

THE ARGUMENT OF THE BOOKE OF IVDGES.

Sainct Hierom geuing this general rule (*Epist. ad Euftoch. virg.*) that in reading hiftorical bookes of holie Scripture, the hiftorie, as fundation of veritie, is to be loued, but the fpiritual vnderftanding rather to be folowed: agreably therto teacheth (*Epist. ad Paulin.*) that in this booke of Iudges there be as manie figures, as princes of the people. Neither doth he meane that there were no more, but for example sake affirmeth that thefe Iudges, raifed vp after Iofue, and fent of God to deliuer the people fallen for their finnes into afflictions; were types and figures of the Apoftles and Apoftolical men, fent by Chrift to propagate and defend his Church of the new Teftament. For albeit diuers of thefe Iudges were fometimes great offenders, yet they were reclaimed by Gods fpecial grace, and fo amending their errors did great thinges, to the fingular honour of God: and are renowned among the holie Patriarches and Prophetes,

Eccl. 46.

particularly prayfed in holie Scripture, faying: *And the Iudges, euerie one by his name, whose hart was not corrupt: Who were not auerted from our Lord, that their memorie may be bleffed, and their bones fpring out from their place, and their name remaine for euer, the glorie of holie men remaining to their children.* After Iofue therfore, who it femeth guided and ruled the people 32. yeares, this booke, written (as is moft probable) by Samuel, shewing the famouse Actes of thefe Iudges of Ifrael, profecuteth the hiftorie of the Church the fpace of 288. yeares more. And may be diuided into three partes. Firft, is defcribed in general the ftate of the people, fometimes wel and fincerly feruing God, other times falling to great finnes. In the two firft chapters. Secondly, their offences, afflictions, repentance, and deliuerie from their enemies are more particularly reported. From the third chap. to the 17. Thirdly, other fpecial accidents, which happened within the fame time, are recorded. In the laft five chapters.

A rule for reading hiftorical bookes.

The Iudges of Ifrael figures of Christs Apoftles.

They were all finally holie men.

The Contents of this booke.

Diuided into three partes.