

Chapter 16

A copie of king Artaxerxes letters, which he sent for the fastie of the Iewes, 10. declaring the insolencie of Aman and dutiful seruice of Mardocheus and Efther, 20. commanding al his prince to affist the Iewes, and with them to celebrate the day which is changed from forow to ioy.

The copie of king Artaxerxes letter, which he sent for the Iewes to al the prouinces of his kingdom: the which also is not found in the Hebrew volume.

The great king Artaxerxes, from India to Æthiopia to the dukes and princes of an hundred twentie feuen prouinces, which obey our commandment, sendeth greeting. ² Manie haue abufed vnto pride the goodnes of princes, and the honour, that hath beene bestowed vpon them: ³ and they do not only endeouour to oppresse the kings subiectes, but not bearing the glorie that is geuen them, they worke treason against them that gaue it. ⁴ Neither are they content not to geue thanks for the benefittes, and to violate in them selues the lawes of humanitie, but they thincke they can escape the sentence of God also who seeth al things. ⁵ And they haue burst forth into so great madnes, that such as obserue diligently the offices committed vnto them, and do al things so that they are worthie of al mens prayse, them they endeouour to ouerthrow by subtil meanes of lies, ⁶ whiles with craftie fraude they deceiue the simple eares of princes, and esteeming others by their owne nature. ⁷ Which thing is proued both out of old histories, and by these thinges, which are done daily, how ^athe enterprises of kinges are depraued by the euil suggestiones of certaine men. ⁸ Wherefore we must prouide for the peace of al prouinces. ⁹ Neither must you thincke, if we command diuers things, that it cometh of the lightnesse

L

^a At last this king saw his owne error in beleuing one false counsellor ouer much. *ch. 13. v. 3.*

of our mind, but that we geue fentence according to the qualitie & neceffitie of times, as the profite of the common wealth requireth. ¹⁰ And that you may more plainly vnderftand, that which we fay, Aman the fonne of Amadathi, both in mind and countrie a Macedonian, and an aliene from the Perfians bloud, and with his crueltie ftayning our pietie, was receiued of vs a ftranger: ¹¹ and found our humanitie fo great towards him, that he was called our father, and was adored of al fecond after the king: ¹² who was puft vp with fo great fwelling of arrogancie, that he went about to deprive vs of kingdom and life. ¹³ For by certaine new deuifes and not heard of before he hath fought to kil Mardocheus, by whose fidelitie and benefittes we liue, and Efther the felow of our kingdom with al their nation: ¹⁴ thinking this that they being flayne, he might worke treason to our folitarines, and might transferre the kingdom of the Perfians to the Macedonians. ¹⁵ But we haue found the Iewes, which were by that moft wicked of men oppoynted to be flayne, in no fault at al, but contrariwife vſing iuft lawes, ¹⁶ and the children of the higheft and the greateft, and alwayes louing God, by whose benefite the kingdom was geuen both to our fathers and to vs, and is kept vnto this day. ¹⁷ Wherefore know ye thofe letters, which he directed in our name, to be of none effect. ¹⁸ For the which heinous fact, before the gates of this citie, that is, of Sufan, both him ſelf that deuifed it, and al his kinred hang on gibbettes: not we, but God repaying him that which he hath deferued. ¹⁹ But this edict, which we now fend, let it be fet forth in al cities, that it be lawful for the Iewes to vſe their owne lawes. ²⁰ Whom you muſt helpe, that thofe, which had prepared them ſelues to their flaughter, they may kil the thirteenth day of the twelfth moneth, which is called Adar. ²¹ For God omnipotent hath turned this day of ſadnes and mourning into ioy to them. ²² Wherefore ^a)count you alfo this

^a As Mardocheus fuggeſted, the king confirmed the obferuation of a feaſt in memorie of Gods benefice and fo both Iewes and Gentiles kept it.

day among other feftiual daies, and celebrate it with al ioy, that hereafter alfo it may be knowne, ²³ that al, which faythfully obey the Perfians, receiue worthie reward for their fidelitie: and they that lie in wayte againft their kingdom, perifh for their wicked fact. ²⁴ And euerie prouince and citie, that wil not be partaker of this folemnitie, let it perifh by fword and fyre, and let it fo be deftroyed, that not onlie men, but alfo beaftes haue no acceffe therto for euer, for an example of contempt, and difobedience.

M chap. 9.
v. 1.