

Chapter 11

Iephte reiected by his brethrens, is intreated by the ancientes of Galaad to returne and fight for them againft the Ammonites: 12. with whom he firft pleadeth the caufe of Ifrael by iuft reafons, 26. and long prefcription. But they perfifting obftinate, he (30. inconfideratly vow-ing) 32. ouerthroweth them, 34. and facrificeth his onlie daughter.

There was at that time Iephte the Galaadite a moft valiant man and a warrier, the fonne of a woman that was ^a)an harlot, who was borne of Galaad. ² And Galaad had a wife of whom he had fonnes: who after they were growen, caft out Iephte, fay-ing: Thou canft not be heyre in the houfe of our father, becaufe thou art borne of an other mother. ³ Whom he fleeing and auoyding, dwelt in the Land of Tob: and there were gathered to him needie men, and theeuifh, and folowed him as their prince. ⁴ In thofe dayes the children of Ammon fought againft Ifrael. ⁵ Who preffing fore vpon them, the ancientes of Galaad went to take Iephte out of the Land of Tob to helpe them: ⁶ and they faied to him: Come and be our prince, and fight againft the children of Ammon. ⁷ To whom he answered: Are not you they that hated me, and caft me out of my fathers houfe, and now are come to me forced by neceffitie. ⁸ And the princes of Galaad faid to Iephte: For this caufe be we now ^b)come to thee, that thou goe forth with vs, and fight againft the children of Ammon, and be the captaine of al that dwell in Galaad. ⁹ Iephte alfo faid to them: If you be come to me fincerly, that I fhould fight for you againft the children of Ammon,

^a The hebrew word *Zonah* fignifieth alfo *an in keeper*.

^b If they had not concurred to his expulfion, it might haue fufficed to haue fent for him, but in this cafe the ancientes iudged it meete to goe in perfon, and to intreat him. So Chrift was reiected by the Iewes, and returneth not to them til in the end of the world they fhall feeke vnto him. *S. Aug. q. 49. in Iudic. poft mediũ.*

and if our Lord deliuer them into my handes, ſhal I be your prince? ¹⁰ Who answered him: Our Lord which heareth theſe thinges, him ſelfe is mediatour and witneſſe that we wil doe as we haue promiſed. ¹¹ Iephte therefore went with the princes of Galaad, and al the people made him their prince. And Iephte ſpake al his wordes before our Lord in Maſpha. ¹² And he ſent meſſengers to the king of the children of Ammon, which ſhould ſay in his perſon: What is betwen me and thee, that thou art come againſt me, to waſt my Land? ¹³ To whom he answered: Becauſe Ifrael tooke my land, when he aſcended out of Ægypt, from the coaſts of Arnon vnto Iaboc and Iordan: now therefore with peace reſtore the ſame to me. ¹⁴ By whom Iephte againe ſent word, and commanded them that they ſhould ſay to the king of Ammon: ¹⁵ Thus ſayth Iephte: Ifrael did not take the Land of Moab, nor the Land of the children of Ammon: ¹⁶ but when they aſcended out of Ægypt, he walked through the deſert vnto the Readſea, and came into Cades. ¹⁷ And he ſent meſſengers to the king of Edom, ſaying: Suffer me that I may paſſe through thy land. Who would not condeſcend to his requeſtes. He ſent alſo to the king of Moab, who alſo him ſelfe contemned to geue paſſage. He abode therefore in Cades, ¹⁸ and compaſſed the Land of Edom at the ſide, and the land of Moab: and came againſt the Eaſt quarter of the Land of Moab, and camped beyond Arnon: neither would he enter the boundes of Moab: for Arnon is the border of the Land of Moab. ¹⁹ Ifrael therefore ſent meſſengers to Sehon the king of the Amorrhaites, who dwelt in Heſebon, and they ſaid to him: Suffer me to paſſe through thy land vnto the riuer. ²⁰ Who alſo him ſelfe deſpiſing the wordes of Ifrael, ſuffered him not to paſſe through his borders: but gathering an infinite multitude went forth againſt him into Iaba, and reſiſted ſtrongly. ²¹ And our Lord deliuered him into the handes of Ifrael with al his armie, and he ſtroke him, and poſſeſſed al the Land of the Amorrhaites the inhabiter of that countrie, ²² and al the coaſtes therof from Arnon vnto Iaboc, & from the wildernes vnto Iordan. ²³ Our Lord therefore the God of Ifrael

Num. 20.

fubuerted the Amorrheite, his people of Ifrael fighting againft him, and wilt thou now poffeffe his land? ²⁴ Are not thofe thinges which ^{a)}Chamos thy god poffeffed, dew to thee by right? But the thinges that our Lord God hath obteyned conquerour, shal come to our poffeffion: ²⁵ vnleffe perhaps thou be better then Balac the fonne of Sephor the king of Moab: or canft shew, that he wrangled againft Ifrael, and fought againft him, ²⁶ when he dwelt in Hefebon, and the litle townes therof, and in Aroer, and the townes therof, or in al the cities nere Iordan, for ^{b)}three hundred yeares. Wherefore haue you fo long attempted nothing for reclaime? ²⁷ Therefore I doe not finne againft thee, but thou doeft euil againft me, denouncing me vniuft warres. Our Lord be iudge the arbiter of this day betwen Ifrael, and betwen the children of Ammon. ²⁸ And the king of the children of Ammon would not harken to the wordes of Iephte, which he fent him by the meffengers. ²⁹ Therefore the fpirite of our Lord came vpon Iephte, and circuiting Galaad, and Manaffes, Mafpha alfo of Galaad, and thence paffing to the children of Ammon, ³⁰ he vowed a vow to our Lord, faying: If thou wilt deliuer the children of Ammon into my handes, ³¹ ^{c)}whofoeuer fhall firft come forth out of the doores of my houfe, and shal meete me returning with peace from the children of Ammon, him wil I offer an holocaufte to our Lord. ³² And Iephte paffed to the children of Ammon, to fight againft them: whom our Lord deliuered into his handes, ³³ and he ftroke from Aroer til thou come to Mennith, twentie cities, and as farre as Abel, which is fette with vineyardes, with a very great plague, and the children of Ammon were humbled by the

^a In the opinion of infidels, it femed that they poffeffed countries by the helpe of falfe goddes, and fo they thought them felues to haue iuft title. Much more iuft is the title when God almighty geueth victorie of conquest. *S. Aug. q. 48. in Iudic.*

^b He argueth vpon prefcription of 300. yeares being nere fo much, for there wanted fcarce thirtie: being from the conquest made by Moyfes (*Num. 21.*) til the time of Iephte about 270. yeares.

^c This vow was vnlawful, for the law forbiddeth to offer man or woman in facrifice. *Exo. 34. v. 20. Deut. 12. v. 31.*

children of Ifrael. ³⁴ But Iephte returning into Maspha to his house, his onlie begotten daughter mette him with tymbrels and daunces. For he had not other children. ³⁵ Whom when he saw, he rent his garments, and said: Wo is me my daughter thou hast deceived me, and thy self art deceived: for I have opened my mouth to our Lord, and I can doe no other thing. ³⁶ To whom she answered: My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth to our Lord, do vnto me whatsoever thou hast promised, the reuenge and victorie of thyne enemies being granted to thee. ³⁷ And she said to her father: This only graunt me which I desire: Suffer me that two monethes I may goe about the mountaines, and ^a)bewaile my virginitie with my felowes. ³⁸ To whom he answered: Goe. And he dismissed her two monethes. And when she was gone with her felowes and companions, she mourned her virginitie in the mountaines. ³⁹ And the two monethes being expired, she returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed, who knew not man. Thence forth a fashion in Ifrael, and a custome was kept: ⁴⁰ that after the compasse of a yeare the daughters of Ifrael assemble together, and mourne the daughter of Iephte the Galaadite foure dayes.

ANNOTATIONS

³⁹ Did to her as he had vowed.) Whether Iephte did well or no in sacrificing his daughter, hauing vowed to offer in sacrifice whosoever (or whatsoever) should first meete him returning with victorie, as it hapened she did, is a great and hard question, saith S. Augustin (*q. 49. in lib. Iudic.*) and not easily decided, the holie scripture neither approving nor reproving his fact.

Neuertheles by conference of other scriptures and discourse of reason, he iudgeth it most probable that Iephte offended in vowing without special warrant from God, to sacrifice, that which by the law was not sacrificable; yet finned not in performing his vow, but rather pacified God thereby, whose will it seemed to be, that for punishment of his sinne he should sacrifice his daughter, because by his diuine providence she first mette him: and the omission might

Iephte offended in vowing vndiscretely. But not in performing his vow as ancient fathers thinke more probable. S. Augustin.

^a In the old testament marriage was ordinarily preferred before single life but in the new, it is better to keepe virginity. *1. Cor. 7. v. 38.*

rather haue benne for his natural loue towards his onlie childe, then for the vnlawfulnes of the facrifice: feing it once pleafed God to command Abraham to immolate his fonne Ifaac, though when it came to execution, he forbade the fame, appointing an other hofte in place of the childe, which here he did not. Neither was it iniurious to the daughter, feing fhe, as al mankinde, muft once die when God appointeth. Yea further fhe offered her felf freely (which femed to be by Gods inftinct) willing her father to do to her whatfoeuer he had promifed to God. This is the fumme of S. Auguftins large difcourfe. Likewife S. Ambrofe (*li. 3. de Officiis c. 12.*) fuppoeth affuredly that this prince Iephthe offended in vowing vnaduifedly, for it alfo repented him, when his daughter firft mette him: yet that with *godlie feare and dreade* he performed to his owne bitter paine that which he had promifed: intituting an anniuersarie lamentation of his daughter, for a warning to pofteritie of more circumfpection in making vowes. S. Hierom alfo (*li. 1. aduerf. Iovinian.*) approueth their opinion that fay: It was Gods ordinance Iephthe fhould feele the error of his vnaduifed vow, by the death of his daughter, for a document to others. The very fame teacheth S. Chryfoftom, (*ho. 14. ad pop. Antioch.*) that God would haue this error to be thus punifhed, that others might be warned from vowing the like. S. Gregorie Naziazen (*orat. de Machabæis*) preferring the martyrdom of the feuen brothers and their mother, before this facrifice of Iephthe as *more aduifed, and more honorable*, yet condemneth not this, but recounteth it amongft other commendable actes. Theodoret (*q. 19. in Iudic.*) and al the aforefaid fathers do highly commend the daughters promptnes in offering her felf to be facrificed, which either much extenuated her fathers fault, or wholly iuftified his fact. Thus the ancient fathers moderate their cenfures. Yet a new gloffe of the Englifh Bible without fcruple fayeth, that by his rafh vow, *and vvicked performance his victorie vvas defaced*; and againe, that he was ouercome *vvith blinde zeale, not confidering* whether the vow was lawful or no.

S. Ambrofe.

S. Hierom.

S. Chryfoftom.

S. Gregorie
Nazianzen.

Theodoret.

Bible 1603.

Proteftants
cenfure.