remained, under pretext of being deceived; for although he had previously himself sought for these deceptions, still his obstinacy was not without colour of excuse, as long as the magicians rivalled Moses in the contention; but when he sees their art fail, he professedly sets himself in opposition to God. Although it was not with reference to him alone that God restrained these impostors, but He exposes them to the ridicule of all, in order to set forth of Pharaoh and his glory of perfect power. Hence we gather how well, according to His inestimable wisdom, He represses whatever license He for a time permits to the ministers of Satan; for when, by hearing with their audacity, He has sufficiently proved the faith of His people, He compels them to stop abruptly, as it were, that they may sink in confusion, and "proceed no further," as Paul says, when recounting this history. (2 Tim. iii. 9.)
come to a stop in their rivalry with the servants of God; therefore they excuse themselves by saying, that there is no more room for their wisdom and magical arts. We gather from hence that they had so often been able to delude by their sorceries, that they thought themselves very good and praiseworthy artificers of deception. For on no other account had the people accounted them wise than because they had themselves first attained this confidence; therefore they oppose the finger of God to their subtlety and skill, as much as to say, that there is no longer any question as to the excellence of their art, but that whatever could be required from astrologers and masters of juggling, was now brought to nought by the extraordinary power of God. They do indeed contradict themselves; because what could have been their object in contending with Moses and Aaron, except they had boasted that God was on their side? But if they had been acting under the auspices of God, how ridiculous was it to confess that those, whom they had before opposed, were their superiors, and to accord them the praise of the victory, because they were endued with power from God? We see then how infatuated they were with all their cunning. But in the meantime we must recollect what I have lately glanced at, that they not only led others into error, but were also deceived, because they thought there was some science in the deceptions of their magic; as nowadays we see that the fortune-tellers and other impostors, who call themselves judicial astrologers, so pride themselves in their follies, as to have no hesitation in taking the first rank amongst the learned. Besides, ambition itself impelled the magicians to say, that God wrought by the hand of Moses; for they were ashamed to confess that any human being excelled them in wisdom. But the confession was extorted from them, that they might greatly magnify the glory of the one true God, and at the same time bear witness to the legitimate vocation of Moses; for if the power of God is manifested conspicuously in Moses, it follows that he is a true and divine Prophet. But, because He does not equally work in them, but brings their efforts to confusion, it may thence be concluded that they are enemies of God.

That they should have contended unavailing, and have been foiled in the midst of their attempts, was sufficient to restrain their vanity; but this was much worse, that they should make out God to be the enemy of their art. It is true that they spoke this inconsiderately, because they only wished to consult their own fame, and to defend the false honors of their learning; but it pleased God thus to convict them, so that Pharaoh should perceive that he had entered into contention with the living God, and not with two ordinary men. As to the form of expression, it is clearly metaphorical; for in Luke’s Gospel the Spirit is called “the finger of God,” (Luke xi. 20;) as likewise, in many passages, the same Spirit is intended by “the hand of God.” Still, we must mark the reason, lest any unlearned person should take it literally, as if the Spirit, who truly is Eternal God, were but some portion of the Divinity. But since the magicians were compelled at length to recognize God’s power in the miracle, our folly will be worse than base if this same consideration does not obtain with us. Although it becomes us to acknowledge the hand of God in two ways; for neither when He acts by means, (as it is called,) does He detract from Himself at all; and, therefore, His hand may be seen with the eyes of faith in the whole course of nature; but, since He stirs up our indifference by miracles, therein it shines forth more conspicuously. Because, however, we shall soon see that the magicians did not therefore repent of their folly, let us learn sincerely and cordially to humble ourselves beneath God’s powerful hand, as soon as it appears. That Pharaoh, when deserted by the magicians, did not censure at all from his obstinacy, is a proof to us that, however wickedness may seek for its support in different directions, still the corruption is implanted within, which is of itself at enmity with God.

20. And the Lord said unto Mos- ses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, (to, he turre Pharaonis: Ecce egregius ad

1 In the Fr., there is the following addition: — “C’est dont selon notre infinité que la vertu essentielle de Dieu est appelée sa main ou son doigt,” it is then in reference to our infinitude that the essential virtue of God is called His hand, or His finger.
cometh forth to the water: and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

21. Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.

22. And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there: to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.

23. And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to-morrow shall this be so.

24. And the Lord did so: and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.

25. And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.

26. And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?

27. We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us.

20. And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early. As Pharaoh advances in daring rashness, so does God on the other hand proceed to restrain his impetuosity by opposing impediments. This is what the wicked at length obtain by long and multiplied contention, that having received many wounds they perish by various torments. With respect to the command that Moses should meet Pharaoh, when he shall go down in the morning to the river-side for his plea-

sure, it is uncertain whether God would have the tyrant encountered in public, because the palace was difficult of access; although it seems probable to me, that a place was chosen in which the proceeding would be more manifest, and where the voice of His messenger would be more clearly heard. Therefore, that nothing might be done secretly, Moses proclaims in open day, before the whole multitude, that judgment of God, which immediately afterwards took effect. But here no mention is made of the rod, as in the former plagues; because God sometimes makes use of external instruments, that we may know that all creatures are in His hand, and are wielded according to His will; but sometimes acts independently of them, that we may know that He needs no such assistance. This varied mode of action demonstrates that He subjects all things to His empire as He pleases, and yet that He is contented with His own power. This plague has some affinity to the two previous ones, inasmuch as its infliction is attended with ignominy, which may put the tyrant to shame. The Hebrew word כַּוָּה, ụnaru, means the same as the Latin "examen insectorum," a swarm of insects. Many interpreters think that there was a mixture of various kinds; and this I do not reject, since it is probable that their foul odour was multiplied, so as almost to suffocate the tyrant. Those who explain it as describing bears, lions, tigers, wolves, and other wild beasts, depart without any reason from the genuine meaning of the word.

22. And I will sever. Although this had not been expressly declared as yet, still it must be extended to the other plagues; for it is certain, that when God inflicted punishment on the Egyptians, He did not proceed promiscuously against all men; and, therefore, that His chosen people, in whose behalf He acted, were free from all inconvenience. But now perhaps for the first time this distinction is made

1 The root כַּוָּה, means commingling, and the producing of confusion thereby. Hence evening is called כַּוָּה, from the mingling together of day and night; and the same name is given to a mixed crowd; and possibly to a confused swarm of insects. The LXX. have taken it for the name of some particular kind of fly in this instance; whilst S. M. has mentioned certain Habbies, as affirming that it here means a mingled crowd of wild beasts.—W.
more evident to Pharaoh, whereas before the peculiar grace of God had not been known to him. From hence, however, it was more than plain, that mercies and punishments were in the power of the one God of Israel, so that He might spare His own people, and treat them kindly and paternal, whilst, on the other hand, He exercised vengeance against His enemies. Wherefore He adds, "to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord God in the midst of the earth." There is an implied antithesis here, which casts down all idols, and exalts the God of Israel alone. But although "the earth" may be here taken for the whole habitable globe, it will be properly confined to Egypt, as if God affirmed that He was supreme in the midst of Egypt, or everywhere throughout all Egypt, which means the same. The expression which follows, although somewhat harsh, yet contains no ambiguity. God is said to have "put a redemption between his people and the Egyptians;" because, as if He had erected barriers, or set up a fence to preserve one corner in safety, He had withheld His favour from the whole surrounding district. Moreover, because the word יִּתְנַכֶּה, phelo, signifies to be admirable, or to be concealed, some interpreters translate it, "I will render admirable the land of Goshen;" but I have preferred following the more usual rendering which appears to be most appropriate. Lastly, it is to be observed that time for repentance is again given to Pharaoh, so that, if he were curable, he might prevent the punishment denounced against him: for God might have sent the insets at the moment; but He assigns the morrow, to prove the wickedness of the tyrant.

25. And Pharaoh called for Moses. Pharaoh imagines that he is granting a great thing, if the Israelites are permitted to offer sacrifice to God in Egypt. He and all his people should have humbly embraced the worship of God, and casting away their superstitions should have sought to Moses as their instructor in sincere piety. He departs from none of their common vices; he does not renounce his idols nor forsake his former errors; but only permits God to be worshipped in one part of his kingdom. But this is customary with the reprobate, to think that they have sufficiently done their duty, when they yield ever so little to God. Hence it arises, that when they are conquered and compelled, still they would not hesitate to detract somewhat from the rights of God; nay, if they might do so with impunity, they would willingly rob Him of all. And in fact as long as fortune is propitious, and they enjoy a state of prosperity and safety, they deprive God, as much as may be, of all His glory; but when the power of resisting fails them, they so descend to submission as to deprive Him of half His due honour. God had commanded a free departure to be conceded to His people; Pharaoh does not obey this command, but endeavours to satisfy God in another way, viz., by not forbidding them to offer sacrifice in Egypt. This sin, which was common in all ages, is now-a-days too clearly manifest. Our Pharaohs would altogether extinguish God's glory, and this they madly set themselves to compass; but when reduced to extremities, if there be no further use in professedly contending with Him, they main and muddle His worship by a fictitious course, which they call a reformation. Hence arose that mixture of light and darkness, which was named "the Interim." Nor do the enemies of the truth cease to obtrude thus ridiculously upon God their empty and unreal expiations.

1. Verse 23, "And I will put a division," nary., "redemption."—A. V.
2. יִתְנַכֶּה, is to separate, to distinguish by marks of favour. יִתְנַכֶּה, to be wonderful, or inscrutable. The derivatives from these kindred roots are, however, not always, distinguishable; and in this instance S. M. and the V. have rendered יִתְנַכֶּה, as C. mentions, assuming it to be irregularly formed from יִתְנַכַּה.—W.
3. French, "miraculeuse."
26. And Moses said. The word "הנֹחַ," kón, which Moses here uses, has a wide signification; for the Hebrews say of whatever they do not approve, that it is not right (rectum.) Therefore almost all the interpreters agree in this, that Pharaoh demanded what was by no means equitable, because he would have exposed the Israelites to be stoned by his people. If this opinion be admitted, we must read the passage connectedly, that it was not in accordance with reason, that the Israelites should sacrifice in Egypt in a strange manner, because the novelty would not be tolerated. There are two clauses in the sentence; one, that it was not right for them to offer in Egypt a sacrifice to God, which was abominable to the inhabitants themselves, or to offer a profane sacrifice of the abominations of the heathen; the other, that there was a danger of the Israelites being stoned, if they provoked the Egyptians by a ceremony, which was detestable to them. As to the second clause, there is no doubt that “the abomination of the Egyptians” is taken actively for the sacrifices which they abominate. The same seems to be the meaning of the first clause; for it would be harsh to interpret the same forms of expression differently within a few words of each other; except that the name of Jehovah, put in opposition as it is to “the abomination,” seems to require a passive signification. For Moses says emphatically, that “it is not right to sacrifice the abomination of Egypt to Jehovah the God of Israel.” If this view be adopted, “the abomination” will be the profanation of true and pure worship, wherewith the sacred ceremonies of the Egyptians were defiled; as much as to say, that it was unlawful to mix up the worship of the true God with such sacrilege. And, in fact, Moses seems to contend with a twofold argument; first, that it was not right, secondly, that it was not expedient. Take this, then, as the first reason, that a sacrifice which should be polluted by the abominations of Egypt, would neither be lawful nor pleasing to God; the second will follow after, that the Egyptians would not tolerate it; because they would conceive both themselves and their gods to be grievously insulted, if their accustomed mode of sacrificing should be violated. This interpretation is fuller, and contains fuller doctrine, if Moses, first of all, was solicitous as to the honour of God, and did not regard the advantage of the people only; and in this sentiment, that the true God could not be duly worshipped unless when separated from all idols, there is nothing forced. But, since in the same verse “the abomination of the Egyptians” is taken actively, it will be well, in order that the construction may be more easy, to expound it thus in both places. Then the sense of the first clause will be, it is not consistent to expose the worship of our God to the reproaches and sneers of the Gentiles; which would be the case, if the Egyptians should see us honouring a sacrificial ceremony which they abominate. I do not, indeed, assent to their opinion, who will not admit the passage to consist of two clauses, but read it connectedly thus—that it was not right to do this, because the Egyptians would stone the Israelites. For Moses not only had regard to what was best for the people, but primarily to what would please God, viz, that His holy name should not be profaned. I see no foundation in reason for restraining, as is usually done, the word “abomination” to the animals of sacrifice; and, therefore, I extend it to the whole operation of sacrificing.¹

27. We will go three days’ journey. This is the conclusion that no change must be made in God’s command, but that His injunction must be obeyed simply, and without exception. Nor is there little praise due to the firmness of Moses, who so boldly and unreservedly rejected the pretended moderation of the tyrant, because it would have somewhat interfered with the will of God. He therefore declares that the Israelites would do no otherwise than as God had prescribed.

28. And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away; entreat for me. 28. Tune dixit Pharaoh, Ego dimittam vos ut sacrificetis Jehovah Deo vestro; veruntamen non longius pergetis eundo: orate pro me.

¹ C. adopts the translation of S. M., instead of that found in the V., and gives his readers the short note of S. M., “Non convenit, sive non est rectum.”—W.
29. And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow; but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.  
30. And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord.  
31. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people: there remained not one.  
32. And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.  

30. Tunc egressus est Moses a Pharaone, et oravit ad Jehovam.  
32. Et aggravavit Pharaon cor suum etiam haec vice, nec dimissit populum.  

Although he was silent as to what he was not ordered to declare, even as to that which God wished to be concealed from the tyrant. But the holy Prophet, aroused to pious indignation by the king's perfidy, does not immediately remove the plague, but waits till the morrow; and moreover, denounces with severity that, if he should persist in deceit, its punishment awaited him. This great magnanimity he had derived from the miracles, for, having experienced in them the unconquerable power of God, he had no cause for fear. For it was an act of extraordinary boldness openly and before the tyrant's face to reproach him for falsehoods, and at the same time to threaten him with punishment unless he desisted from them. But we said before that Moses had not acted from the workings of his own mind, when he promised Pharaoh what he asked, but that he had spoken thus confidently from special impulse. For the general promise in which God affirms that He will grant the prayers of His servants, must not be applied to particular cases, so that they should expect to obtain this or that in a specified manner, unless they have some peculiar testimony from the word or the Spirit of God.  

31. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses. "The word" here may be expounded either of the answer, or the prayer, of Moses. The former pleaseth me best, viz., that by the result God proved that He ratified what Moses had said, whom He had made the proclaimer of His judgment; but if any one prefer to refer it to his prayer, let him retain his opinion. When he adds that the "heart of the king was hardened at this time also," he aggravates the crime of his obstinacy, since there was no bound to his rebellion under such a series of punishments, by which even an iron heart should have been corrected.  

CHAPTER NINTH.  

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

7. **And Pharaoh sent, and said, why is this done unto thee and to me?**

1. **Then the Lord said, No complaint or expostulation of Moses is here recounted; and it is possible that he was quiet and silent, whilst God foresaw what it was necessary to do, and even commanded what He would have done. But since he only gives a brief summary of occurrences, we may probably conjecture that, as the evil grew worse, he had recourse from time to time to the remedy. In the denunciation, “the Lord God of the Hebrews” is no unmeaning repetition, that Pharaoh may learn that He, whom he thought to have repelled in the abundance of his pride, was still in the field against him. For God insults his ferocity, and by setting forth his name contemptuously defies his wrath. We have already said that Pharaoh is convicted of sacrilege, both in his oppression of God’s people and in defrauding God Himself of His due honour; therefore those words, “Let my people go, that they may serve me,” have the force of aggravating his sin.**

2. **But if thou refuse.** God again urges him to obedience through fear of punishment, as He usually deals with the forward. Yet He permits him a short space of time for re-

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**footnotes:***

1. See Lev. xxxvi. 18, 21, 24, 28.
2. Lat., “se habet locutio.” Fr., “s‘entend que par ci par là il y eut grande descomitute”; it means that on every side there was great destruction.
to this plague having been a remarkable proof of God's anger, because the pestilence did not only kill a few animals, as it usually does, but made havoc far and wide of a vast number of herds and flocks.

7. And Pharaoh sent. I leave it undecided, whether he then first sent these inspectors; it may be, that, in the blindness of his obstinacy he neglected this, until he was reminded by Moses; for we know how the reprobate shut their eyes against the manifest marks of God's wrath, and wilfully indulge in their errors. Certainly there is no doubt that Pharaoh, whilst he seeks to harden himself in every way, deliberately passed over what it was very useful for him to know; but, since he was informed by Moses of the distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites, he is compelled, whether he will or no, to ascertain from actual inspection, what he would have gladly been in ignorance of. But this was no obscure demonstration of God's paternal favour towards His chosen people; that the contagion should not have affected that part of Egypt which was fullest of cattle, though it ravaged the whole surrounding neighbourhood. Wherefore, the hardness of the king's wicked heart was all the more base and marvellous, since he was not moved even by this extraordinary circumstance; for it was a token of horrible folly, that, when the matter was examined and discovered by his underlings, he still hardened his heart and would not obey God.

8. And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron. Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

9. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

10. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast.

8. Tune dixit Jehovah ad Mosen et ad Aharon, Tollite volub vosin, pugilios vestros favillum fornasinos, et sparagat illam Mosei per colunm vel, per aerem, coram Pharaone.


10. Tulerunt ergo favillum fornasinos, et stipserunt coram Pharaone: et sparagis illam Mosei per colum, vel, per aerem. Et fuit ilesus tumo-

14 It is asked, why he did not do so before? Resp. Because either, first, The roads were impassable on account of the frogs, lice, & c., or secondly, It did not previously occur to him.—Menochius in Pol. Syn.

ing forth with blains upon man and upon beast.

11. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

12. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had spoken unto Moses.

8. And the Lord said unto Moses. God does not now postpone the time of the punishment, but redoubles the plagues in a continuous series; nor does He threaten Pharaoh, but, leaving him, executes the judgment which He decreed; both because it was now more than sufficiently manifested that admonitions were of no avail with him, and also that his desperate wickedness might be reprov ed in every way. For although I have lately said that all which happened is not fully related, still the narrative of Moses rather leads us to infer, that nothing about the boils was previously told to Pharaoh, but that the ashes were sprinkled, when he had no suspicion of anything of the kind. But it did not happen naturally that the heaven was darkened by the dust, and that the disease arose from thence; for how could a few ashes cover the whole air? But by this visible sign the tyrant was taught that the calamity which ensued was inflicted by Moses and Aaron. Moreover, God invested His servants with high and

ren produces in homine et in bestia.

11. Et non poterant magi stare coram Mose propter ulcus: quia fuit ulcus in magis ut in omnibus Aegyptiis.

And the magicians could not. Since the magicians were now also at hand, doubtless they were possessed by their former folly, so that they stood in readiness, as it were, in case an opportunity of contention should be offered them. And, in fact, since Satan, although ten times conquered, is still perpetually hurried forward with indefatigable obstinacy, so neither do his ministers desist from their madness, notwithstanding they have experienced how unsuccessful are their battles. These enchanters had lately confessed that their art availed no farther, and yet they embolden themselves to try all extremities, until the disease of the boils drives them back in disgrace. Wherefore, that we may not betray our madness by similar audacity, let us learn to give God His full glory by voluntary submission. But that Pharaoh, when not only deprived of their assistance, but even when abandoned, and without their presence, is neither changed nor softened, proves that he was not so much deceived by the impostures of others, as stupefied by his own malice and perversity; although Moses here repeats that "his heart was hardened by God," because He desired, as if by an opposing barrier, to have an opportunity for manifesting His power. And here their ignorance is refuted, who imagine that God is endowed with mere presence; for when "the Lord has spoken" is added, He attributes both in conjunction to Himself, viz., the effect as well as the foreknowledge. On this point we shall enlarge a little further on; yet let us remark that at the same time the tyrant was not absolved from crime, for that his hardness of heart was voluntary. The plagues which were epidemic on the cattle, are a proof that they did not all die in the former catastrophe.

1 D'y faire leurs efforts.—Fr.
24. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

25. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.

26. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.

13. And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up. God returns again to threats, to try the mind of the wicked king; not that there is any hope of a cure, but that his obstinacy may be more and more discovered. For it was desirable as an example, that it should be known openly how madly those, who are cast into a reprobate state of feeling, and who are possessed by a spirit of wilfulness, rush upon their own destruction. Surely it would be incredible, that any human being should have ever resisted God with such headstrong folly and obstinacy, unless this picture had been presented to us. How often was Pharaoh commanded to send the people away, and on every occasion a ratification of the command was added! So that God no less thundered from heaven than He spoke on earth by the mouth of His servant and ambassador; yet still the mind of the tyrant was not subdued into obedience, because Satan alienates the minds of those, whom by God’s permission he holds in devotion, and bondage, to himself. Meanwhile, they heap up more terrible vengeance against themselves by their impious contempt of warnings.

14. For I will at this time. The unexpressed condition is implied, “unless he should submit himself to God.” The meaning is, that although he had already chastised his pride, yet that this had been done gently and in moderation; but that He now would use a heavier scourge, since the lighter rods had been unavailing. Thus his ingratitude is reproved, because he had not acknowledged that he had been spared,

in order that, having suffered only some trifling losses, he might return to his right mind. Wherefore, because God had proceeded gradually with his punishments, He now threatens that He will inflict many on him at once; as He is wont to act with the rebellious. On which account also David exhorts us not to be “as the horse and mule—whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle when they are restive,” (Ps. xxxii. 9) whence he concludes, that “many sorrows shall be to the wicked” and rebellious. But Moses here denounces plagues, which shall not only affect the head and arms, but which shall reach to the heart itself, and inflict a deadly wound in his very bowels; for Pharaoh was so obstinate that it was not enough to batter his sides. In fine, he is enjoined to make haste and provide against the awful judgment which impended, unless he chose rather to perish with all his (servants.) The expression, “all my plagues,” embraces whatever chastisement we shall hereafter see inflicted on him; and therefore the word, מְדָעָה, dever, designates every kind of death; as much as to say, that He would heap punishment upon punishment, until He had destroyed the tyrant together with his whole nation. What is afterwards added, “that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth,” implies that Pharaoh had hitherto struggled against Him, because he had never really and seriously apprehended the extent of the divine power; for wherever it is really felt, it is impossible but that pride must be humbled before it. And, doubtless, the reprobate, although in some measure they recognise the power of God, still rush on with a kind of frenzied impulse, and their wickedness is combined with blindness of heart, so that seeing, they do not see. Meantime we are reminded, that the reprobate only gain this by their stupidity, that God should proceed against them with all His forces, and drag and compel them against their will to understand His power, from which they fly. But that he may expect no longer truce, God affirms in the next verse that He is advancing with an outstretched hand. For God is not here commending His patience in the slowness of His procedure, as some prefer to

1 The French Version supplies “avec menaces;” with threatenings.
explain it; but He rather admonishes him that the execution was nigh at hand, since He had armed Himself, and prepared His forces before He had spoken a word.

16. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up.

The word, נִקְרָא, hagonnedeth, is variously explained; it properly signifies "to appoint;" some, therefore, refer it to his eminent position, as if God had placed Pharaoh on the throne, for the purpose of better manifesting His glory. The Greek interpreter extends the meaning, translating it ἐφάντασεν αὐτόν, "I have stirred thee up," as much as to say, that Pharaoh had been chosen by the secret counsel and providence of God that His power might be exercised upon him; as He is constantly said to stir up those whom He brings forward, to apply them to those objects for which He has destined them. Others think that this sentence depends on what has gone before, and interpret it "I have preserved thee," or "chosen that thou shouldst survive." For the Hebrew verb, which is transitive in Hiphil, is derived from נָנָה, gnomad, which means "to stand up." Since, therefore, God had restrained Himself, He now assigns the cause of His moderation, because if Pharaoh had fallen in one trifling engagement, the glory of His victory would have been less illustrious. In fine, lest Pharaoh should flatter himself, or harden himself by vain confidence, God affirms that He does not want strength to destroy him immediately, but that He had delayed his ultimate punishment for another purpose, viz., that Pharaoh might slowly learn that he strove in vain against His incomparable power; and that thus this remarkable history should be celebrated in all ages. But although Paul follows the Greek interpreter, there is no reason why we should not embrace this latter sense; for we know that the Apostles were not so particular in quoting the words, but that they rather considered the substance. But,

1 The Greek interpreter we should generally understand the LXX. to be meant, but it has ἐφάντασεν, which is obviously a less close rendering than ἐφάντασεν αὐτόν, the version adopted by Paul. As the root נָנָה, means to stand up, it is perfectly regular that the Hiphil, or causal perfecto, I have made thee to stand up, should be held equivalent to I have raised thee up, as in our A.V. S.M., I have preserved thee.—W.


although we admit that by God's long-suffering Pharaoh continued to hold out, until he became a clear and notorious proof of the madness and folly of all those who resist God, yet this also has reference to the eternal prescience of God; for therefore did God spare Pharaoh to stand for a time, because, before he was born, he had been predestinated for this purpose. Wherefore, also, Paul rightly concludes, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth." (Rom. ix. 16.) For whether God raises up or upholds the reprobate, He wonderfully manifests His glory by their perverseness. Thus is their ignorance refuted, who, by this cail, endeavour to overturn the eternal predestination of God; because it is not said, that He created Pharaoh with this intention, but that He suspended His judgment for a time. For this intermediate and progressive course of proceeding arose from this source, that Pharaoh was the organ or instrument of God's wrath.

17. As yet exalteth thou thyself. The expression which Moses uses' denotes the pride of Pharaoh; because he too insolently exalted himself by trampling on the people. God therefore inquires, as if in astonished, what this blinded fury meant, that the tyrant should hope that the injuries whereby he undeservedly afflicted God's people, would be permitted with impunity? For he was already taught, by many miracles, that God had, as their protector, undertaken the cause of His people, so that He would be the avenger of all their unjust treatment. At the same time He ironically reproves the tyrant's folly, in that he was not humbled by so many chastisements; as if He had said, that although, when intoxicated by prosperity, he might have raged against the wretched people with tyrannical and persevering arbitrariness, yet, after undergoing so many plagues, it was surely time to cease.

18. Behold, to-morrow about this time. God now indicates the kind of punishment which He was prepared to inflict, viz., that He would smite with hail both man and beast, and a

1 יָנֹבֹשׁ. Part. Hithp. Raising up thyself like a rampart. C. found in S. M. that Kimchi had followed Aben-Ezra in interpreting the root נָנָה, to Kimchi, a meaning not acknowledged by recent Lexicographers. —W.
part of the crops. It sometimes, indeed, happens that the corn is destroyed by hail, and occasionally that great injury is thus inflicted even on men and beasts; nay, it is regarded as an unusual blessing if ten or fifteen years pass by without such a calamity. But God makes it apparent by certain signs in the judgment, which he has determined to execute, that the hail did not arise from natural causes, but that the atmosphere was manifestly armed by Him for the battle. First, the morrow is fixed; nor is this enough, the hour also is added. But what astronomer or philosopher could thus measure the moments for storms and tempests? Then, again, its unusual violence, such as had never been seen before, is appointed. Fourthly, its extent, from the extreme boundaries of Egypt, from the one side to the other, as well as its expansion over its whole breadth. Scarcely once in twenty years will a storm so widely prevail, flying, as this did, like an arrow; but, restrained within narrow limits, it will not thus diffuse itself far and wide. Lastly, the distinction is added between Goshen and the rest of Egypt. Hence it is plain, that this hail was not produced by an accidental impulse, but made to fall by God’s hand; in a word, that it was not the drops of moisture frozen in mid air, but a portent which transcended the bounds of nature.

19. Send therefore now. He does not give this counsel as if He would spare His professed enemy, but He insists his mad confidence, because hitherto in supine security he had despised whatever punishments had been denounced against him. He indirectly hints, therefore, that now is the time for fear. Secondly, that when God contends, the event is not a doubtful one; because He not only openly challenges him to the combat, but assures him that He shall have no difficulty in putting him to the rout. Finally, He shews him, that He has no need of deceit, or of any stratagems to overtake His enemy, but that, although He grants him a way of escape, still He should be victorious.

20. He that feared the word of the Lord. In these words Moses shews that there were some who were so far taught by experience as not altogether to despise what he had denounced; for hence arose their fear from the denunciation of the punishment, because they were persuaded that Moses was the servant of God, and a Prophet, as well as the herald of the Divine judgment. Although it likewise appears that they had not seriously repented so as to obey God, but were impelled to take these precautions by immediate and momentary terror. Thus, particular fear often makes the reprobate anxious either to deprecate or fly from the vengeance of God. Still Moses says, that their fear profited them, for they did not experience the same calamity as others, who were more insensible. In this way God bore witness, that in proportion as each one more obstinately despises His judgments, the more grievously and heavily is he afflicted; but that some unbelievers are in some degree spared from inconveniences, and more gently chastised, because they at least do not proudly exalt themselves to despise His power. Moreover, by this destruction the judgment of God more clearly shone forth, when among the Egyptians themselves, whosoever was most hardened received the sure reward of his contempt. Yet are we taught by this example, that it does not greatly profit unbelievers, though God may pardon them for a while when they are alarmed and humbled; because they ever remain under condemnation to eternal death.

22. And the Lord said. The rod of Moses is again employed to bring on the storm, not so much for Pharaoh’s sake, as that Moses may be the more encouraged to the remaining contests, when he sees the proof of his vocation renewed. In the meanwhile, we may observe the trial of his faith, since before he had received the command to stretch forth his rod toward heaven, he had not hesitated to predict to Pharaoh the grievous and miraculous hail. But if any one thinks that this is an ἄρεστος προέρροι, and that what was first in order of time is related last, I will not debate it; but this seems more probable to me, and also to be rightly gathered from the text, that when the day had elapsed, Moses was commanded to execute that of which the means was before unknown to him. Hence, also, both Moses himself learnt, and we also ought now to learn, that all the elements, although without sense, are still ready to render any kind of
obedience to their Maker; since, at the stretching forth of the rod the air was troubled in an incredible manner, so that it hurled down an abundance of hail for the destruction of beasts and men.

27. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.

28. Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.

29. And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's.

30. But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not fear the Lord God.

31. And the flax and the barley were smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was boiled.

32. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten; for they were not grown up.

33. And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the Lord; and the thunderings and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.

34. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain was not, neither the hail, neither the thunderings were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

35. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the Lord had spoken by Moses.

27. And Pharaoh sent and called. If this confession had proceeded from the heart, it would have betokened repentance; but Moses immediately perceived that fear in the heart of the wicked is not a principle which governs them in lasting duty; and this was more manifest in the result.

1 Et n'est maitresse que pour une minute; and is only their mistress for a minute.—Fr.
hypocrites are always double-hearted;) yet it is certain,
that because he was terrified by his troubles, he sought for
peace with God, lest his rebellion should draw down upon
him new and greater punishments; but as soon as, having
obtained his desire, he ceased to be afraid, the secret wicked-
ness which lay, as it were, stifled under the abundance of
his miseries, burst forth out of the sense of security. What
immediately follows is variously explained by the tran-
sators; some understand it negatively, "that there be not,"
or "if there be not—thunderings;" and even these disagree
among themselves; for some suppose that Pharaoh congratu-
lates himself, because the thunders have ceased; but it is
plain from the context that they are grossly mistaken. If,
then, a negation is intended, the passage must necessarily
refer to the future; as if Pharaoh had said, that he should
be very graciously dealt with, if God should please to allay
the thunderings. But the various reading is equally proba-
bile; "It is much, or a great thing, that there are, or have
been thunderings;" as though he said, that he had been
punished enough, or more than enough for his folly; or
(as best pleases myself) that he is now subdued by terror,
whilst he is alarmed by the continual rollings of the thunder
and the beating of the hail; for he seems to desire to prove
the truth of his conversion, because he is conquered by the
terrible power of God.

29. And Moses said. In this answer Moses indirectly
hints, that he leaves the presence of Pharaoh, in order duly
and purely to supplicate God; since by his unbelief he would
in a manner pollute the sacrifices. For, as he had already
shewn, that legitimate worship could not be offered by the
people except away from Egypt, so now he seeks to be alone
for prayer; and thus, by this change of place, he indicates
that the place, in which Pharaoh dwells, is unholy. We have
already said, that Moses promises nothing out of mere rash

impulse, but that, taught either by the inspiration of the
Spirit, or by sure revelation, he pronounces, with the author-
ity of a prophet, what God is about to do. Moreover, it is
not without reason that Moses exhorts Pharaoh to learn from
the remission of the punishment, that the God of Israel is
the Lord of Egypt also; for the word earth seems here to be
limited to Egypt; although I do not deny that it may be
properly understood of the whole world; but, whichever you
may prefer, Moses rightly concludes, that the glory and
dominion of God is perfectly manifested, not only when he
appears as an avenger in the infliction of punishment, but
that He also shows it in an opposite way, when all the ele-
ments are subservient to His mercy. Besides, His power is
still more clearly shown forth, when He himself heals the
wounds which He has inflicted; and, therefore, in Isaiah
xli. 23, and xlv. 7, in order to prove His divinity, He joins
the two together, viz., that it is His prerogative and attribu-
to both "do good, or to do evil."

30. But as for thee and thy servants, I know. Such free-
edom of reproof plainly proves with what magnanimity the
holy Prophet was endued, who, without taking any account
of the wrath of the imperious and cruel tyrant, does not hesi-
tate to condemn the impiety of himself and his whole court.
Nor can it indeed be questioned, that God miraculously re-
strained so many wild beasts to keep their hands off Moses;
for it cannot be attributed either to their moderation or
humanity, that men, otherwise worse than bloody-minded,
did not kill him a hundred times over, when he so bitterly
provoked them. But, from his firmness, it also appears how
much he had profited by his novitiate; because he, who had
before fled far for refuge in fear of their darts, now has no
alarm in the hottest conflict. But he justly affirms that the
Egyptians do not "fear the Lord," because alarm and terror
do not always lead the mind to reverence and due obedience.
For Moses speaks of true fear, which altogether attaches us
to God, wherefore it is called "wisdom," and "the beginning
of wisdom." (Prov. i. 7, and Ps. cxi. 10.) But hypocrites,
although they fear the name of God, are very far from will-

1 Tyrocinio.—Lat. Apprentissage.—Fr.
ingly desiring to serve Him. Wherefore, lest we be deceived
by empty imaginations, let us learn honestly to sift all our
feelings; and diligently to examine into all those winding
recesses, wherewith human hearts are filled and incredibly
tangled. A question arises, why Moses undertook the
part of an intercessor, when he sees no repentance? My re-
ply is, that he was not thus ready to spare, as if he had been
persuaded; but that he gave a short intermission, until the
king’s impiety should again betray itself, and thus God
should fulfill what he had predicted respecting all the plagues.
It is, then, absurd to gather, as some do, from this passage,
that ministers of the word and pastors should be satisfied
with a mere verbal confession; for Moses did not so much
intend to pardon as to open a way for the remaining judg-
ments of God.

31. And the flax and the barley. He relates the calamity
which the hail inflicted; and shews that a part of the fruits
of the earth was destroyed, viz., that which had already
grown into stalk; but that the seeds which grew more slowly
were spared. For God desired to give a remnant of hope,
which might invite the king and his people to repentance,
if only their wickedness were curable.

34. And when Pharaoh saw. Again, as usual, Pharaoh
gathers audacity from the mitigation of his punishment, as
security arms the reprobate against God; for as soon as the
scourges of God rest for awhile, they cherish the presumption
that they will be unpunished, and contrive the short
truce into an abiding peace. Pharaoh, then, hardens anew
his heart, which he seemed to have somewhat changed, as
soon as he is delivered from this inflection; as though he had
not been warned that others remained behind, nay, that the
hand of God was already stretched out against him. There-
fore, at the end of the chapter, Moses amplifies the crime
when he adds, that this had been foretold 2 “by the hand of
Moses.” We have sometimes seen already that the wicked
king was hardened, as God had said to Moses; now, more is
expressed, viz., that Moses had been the proclaimer of his in-
domitable and desperate obstinacy.

1 Arrières boutiques.—Fr.  4 Ver. 35, A. V., marg. ref.
He had hardened his heart, in order that he might shew forth these miracles and evidences of His power; for if Pharaoh had been humbled, and had yielded immediately, the contest would have been superfluous; since what would be the object of contending with a conquered and prostrate enemy? The obstinacy of the tyrant, then, in so often provoking God, opened the way to more miracles, as fire is produced by the collision of flint and iron. Thence also the silly imagination is refuted, that the heart of Pharaoh was no otherwise hardened than as the miracles were set before his eyes; for Moses does not say that his heart was divinely hardened by the sight of the signs, but that it pleased God in this manner to manifest His power. Hence also we gather, that whatever occurred was predestinated by the sure counsel of God. For God willed to redeem His people in a singular and unusual way. That this redemption might be more conspicuous and glorious, He set up Pharaoh against Himself like a rock of stone, which by its hardness might afford a cause for new and more remarkable miracles. Pharaoh was, therefore, hardened by the marvellous providence of God with this object, that the grace of His deliverance might be neither despisable nor obscure. For God regarded His own people more than the Egyptians, as immediately appears, “that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son’s son,” &c. For far more abundant material for thanksgiving and for celebrating the memory of their deliverance was afforded, by the fact of the Israelites having seen God’s arm stretched forth so often from heaven, and with so many prodigies. Had they been redeemed by any ordinary method, the praise due to God would soon have been forgotten. It was proper, then, that their posterity should be thus instructed by their fathers, that they might have no doubts as to the author of so illustrious a work. But it is here required of the fathers, who had been eye-witnesses of the signs, that they should be diligent and assiduous in teaching their children; and on these also, care and attention in learning is enjoined, that the recollection of God’s mercies should flourish throughout all ages. The practical effect of this doctrine is seen in Psalms xlii. and cv.

3. And Moses and Aaron came in. Moses now relates how, at God’s command, he tried whether Pharaoh’s heart, after so many experiments, would be bent to obedience out of fear of the new punishment which impended. But by this proof his impiety was better known, since, although he saw his kingdom deprived of a part of its corn, he fears not what is denounced by Moses respecting the other part. Therefore he reproves him still more severely, inquiring, “How long wilt thou proudly resist the command of God? For since plagues vanquish even the worst natures, it was marvellous that the king, having been smitten eight times, and in so awful a manner, was still unwilling to yield, as if he were in safety, and unaffected by any injury. But we may learn from this passage, that we are chastised with this object by the rod of God, that we may return from the indulgence of our lusts to submission to Him. This Moses calls (and Peter after him, 1 Pet. v. 6) to “humble” ourselves before God, or “beneath His mighty hand,” when, having experienced His formidable power, we reverently submit ourselves to His dominion. Whence it follows, that they, who are neither tamed nor bent by the fear of punishment, struggle against God as with an iron brow. Let fear, then, teach us to repent; and that we may not provoke His vengeance by proud contempt, let us learn that nothing is more terrible than to fall into His hands. Moses also hints that Pharaoh’s contention was not with the Israelites only, but with God who undertook their cause. And let us not doubt, therefore, that all tyrants, who unjustly persecute the Church, contend with God Himself, to whose powers they will find themselves far inferior.

4. Else, if thou refuse. Moses denounces the extreme dearth and famine of the land of Egypt, because the locusts will suddenly arise, altogether to consume the remaining produce of the year; for half of it had already been destroyed by the hail. But, although ancient histories bear witness, and it has happened also in our time, that not only cornfields, but that pastures have been devoured by locusts, still we may gather from the circumstances, that this was an ex-
triaordinary instance of the divine vengeance; because Moses both appoints the next day, and also relates that an incredible multitude suddenly burst forth, and adds, that such had never been seen; and, lastly, threatens that no house should be exempt from their invasion. Moreover, it is worth while again to remark the nature of the scourge, that God collects and arms a host of vile insects, whereby He may insinuatingly overcome this indomitable tyrant with all his forces. The ingratitude of Egypt, too, was worthy of this return, since it was too great an indignity that the posterity of Joseph should be tyrannically persecuted in that country, which a little more than 250 years before he had preserved from famine by his energy. What follows in verse 6, that “he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh,” is recorded as a token of his indignation; as though Moses, worn out with the perverseness of the tyrant, had hastily withdrawn himself from him, without bidding him farewell. Therefore, although he was otherwise of a mild disposition, this peremptory harshness was to be adopted as a reproof of the arrogance with which the tyrant spurned heaven’s face. But, let the Pharaohs of our age also learn, that when they impede by their cruel menaces the pure worship of God, it is in His strict justice that fanatics, like locusts, assail their kingdoms with their impious errors, and infect their people with contagion.

7. And Pharaoh’s servants said unto him. How long shall this man be a bane unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? 8. And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the Lord your God: but who are they that shall go? 9. And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go: for we must keep a feast unto the Lord. 10. And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. 11. Not so: go ye now that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence.

7. And Pharaoh’s servants said unto him. We have seen, a little above, that they were obstinate in common with their king; nor can it be doubted that by their servile flattery they had blinded him more and more; but now, conquered by their calamities, and fearing something still worse, they seek to mitigate his fury,—not because they had themselves returned to their senses, but because they feel that they are overcome by the hand of God, and that strength to resist had failed them. They say, therefore, that Moses, until he should be dismissed, would be a constant source of evil to them. Whether you translate the word בְּנֵיהוֹם, bnei-vehom, a snare or a stumbling-block, is of little consequence, because it is taken metaphorically for every kind of misfortune or injury. They signify, then, that no end of their troubles was to be expected so long as Pharaoh shall contend with Moses; for that evils would follow upon evils. By the question “how long?” they admonish him that his pertinacity had already been more injurious than enough; and thence they conclude that there is nothing better to be done than, by the expulsion of Moses, to free himself from the snare, or to avoid the stumbling-block, since he could only fight unsuccessfully. As to the second part of the verse, interpreters differ. The Chaldee Paraphrast translates it with the introduction of a negative,—“Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?” Word for word it is, “whether to know before,” or “before to that know.” But because the infinitive is sometimes taken for the future, thus does it seem to accord very well with the sense—“Do you wish to know the destruction of the whole kingdom before you

1 בְּנֵיהוֹם. The root of this word makes it obvious that its proper meaning is a snare. The word offendiculum mentioned by C., he found in S. M.; but the LXX. and V. have also rendered it a stumbling-block.

As to the latter part of this verse, C. appears to have given too hasty a glance at S. M.’s notes. Neither the Hebrew nor the Chaldee Paraphrast has used the infinitive. S. M. has ceased to speak of Onkelos, when he proceeds to say, Alius vertunt, visere prius experiri?—W.
desist from your unhappy contention?” as if they had said, that unless God should avert His anger, the remedy would be soon too late and useless.

8. And Moses and Aaron were brought again. It is probable that, when the wrath of the king was appeased, some of the company were hastily despatched to bring back Moses in that same hour, lest the calamity denounced by him should happen on the morrow. For we may gather from the king’s words that he was not altogether overcome by their entreaties; but that, because he was unwilling to offend all their minds by an abrupt refusal, he suffered Moses to be recalled, that he might delude them by an underhand artifice; since thus do tyrants escape unpopularity by the false appearance of consent.2 But he returns to his former purpose, when seeking to compound with God by an intermediate course he wishes to secure to himself the people’s return. It appears indeed that he was himself also frightened, and sought some way to propitiate God; meanwhile, as if it were free for him to make conditions, he proposes such as would be advantageous to himself; as hypocrites are wont so to treat with God, as if He were compelled to abandon half His rights. But although he cunningly inquires, as if the point were doubtful,2 still his suspicion is easily discovered. Therefore, what he knows to be enjoined him respecting all, he restricts to a few, and yet pretends that he accords what is right and what ought to satisfy God. But although Moses, in his answer, abundantly cuts off all pretext for subterfuge, and does not flatter him with any prevarication or ambiguity, still he suppresses God’s counsel respecting the deliverance of the people—not because he wishes to deceive or to lie, but that he may confine himself within the bounds of his commission. And lest it might be objected that in this way the Israelites would be withdrawn from their legitimate government, he does not dissemble that, being adopted by God, they were under the dominion of none other. God therefore openly asks again His own who has once

1 “A fausses enseignes,” under false colours.—Fr.
2 Addition in Fr., “quelle partie du peuple deurs aller;” what part of the people was to go.

attached to Himself. Nor must He be thought to have dealt fraudulently with the tyrant, although He conceals His counsel from him. He says that the Israelites must take their flocks and their herds with them, that the victims which they should offer to God may be at hand. As to their “sons and their daughters,” he insinuates that the feast day must be kept by the very least of them, because God had devoted them all to Himself for the services of piety.

10. Let the Lord be so with you. I am surprised that this passage, so clear in itself, should be violently wrested by the interpreters.1 Some thus expound it,— “I would that God may not otherwise favour you, than as I am determined to let you go;” while others think that it was spoken deceitfully, as though he had commended them to God after their departure. I will not adduce the opinions of all, nor is it necessary. I have no doubt that it was an ironical sneer, whereby he insults, at the same time, both God and them; as if he had said, “You boast that God is on your side; experience will prove this, if I shall let you go.” Thus, then, establishing himself as the supreme judge as to their departure, and claiming to himself the power of forbidding and preventing them from going, he derides their confidence, because, in demanding their free dismissal, they profess to do so under the auspices and by the command of God; just as if he had said, “If I do not hinder you, then you may reasonably pretend that Jehovah is the guide of your journey.” In this way he wantonly provokes God, and denies that He is able so to aid His people as to prevent his own power from prevailing to resist Him. Thus the reprobate, after having been troubled in themselves, sometimes burst forth with ravings of contempt against God, as if they were well secured from all dangers, and counting for nothing the aid which God has promised to give to His own people, fearlessly ridicule the simplicity of their faith.

Again, in the second clause of the verse, many, as it appears to me, raise unnecessary difficulties. Some gather
from it this sense,—"The evil which you are planning shall happen to yourselves, and shall be turned against your own faces." Others think that it is a comparison taken from a target, because the Israelites were looking steadfastly at nothing but ill-doing. But I do not doubt that Pharaoh, after having set his tyrannical prohibitions in array against God, now threatens them, to inspire them with terror. He says, therefore, that evil awaits the Israelites, and is, as it were, held up before their eyes, because they are about to suffer the penalty of their rashness. Thus he signifies that the help of God, in which they confide for protection, is either evanescent or will profit them nothing. But when he says, "Look to it," he indirectly taunts them; because, in their reliance on God's assistance, they are rushing inconsiderately on their ruin. The conclusion is, that they were ill-advised as to their own interests in making these attempts, and that they foolishly or incautiously trusted to the protection of God.

11. Not so. He pretends to give them what they had asked at first, and thus accuses them of changeableness, because they do not persevere in the same determination. Whereas it is certain that the cause of his pertinacity in resisting was because he feared that the whole people should depart from Egypt. He knew, then, that what Moses required in God's name extended also to their little ones, else would he have not been enraged at it. But, in order to cast blame upon them, he falsely and calumniously reproaches them with having doubled their unjust demands, whilst he is exercising the greatest kindness, because he accedes to their original request. But he had no wish to rob the parents of their children, but to retain them as hostages; for he was persuaded that they would not willingly renounce pledges which were so dear to them. With respect to what is added at the end of the verse, "He drove them away from Pharaoh's presence," some take it indefinitely, and understand "some one of his dependents;" but, since it is usual in Hebrew to omit the antecedent, and then to supply it in the place of the relative, I have no doubt that Pharaoh, perceiving Moses not to be contented with half of them, grew angry, and drove him out with renewed menaces, because he could not endure his presence.

12. Tune dixit Jehova Mosi, Extende manum tuam super terram Ægypti pro locusta, ut ascendat super terram Ægypti, et depescat omnem herbam terrae, quiqua quadrata granum residuum est.

13. And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left.

14. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

15. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.

16. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darken; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

17. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord God, and against you.

18. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and en- treat the Lord God, that he may take away from me this death only.

19. And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord.

20. And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt.

21. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.
12. **And the Lord said unto Moses.** Since Pharaoh was not induced to obey by the announcement of the punishment, its execution is here related. And first, Moses is commanded to stretch out his hand to bring in the locusts, in right of the authority with which God had invested him; for the stretching forth of the hand is a token of power. He therefore adds, just beyond, that he stretched forth his rod, which we have before seen to have been given him as a royal sceptre. It is, then, just as if God had appointed him to be His vicegerent, and had subjected to him the sea, and earth, and air. But that he may sink down into the character of a minister, he does not say that the locusts came up at his command, but assigns the glory of the operation to the Lord alone. And this mode of expression is worthy of remark, since we learn from it that the ministers of God, although they bring nothing of their own, still do not lose their labour, because the efficacy of the Spirit is conjoined to their word; and still that nothing is detracted from the power of God and transferred to them, since they are but instruments, which by God’s hand are applied in His service. Thus did not Moses in vain command, as he stretched forth his rod, the locusts to come up; because the effect of his command immediately appeared. Still he did not himself create the locusts, nor attract them by the stirring of his rod, but they were divinely brought by the power of the east wind. But so sudden a gathering unquestionably occurred contrary to the order of nature; nor, if God thus employed the wind, does it necessarily follow that this was usual. We know that the east wind is a wholesome and gentle wind, and although it is sometimes stormy with respect to Judea, still it does not seem probable that either by its strength or by its contagious blast, Egypt was covered with locusts. But it is possible that God, bringing in the immense abundance of locusts by a sudden whirlwind, gave the Egyptians a sign of their approaching calamity, so that it might be more manifest that they had not arisen otherwise than in accordance with the prediction of Moses. That “before them there were no such locusts as these, neither after them shall be such,” is no contradiction to the declara-

16. **Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste.** This haste arose from anxiety and fear, because it was a time of extremity, and the enormity of the evil admitted no delay. By this vehemence, then, Pharaoh betrays his distress, when he not only willingly is inclined to recall Moses, whom he had lately driven out, but does so in such haste. The confession which is added, although it flowed from a double or deceitful heart, still was not altogether feigned. For we cannot doubt that (because Pharaoh was conscious of his sin) God exorted from him this cry, “I have sinned,” under the smiting and compulsion of His chastisements. For we must observe this distinction, which I have already laid down, between the hypocrites who lie and deceive designedly, or who knowingly and wilfully delude others, and those who beguile themselves, and have a terror of God’s judgments, even while they cherish iniquity and impiety in the secret recesses of their hearts. Pharaoh was a hypocrite of this latter kind, who, although having no professed intention of deceiving either God or Moses, yet, because he did not prove and examine himself, did not sincerely confess his sin. And this must be carefully observed, lest any should slumber in false repentance, as if temporary fear or forced humiliation could propitiate God. As to his saying, that he had “sinned against the Lord God and the Israelites,” it must be thus explained, that he had been rebellious against God, because he had unjustly afflicted that people which He had taken under His care, and into His confidence. For, although he had not been taught by the Prophets, yet did he hold this principle; that, because God by plain and illustrious miracles had shewn that people to be under His defence and protection, he had by his iniquitous and tyrannical oppression of them committed an injury against their patron and guardian.
He confesses, then, that he is doubly culpable, because he had been cruel to the people, and had impiously despised God. This would have been an evidence of true repentance, if it had proceeded from pure and genuine feeling; for the sinner, voluntarily condemning himself, prevents the judgment of God. His humiliation also appears in this respect to have been by no means ordinary, when he humbly prays to Moses for forgiveness; for it was no slight virtue, that a very powerful king should thus submit himself to an obscure and despised individual; which even the lower classes are often ashamed to do. But, inasmuch as his heart was still enchain'd by secret corruption, he deceitfully made a shew of the outward signs (of humiliation) instead of the reality. Wherefore David, when he declares, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered,” has good cause for adding, “and in whose spirit is no guile.” (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.) In order, therefore, that we may prove to God, whose attribute it is to search the heart, the truth of our repentance, let us learn seriously and inwardly to examine ourselves, lest there should be any hypocrisy lurking within us. The addition “only this once,” is meant to testify the continuance of his better mind; as though he acknowledged that he had been hitherto perfidious, and promised that he would hereafter obey God in good earnest. Whence we gather, that the reprobate do not return immediately to their natural habits and disposition, because they are ignorant of the power and nature of true conversion, but, because being without a spirit of uprightness, they have a perverse and crooked heart. Moreover, by desiring only that this present death should be removed from him, he seems not much to care for an entire reconciliation with God; as it is usual for the wicked to be indifferent to the hatred or favour of God, and only to have a dread of His hand. Careless, then, of his sin, he merely wishes that punishment should be far removed from him.

18. And he went out. We have stated why the holy Prophet went out from the king to pray, viz., because he was not worthy that the sacred name of God should be invoked in his presence. Therefore Moses did not offer prayer for him, because he thought him to be really converted, but that he might open God’s way for the remaining contests. If, indeed, a choice had been given to the holy man, I do not doubt that he would have been disposed by his extraordinary kindness of heart, willingly to provide for the tyrant’s safety; but, since he had heard the revelation of his desperate obstinacy, he was only intent on manifesting the power of God. Nor is there any question that he prayed under the special impulse of the Spirit, until he was assured of the final act; and the event proves that his prayers were not vainly cast into the air, because the land was immediately cleared of the locusts. We must have the same opinion with respect to the west wind as we have lately advanced respecting the opposite wind; for a temporary blast would not have been sufficient to dissipate so vast and filthy a host; but, in both cases, God testified by a visible token that he was influenced by the prayers of His servant, and that on this account the plague was stayed. It is sufficiently well known that the Arabian Gulf is called by the name of the Red Sea. By the Hebrews it is called יְהֹוָה, suiph, either from the reeds or rushes with which it abounds, or from its whirlwinds; since this word is used in Scripture in both senses. If, therefore, you choose to translate it into Latin it must be called Mare algosum et junceum, or “turbinosum.” (The weedy and rushy sea, or the tempestuous sea.) But, since there is something monstrous and incredible in such raging obstinacy, it is expressly stated that his heart was hardened by God; that we may learn to tremble at that terrible judgment, when the wicked, seized by a spirit of madness, do not hesitate to provoke more and more that God whose name overwhelms them with terror.

21. And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward the earth over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. 21. Tune dixit Jehova ad Moen, extende manum tuss in colunm, ut tenchere super terram Egypti, et palpem tenebras, (et palpenter tenebras.)

1 יְהֹוָה, sea-weed, מִּדְּנֵד, or tempest. In Luther’s German, Schleisener preserves the original meaning of the Hebrew name for the Red Sea.—W.
2 Addition in Fr., “C’est par ou les enfans d’Israel ont depuis passe, comme nous verrons?” the children of Israel afterwards passed through it, as we shall see.
22. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

23. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

24. And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.

25. And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God.

26. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not what we must serve the Lord until we come thither.

27. But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

28. And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee hence from me, vex me not any more; for in that day thou shalt die.

29. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well; I will see thy face again no more.

30. And the Lord said unto Moses, God here inflicts the punishment without denouncing it; because Pharaoh had deceitfully broken his promise of being obedient to His word. Since, therefore, he had so wickedly abused God's clemency, he must needs be suddenly overtaken by a new calamity, that he might in the darkness feel God's avenging hand, which he had despised. Nor, indeed, would he have been alarmed by menaces; as it will directly appear, that, when he was warned of the death of his first-born, and of the same slaughter both upon the first-born of man and of beast through the whole land, he was unnerved, and in his security provoked God, as if he had heard nothing. There is no wonder, then, that God covered the whole land with darkness before Pharaoh could suspect anything of the kind. At the end of the verse, some translate the word מָשָׂא; yamesh, passively; as if he had said that the darkness might be felt. For the word מָשָׂא, choshek, darkness, is singular in Hebrew. Those who take it transitively, because they suppose it to be put indefinitely, understand a noun, with this meaning, "that a man might feel." But if the transitive sense be preferred, it will be better referred to Pharaoh. But I willingly subscribe to their opinion, who hold that the darkness was so thick that it might be felt by the hand.

32. And Moses stretched forth his hand. By this darkness God not only wished to reprove the blindness of Pharaoh's mind, but in every way to convince him how senseless and mad he was in his resistance. There is no blessing which is more common to all men, from the very highest even to the lowest, than light, which is enjoyed not less by the humblest and most contemptible people than by the greatest kings. It was, then, a terrible judgment of God, that the whole world should be enlightened by the sun's rays, whilst the Egyptians, although possessing sight, were plunged in darkness. What madness, then, could be greater than theirs, when in their hardness of heart they cease not to contend against God's hand, formidable as it was? Their waters turned into blood had denied them drink; frogs and other animals had filled the whole country; they had almost been consumed by lice; their limbs had been enfevered by boils; the hail had destroyed part of their corn; the locusts had brought still increased destruction; even rocks and stones should have been somewhat terrified by such warnings. This admonition, then, was very seasonable, viz, that darkness should be spread over all Egypt, that they might understand that, when God was wrath with them, the very hosts of heaven were armed against them. And, in order that God's vengeance should be neither obscure nor doubtful, the cause of the darkness could not be assigned to an eclipse, both on account of its density and the time it lasted; for both of

1 מָשָׂא, the vowels determine this verb to be in the Hiphil, or active causal voice. מָשָׂא, darkness, comes after the verb; the ordinary position of the nominative in Hebrew. The words, therefore, should naturally mean the darkness shall make (a man) feel.—W.

2 Referring, of course, to the Latin plural noun tenebrae.
these circumstances are expressly noted by Moses, that it may be more clear that the sun was obscured to the Egyptians, because they had endeavoured to extinguish God's glory by their impious contempt. On the contrary, the Israelites must have acquired new cheerfulness when they recognised in the sun's brightness that God's paternal countenance was shining upon them; for He then enlightened them with His favour, as if to shew them the freedom of their egress. And, indeed, He might have at once led them forth from their astonished enemies; but He chose, as we shall see, to prepare their departure in another way.

24. And Pharaoh called unto Moses. We gather that he was greatly alarmed by this infliction; because of his own accord he again calls to him (as before) the men who were so troublesome to him, and the authors of such sore calamities, that he may treat with them of their departure. But it is asked how, if no one rose from his place for three days, Pharaoh could send for Moses and Aaron? If we were to answer that the messengers were sent after the darkness had been dispersed, this objection must readily arise, viz., that it does not appear probable that this untameable wild beast should be so much subdued, when the severity of the punishment was relaxed; for thus far we perceive that, as often as God withdrew his hand, the proud tyrant, having cast aside his fear, returned to his ferocity. My own opinion is, that whilst the exigency was still pressing upon him, and he feared lest the darkness should be upon him for ever, he took counsel how to appease Moses. But when it is here related, that "none rose from his place," I understand that it is spoken hyperbolically, as though it were said that they ceased from all the occupations which required light. But although the night does not allow of our executing the works in which men are employed by day, still it does not so confine them that they are unable to move about. Neither has this hyperbole anything harsh or severe in it, that the Egyptians were so overwhelmed with darkness as to remain each one fixed as it were in his own place, and not to behold each other; because in the three days' darkness God forbade them from performing their customary actions. Although Pharaoh is prepared to accord somewhat more than before, still he does not make an end of shuffling. He allows their little ones to go, provided their herds remain; either because he hoped that the people might easily be recalled through fear of famine; or because his loss would be at any rate less, if he were enriched by such spoils. For it is plain that he was very anxious about the men themselves, because he so very reluctantly made the concession that they might go out to sacrifice without their goods; which he would not have been unwilling to do, if he had only been desirous of spoiling them. But this passage again teaches us, that the wicked only partially yield to God, though they cease not meanwhile to struggle like malefactors, who are compelled to follow the executioner when he drags them by a rope round their necks, and yet are not on that account any the more obedient. This, too, is to be observed, that the wicked are quick in inventing subterfuges, when they are suffering under God's hand, and that they turn and twist about in every direction to discover plans for escaping from a sincere and hearty submission. When he says, "let your little ones also go with you," by this particle of amplification he would make a specious shew of generosity, in order to eajole Moses and Aaron; as if he said, that he now at length granted them what they had seemed chiefly to require.

25. And Moses said. Moses no less severely repudiates all exceptions, than as if he authoritatively demanded of the king what God had enjoined. And assuredly, by this austere and abrupt manner of speaking he evidenced his courage, whereby he might humble the arrogance and audacity of the impious king. His pretext indeed was, that they had need of victims, and in this way he avoids the tyrant's greater displeasure; but, at the same time, by directly excluding all conditions, and by not leaving even a hair in the power of the king, he asserts the indivisible right of God alone; that Pharaoh may know that all his evasions will profit him nothing. The expression "there shall not a hoof be left behind," contains a severe reproof, accom-
panied with anger and contempt; as if he would purposely pique¹ the virulent mind of the tyrant. But we have already said that there was no dissimulation in these words; for, although the holy man knew that the counsel of God had a further object, he still thought it sufficient to deliver the commands which were prescribed to him; nor would it be proper to suppose that God is under an obligation always to make the wicked acquainted with all His purposes.

27. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. A probable conjecture may be elicited from hence, that at the coming of Moses some light shone forth, so that the darkness was not so thick; because Pharaoh would never have dared to boast himself so proudly without being confident of impunity; but his pretenues at the commencement (of their interview) are here omitted by Moses, though the mitigation of the horrible punishment which had urged him to supplication depended upon them. But although he is still in a state of alarm, still he is hardened, and prepares himself for every extremity rather than simply to obey God. Here, also, according to his custom, Moses asserts that God was the author of his obduracy; not because He inspired with obstinacy a heart otherwise disposed to docility and obedience, but because He gave over as a slave to Satan a reprobate who was wilfully devoted to his own destruction, that he might rush forward with still increasing pertinacity in his impiety. But, since Moses has so often used this word, I am astonished at the boldness of certain sophists who, by the substitution of the word permission, allow themselves by this frivolous evasion to escape so plain a statement.

28. And Pharaoh said unto him. This ebullition of passion, in the midst of such sore calamities, is a proof of the violent assaults by which Satan precipitates the wicked, when they are given over to a reprobate mind. The impiety of kings is indeed notorious, and observed by the ancient poets; ² "Animadverte, ut dicto pare," (attend, and

¹ The Fr. thus resolves the metaphor:—"Como s'il plequiro de pro-
pros deliberé le courage envenimé du tyran, pour en faire crever l'apos-
thème;" as if he purposely lanced the censued audacity of the tyrant, to let out its matter.
² Cicero pro C. Rabirio Postumo, c. xii. "Nemo nostrum ignorat, etiam

obey my word;) and, again, "Moriere, si te secundo lumine hic offendoro," (if I meet thee here again a second day, thou shalt die.) Nor can it be doubted that Pharaoh, with his usual intemperateness, now breaks out into fierce and cruel threats; but had he not been carried away by a spirit of madness, he would not have so boldly opposed himself to God's servant, whom he had so often known, by experience, to be endued with unconquerable power, and to be so accredited by God, as to have supreme dominion over all the elements. Hence, also, we gather, that he had not been hitherto restrained from hence Moses with severity either by kindness, or moderation, or patience; because, when the circumstances of his kingdom were still flourishing, his wrath would have been more excessive; but that he was kept back by some secret rein. But Moses shows by his answer, how completely he set at nought all this froth; for he voluntarily defies him, and by declaring that he will come before his face no more, signifies that he is not worthy that he should labour any longer in his favour. But we see that the wicked king, carried away by his fury, prophesied against the wishes of his own mind, for God returned upon his own head what he threatened against another. Although, at the same time, it must be remembered that Moses spoke thus not without authority, but by God's command; because, unless he had been certainly taught that the last trial was come, he would have ever stood in readiness for the performance of his part. But it will presently appear from the context, that in this saying also he was the true messenger of God.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

1. And the Lord said unto Mo-

ses, Yet will I bring one plague
more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt;

afterwards he will let you go hence:

1. Dixerat autem Jehova ad Mo-

ses, Aitnque plagam unam adducam

super Pharaonem, et super Aegyp-
tum: postea dimittet vos hinc, di-
si experti non sumus, consuetudinem regiam. Regum autem haec sunt
imperia: Animadverte et dico pare: et prater rogatum si gerere: et
ille minime, Si te secundo lumine hic offendoro, moriere." In the Varia-

res edition, Elzevir, 1661, there is the following note:—"Animadverte,

&c., Explicat isthme Columna commentariis suis ad Q. Ennium."
when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.

2. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

3. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants, and in the sight of the people.

4. And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt:

5. And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maiden-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts.

6. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.

7. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast; that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

8. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

9. And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.

10. And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

1. **And the Lord said unto Moses.** He now relates that it was not with self-conceived confidence that he was lately so

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1 See Lut., Dixerat autem.
deception. But it cannot be permitted to any mortal man to censure or cavil at anything in the commandment of God; not only because His decree is above all laws, but because His most perfect will is the rule of all laws. For neither therefore is God answerable to law, because He delights in uncontrollable power; but because in the perfection of His infinite justice there is no need of law. But although the excuse which some allege is not altogether without show of reason, viz., that the very severe labours which the Egyptians had tyrannically exacted were worthy of some reward, and therefore that God had justly permitted His people to exact the compensation of which they would have been otherwise unjustly defrauded, still there is no necessity for having recourse to these subtleties; for that principle, which we have elsewhere laid down, ought to be sufficient, that God, in whose hands are the ends of the earth, to destroy and to overturn at His will its kingdoms, and to change the government of its nations, much more (has the right) so to distribute the wealth and possessions of individuals, as to enrich some and to reduce others to want. "The rich and poor meet together, (says Solomon:) the Lord is maker of them all," (Prov. xxiii. 2;) by which words he means that the providence of God rules in the various mixing together of poor and rich. But if theft be the taking away of what is another's, those things which it has pleased God to transfer to His own people, must not be counted the property of others. But if by the laws of war it be permitted to the victors to gather up the spoil of the enemy, why should we consider it less allowable for God to do so from the Egyptians, whom He had over come in ten illustrious battles, before He compelled them to surrender? As to the pretence of borrowing, the reply is easy, for the Israelitish women did not lie when they asked for the vessels for the purpose of sacrifice: since God had thus commanded, in whose power it was afterwards to devote them to other uses. Still part of them were dedicated to the sanctuary, as we shall see elsewhere; for besides the altar, the censer, and the candlestick, and other vessels of that kind, each of the tribes offered vials and dishes of great value. Yet must we recol-

lect that a particular case is here related, imitation of which, without God's special command, would be wrong.

3. And the Lord gave the people favour. Because the Israelites never could have hoped that the Egyptians, who had before rapaciously stripped them of everything, would become so kind and liberal to them, Moses declares that men's hearts are turned this way or that by God. For, as the Psalm testifies, that the Egyptians were impelled by Him "to hate His people," (Ps. cv. 25;) that He might make way for their glorious deliverance; so He was able also to incline them in the opposite direction, that they should freely give what they had before harshly refused, and not without threats and blows. This doctrine is exceedingly useful to be known, because, when men are harsh and cruel to us, it teaches us patience, whilst we are assured that the passions of wicked men only thus assail us, in so far as God would chastise our sins, and exercise and humble us. It affords also no little consolation to alleviate our pains, and seasonably arouses us to call upon God, that He would turn the minds of our enemies from brutality and unkindness to gentleness. It appears from many passages that this was ever the persuasion of all the pious, and unquestionably the expression of Jacob to his sons, "God Almighty give (dabit) you mercy before the man," was founded on this general feeling. (Gen. xlii. 14.) But, since Scripture is full of such testimonies, let it suffice to have quoted this single one. Again, God does not always incline men to mercy, by the Spirit of regeneration, so that they should be changed from wolves to lambs; but sometimes by His secret inspiration He for a short time softens them though they know it not, as we read here of the Egyptians. In the second clause of the verse, where it is said, "Moreover the man Moses," &c., an inferior and subordinate reason is given, which availed both to change the Egyptians as well as to encourage the Israelites, so that both of them reverently referred to his words; for although this whole matter was governed by the power of God alone, still He did not act simply by Himself,
but having chosen Moses as His minister, He assigned a certain charge to him. Hence the veneration which made the Egyptians as well as the Israelites obedient to him, that his labour might not be in vain. He only speaks, indeed, of the Egyptian nation, (for after having spoken of "the land" first, he adds two divisions, "Pharaoh's servants," i.e., the nobles and courtiers, and then "the common people," for so in this place I understand the word "people;") but we shall soon see that the miracles had had a good effect upon the Israelites also, that they should more readily believe and obey. But this passage teaches us that God's servants are often prized and honoured, where yet faith in their doctrine is not possessed, for although the Egyptians reverence and highly esteem Moses, they do not therefore incline to seek after piety. And thus the wicked often fear God Himself, when influenced by particular circumstances, and yet do not devote themselves to His service.

4. And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord. I lately said that Moses did not go from Pharaoh's presence until he had delivered the message of his final destruction. This denunciation is, therefore, connected with the foregoing passage. Whence it appears how courageously Moses sustained the menaces of the tyrant, whilst he willingly encounters him, and boasts that he shall be his conqueror, though he be not in his presence, by the death of his first-born son in the coming night. Nor is it to be doubted that Pharaoh was confounded with terror, since, although so cruelly repulsed, he dismissed the Prophet in safety. Assuredly, since so unreserved a threatening must have inflicted a very bitter pang, so it would have aroused the cruelty of the raging tyrant, unless the same God who had ended His servant with admirable firmness, had also controlled the impetuosity of the savage beast. Why God, in inflicting punishment on the children, postponed till another time that of the fathers, whose sin was greater; why, in wreaking vengeance on the beasts, He spared men, it is not our province curiously to inquire, because it is sinful to prescribe to God, whose incomprehensible wisdom surmounts all human understanding, what should be the rule or measure of His judgments. By bringing the children and beasts to punishment, He certainly represented clearly to the wicked despisers of His power, what they had deserved. The first-born of Pharaoh, who would have been heir of the kingdom, is placed in the first rank of victims; afterwards the whole body of humbler people is mentioned, for the maid-servants, who turned their revolving mills, occupied a very low and despised condition, as appears not only from the ancient poets, but from the testimony of Scripture itself. (1 Sam. viii. 16). If any one chooses to observe the analogy between this plague and the unjust tyranny by which the Egyptians had afflicted Israel, God's first-born son, I make no objection. God again puts a difference between the Egyptians and his own people, when he declares that, in the midst of the great cry, the lattest shall be quiet and tranquil. For this is the meaning of the figure, "A dog shall not move his tongue," because dogs are wont to bark at the very least noise in the night. Moreover, although such a separation between the faithful and unbelievers does not always appear, but rather do similar punishments generally involve them both together, yet in the final issue God divides them very widely one from the other. Wherefore we can never lose this felicity, that we know that all afflictions conspire unto the salvation of us, whom he has once embraced with His loving-kindness.

8. And all these thy servants shall come down. Thus far Moses had reported the words of God; he now begins to speak in his own person, and announces that, by Pharaoh's command, messengers would come from his court, who would voluntarily and humbly crave for what he had refused respecting the dismissal of the Israelites. The great asperity of these words inflicted no slight wound on the tyrant's mind, for it was the same as if he had said—Thus far I have entreated you to allow God's people to depart; now, whether you will or not, I will freely go, and not even without the
request of yourself and your followers. What he then relates, that he went out "in the heat of anger," or in a great anger," shows us that the servants of God, even when they truly and faithfully perform their duty, are so disturbed with indignation against sin, that they are by no means restrained from being affected with anger. Nor is there any question that Moses was thus excited to wrath by the impulse of the Spirit. Yet, since we are naturally too prone to impetuous passions, we must diligently beware lest our indignation exceed due bounds. The Spirit awakened in the heart of Moses this zeal, which here is mentioned, but he at the same time moderated it, so that it should contain no admixture of unregulated passion. But since it may, and often does happen that the faithful, when influenced by pious zeal, still do not sufficiently restrain themselves, nor keep themselves within due bounds, the spirit of gentleness and propriety must be asked of God, which may prevent all excesses. Yet the anger of Moses is a proof to us that God would not have us lazily and coldly perform the duties which He entrusts to us; and, therefore, that nothing is more preposterous than for certain cynics, whilst they jokingly and ridiculously philosophize concerning the doctrines of religion, and sting God's servants with their laughing and wanton witticisms, to deride their vehemence, which is rather worthy of the highest praise.

9. And the Lord said unto Moses. This seems to be a representation of the reason why Moses was so angry; viz., because he had been forewarned that he had to do with a lost and desperate man. When, therefore, after so many contests, he sees the dominion of God despised by the audacity and madness of the tyrant, deeper indignation bursts from him in their last struggle; especially because he sees before his eyes that detestable prodigy, viz., an earthen vessel so bold as to provoke God with indomitable obstinacy. But God had foretold to Moses (as we have already seen) the end of this his exceeding stubbornness, lest, having so often suffered repulse, he should faint at length. Otherwise, there might have crept in no tripping temptation, as to how it could please God to contend in vain with a mortal man. And it was absurd that the hardness of a human heart could not be either subdued, or corrected, or broken by the divine power. God, therefore, asserts that He was thus designing His own glory, which He desired to manifest by various miracles; and on this account he adds again in the next verse, that Pharaoh's heart was again hardened by God Himself; whereby he signifies, that the tyrant thus pertinaciously resisted, not without the knowledge and will of God, in order that the deliverance might be more wonderful.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

21. Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you a lamb, according to your families, and kill the passover.

22. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

23. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

24. And ye shall observe this thing as an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

25. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

26. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

27. That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he

1 Margin, A. V.