

THE BOOKE OF ESTHER.

THE ARGVMENT OF THE BOOKE OF ESTHER.

*Melito S. Atha.
S. Greg. Naz-
ian. Ori-
gen apud
Euseb. lib. 6.
c. 25. hift.*

Of the authoritie of this booke *only two or three ancient writers, doubted*, before the counsels of Laodicea, and Carthage declared it to be Canonical. *Al the rest did euer esteeme it as diuine Scripture.* For albeit S. Ierom in his time found not certaine partes therof in the Hebrew, and therefore tranfposed the fame to the end of the booke, as now we haue them: yet in the Greeke he found al these fixtenne chapters conteyned in tenne. And it is not vnprobable, that these parcels were fometimes in the Hebrew, as were diuers whole bookes which are now loft. But whether they were at anie time in the Hebrew or no, the Church of Chrifft accounteth the whole Booke of infallible authoritie, reading as wel these partes, as the rest in her publique office. And the council of Trent (*seff. 4.*) for more expresse declaration defineth *that al the bookes recited in the fame Decree* (amongst which is Esther) *with al the partes therof, as they are accuftomed to be read in the Catholique Church, and be conteyned in the old vulgate latin Edition, are sacred and Canonical Scripture.*

This whole booke is canonical.

It conteyneth a particular great danger of the people of Ifrael, hapening (as is probable) shortly after their general relaxation, & returne of some from the captiuitie of Babylon; and their deliuerie from it, through the godlie zeale and other vertues of Quene Esther, directed herein by Mardocheus, who being also in imminent danger was deliuered & aduanced, and finally writ the hiftorie. Which may be diuided into foure partes, not by order of the chapters: as they are here tranfposed: but in order of time, first the author reporteth some thinges going before the peoples danger, in the 11. 1. 2. 12. chapters, and part of the 3. Secondly their danger and distresse, in the rest of the 3. and part of 13. chapters. Thirdly their deliuerie: from the 4. chapter to the middes of the 9. and rest of the 13, and in the 14. 15.

The contentes.

VVritten by Mardocheas. Diuided into foure partes.

and 16. Fourtly, the thinges that enfued hereupon, in the other half of the ninth chapter, the 10. chapter, and first verfe of the eleuenth.

VWho foeuer vvil pleafe to read this hiftorie, in order of the time as the thinges happened, adioyning the latter chapters, vvwhich are in the Greke, and not in the Hebrevv, may folovve the letters of the Alphabet, as here vve haue placed them in the margent, beginning at the fecond verfe of the 11. chapter, vvhere he findeth the letter A and vvhen he cometh to B returne vvhere the fame letter is noted. ch. 1. And fo in the reft folovv the fame direction.

Chapter 1

King Affuerus celebrateth a great banquet to shew his glorie, 10. calleth quene Vafthi therto. Who refufing to come, is by aduife of his counfel depofed.

The first part
beginneth in
the 11. ch.

A.
B

In the daies of Affuerus, who reigned from India vnto Æthiopia ouer an hundred twentie feuen prouinces: ² when he fate in the throne of his kingdō, the citie Sufã was in the begynning of his kingdom. ³ In the third yeare therfore of his empyre he made a great feaft to al the princes, and to his feruantes, to the moft valiant of the Perfians, and the nobles of the Medes, and the rulers of the prouinces in his fight, ⁴ that he might shew the riches of the glorie of his kingdom, and the greatnes, & vaunting of his might, a great time, to witte, an hundred & foure fcore dayes. ⁵ And when the daies of the feaft were accomplished, he inuited al people, that was found in Sufan, from the greateft to the leaft: and commanded feuen daies a feaft to be prepared in the entrance of the garden, and of the wood, which was planted with royal garnifhing and with hand. ⁶ And there hong on euerie fide hangings of skie colour, and grene, and hyacinthine colour, held vp with cordes of filke, and of purple, which were put into rings of

yuorie, and were held vp with marble pillers. Beddes alfo of gold and filuer, were placed in order vpon the floore paued with the emerauld, and the touch ftone: which paynting adorned with meruelous varietie. ⁷ And they that were inuited, dranke in golden cuppes, and the meates were brought in change of veffels. Wine alfo plenteous and the beft was fet downe, as was worthie of a kings magnifence. ⁸ ^{a)}Neither was there that compelled them to drinke that would not, but as the king had appointed, making ech of his princes ouerfeer of euerie table, that euerie man might take what he would. ⁹ Vafthi alfo the queene made a feaft for the wemen in the palace, where king Affuerus had accuftomed to remayne. ¹⁰ Therefore the feuenth day, when the king was merier, and after very much drinking was wel warmed with wine, he commanded Maumam, and Bazatha, and Harbona, and Bagatha, and Abgatha, and Zethar, and Charchas, the feuen eunuches, that miniftred in his fight, ¹¹ that they fhould bring in queene Vafthi before the king, the crowne fet vpon her head, that he might fhew her beautie to al the peoples and princes: for fhe was exceding beautiful. ¹² Who refused, and contemned to come at the kings commandment, which he had commanded by the eunuches. Wherupon the king being wrath, and chaffed with ^{b)}exceding furie, ¹³ asked the wifemen, which after the manner of a king were alwayes prefent with him, and he did al thinges by their confel, which knew the lawes, and rightes of the elders: ¹⁴ (and the chiefe and neareft him were, Charfena, and Sethar, and Admatha, and Tharfis, and Mares, and Marfana, and Mamuchan, feuen dukes of the Perfians, and of the Medes, which faw the face of the king, and were wont to fit firft after him) ¹⁵ to what fentence Vafthi the queene fhould be fubiect, that would not do Affuerus the kings

^a Modeftie and temperance amongft heathen people condemne Chriftianes that vrge men to drinke immoderatly, and fo caufe them to be drunke. *S. Au. Ser. 231. 232. de tempore.*

^b The end of immoderate feafting is commonly browling. Here the king became furious, and the queene was diuorfed from him.

commandment, which he had commanded by the eunuches. ¹⁶ And Mamuchan answered, the king hearing, and the princes: ^a)Queene Vafthi hath not only hurt the king, but also al peoples, and princes, that are in al the prouinces of king Affuerus. ¹⁷ For the word of the queene wil goe forth to al wemen, that they wil contemne their husbands, and wil fay: King Affuerus commanded that the queene Vafthi should come in to him, and she would not. ¹⁸ And by this example al the wiues of the princes of the Perfians and the Medes, wil little esteeme the commandmentes of their husbandes, wherefore the kings indignation is iust. ¹⁹ If it please thee, let an edict goe forth from thy face, and let it be written according to the law of the Perfians and of Medes, which is not lawfull to be transgressed, that Vafthi come in no more to the king, but an other, that is better then she, take her kingdome. ²⁰ And let this be published into al the empire of thy prouinces (which is most large) and let al the wiues, as wel of the greater as of the lesser geue honour to their husbandes. ²¹ His counfel pleased the king, and the princes: and the king did according to the counfel of Mamuchan, ²² and he sent letters to al the prouinces of his kingdome, as euerie nation could heare and reade, in diuers languages and characters, that the husbandes should be princes and maisters in their houses: and that this should be published through al peoples.

Chapter 2

Inquirie being made of the best and fairest virgines, 5. Esther the vnknowne neece of Mardocheus a Iew is preferred,

^a Brentius approueth the sentence of this parasite, but Iosephus *li. 11. c. 6.* Macrobius *li. 7. c. 1. Saturn.* S. Ierome *ad Rustic.* and S. Ambrose *l. de Elia c. 14.* iudge the queenes refusal lawfull, and agreeable to the Perfians lawes, which prohibited married wemē to come in sight of other men in great assemblies: neither had the king iust cause to break that law, for pleasing his phansie in his drunken humour. *v. 10.* Luther also wresteth this example in fauoure of adulterie. *par. 2. de diuortio. folio 177. Editionis vvitember Ano. 1553.*

18. and made Queene in place of Vafthi, a mariage feaft made, and prefentes geuen. 21. Mardocheus detecteth traitors, and his feruice is recorded in the regifter.

Thefe thinges fo done, after the indignation of king Affuerus was affwaged, he remembred Vafthi, and what fhe had done, or what fhe had fuffered: ² and the kings feruantes and his minifters faid: Let there be maydens fought for the king, virgins and beautiful, ³ and let there be fent that may viewe through al prouinces beautiful maydens and virgins: and let them bring them to the citie of Sufan, and deliuer them into the houfe of wemen vnder the hand of Egeus the eunuch, who is ouerfeer of the kings wemen: and let them receiue wemens ornamentes, and other things neceffarie to be vfed. ⁴ And which fo euer among al fhall pleafe the kings eies, let her reigne for Vafthi. The word pleaſed the king: and fo as they had fuggeſted, he commanded to be done. ⁵ There was a man in the citie of Sufan a Iew, named Mardocheus, the fonne of Iair, the fonne of Semei, the fonne of Cis, of the ſtocke of Iemini, ⁶ who had beene tranſported from Ieruſalem the ſame time, that Nabuchodonofor the king of Babylon tranſported Iechonias the king of Iuda, ⁷ who was the fofter father of his brothers daughter Ediffa, which by an other name was called Efther: and fhe had loſt both her parentes: exceeding beautiful, and of comely face. And her father and mother being dead, Mardocheus adopted her for his daughter. ⁸ And when the kings commandment was bruited abroad, and according to his commandement many fayre virgins were brought to Sufan, and were deliuered to Egeus the eunuch: ^a)Efther alfo among the reſt of the maydens was

4. Reg. 24.

^a *Deut. 7. v. 8.* Ifraelites are forbid to marie with Gentiles, yet when there was no danger to be peruerſed, and great hope of good, Efther by Mardocheus counſel conſented to marie king Affuerus, though otherwiſe ſhe *detected the bed of the incircumciſed, and of euerie ſtranger. ch. 14. v. 15.* K. Dauid alſo married the kings daughter of Geffur. *1. Reg. 3. v. 3.*

deliuered to him, that she might be kept in the number of the women. ⁹ Who pleased him, and found grace in his sight. And he commanded the eunuch, that he should haften the womens ornamentes, and should deliuer her, her partes, & geue the most beautiful maydens of the kings house, and should adorne and decke both her and her waiting maydes. ¹⁰ Who would not tell him her people and countrie. For Mardocheus had commanded her, that of this thing she should altogether keepe silence: ¹¹ who walked daily before the entrance of the house, wherein the chosen virgins were kept, taking care of Esthers welfare, and desirous to know what should chance vnto her. ¹² And when the time of euerie virgin in order was come, that they should goe in to the king, all things accomplished that perteyned to womens ornamentes, it was the twelfth moneth: yet so, that for six monethes they were anoynted with oyle of myrtle, and other six monethes they vsed certayne payntings and sweete spices. ¹³ And going in to the king, whatsoeuer they asked that perteyned to adorning they receiued: and being trimmed, as it pleased them, they passed from the chamber of the women to the kings chamber. ¹⁴ And she that went in at euening, came out in the morning, and from thence she was brought to the second house, that was vnder the hand of Sufagazus the eunuch, who was chiefe ouer the kings concubines: neither had she power to returne any more to the king, vnlesse the king had willed, and had commanded her to come by name. ¹⁵ And the time by order coming about, the day was at hand, that Esther the daughter of Abihail the brother of Mardocheus, whom he had adopted for his daughter, should goe in to the king. Who fought not womens ornamentes, but whatsoever Egeus the eunuch the keeper of the virgins would, those things he gaue her to her adorning. For she was exceeding fayre, and of incredible beautie, she seemed to all mens eyes gracious and amiable. ¹⁶ She therefore was brought to the chamber of king Affuerus the tenth moneth, which is called Tebeth, in the seventh yeare of his reigne. ¹⁷ And the king loued her more then all the women, and she had

grace and mercie before him aboue al the women, and he put the crowne of the kingdom on her head, and made her reigne in fteede of Vafthi. ¹⁸ And he commanded a verie magnifical feaft to be prepared to al the princes, and to his feruantes, for the coniunction, and mariage of Efther. And he gaue reft to al the prouinces, and beftowed giftes according to princely magnificence. ¹⁹ And when virgins were fought the fecond time and gathered together, Mardocheus taried at the kings gate, ²⁰ neither had Efther as yet vttered her countrie, & people, according to his cōmandment. For what foeuer he commanded, Efther obferued: and she did al thinges fo as she was wont at that time, when he nourished her a litle one. ²¹ At that time therfore, when Mardocheus abode at the kings gate, Bagathan, and Thares were angrie, two of the kings eunuches, that were porters, and were chiefe in the firft entrie of the palace: and they would make infurrection againft the king, and kil him. ²² Wherof Mardocheus ^a)gotte notice, and immediatly he told it to queene Efther: and fhe to the king in the name of Mardocheus, who had reported the thing vnto her. ²³ It was examined, and found: and they were both hanged on a gibbet. And it was put in the hiftories, and regiftred in the cronicles before the king.

Large C ch. 12.
v. 1.

Chapter 3

Aman aduanced by the king, is much offended that Mardocheus doth not adore him, 6. and therfore procureth the kings decree, to deftroy the whole nation of Iewes.

After thefe things king Affuerus aduanced Aman **D** the fonne of Amadathi, which was of the ftocke of Agag: & he put his throne aboue al the princes which he had. ² And al the kings feruantes, that

^a Mardocheus hearing fufpicious wordes and obferuing their actions fawe that they intended euel and informed the king, wherby their trefon was difcouered. *Rab. Calom. & Iofep.*

were in the doores of his pallace, bowed their knees, and adored Aman: for so the emperour had commanded them, ^{a)}onlie Mardocheus did not bowe his knee, nor adore him. ³ To whom the kings seruantes, that were chiefe at the doores of the pallace, said: Why doest thou aboute the rest not obserue the kings commandment? ⁴ And when they said this often, and he would not heare, they told Aman, desirous to know whether he would perseuere in his sentence: for he had told them that he was a Iew. ⁵ Which when Aman had heard, and had proued by experience that Mardocheus bowed not his knee vnto him, nor adored him, he was angrie exceedingly. ⁶ And he counted it a matter of nothing to lay his handes vpon Mardocheus alone: for he had heard that he was of the nation of the Iewes, and he would rather destroy al the nation of the Iewes, that were in the kingdom of Affuerus. ⁷ The first moneth (which is called Nifan) in the twelfth yeare of the reigne of Affuerus, the lot was cast into a potte which in Hebrew is called Phur, before Aman, ^{b)}in what day and what moneth the nation of the Iewes should be flayne: and there came forth the twelfth moneth, which is called Adar. ⁸ And Aman said to king Affuerus: There is a people disperfed through al the prouinces of thy kingdom, and separated one from another, vsing new lawes and ceremonies, moreouer also contemning the kings ordinances. And thou knowest very wel that it is not expedient for thy kingdom that they waxe insolent by libertie. ⁹ If it please thee, decree that they may perish, and I wil pay ten thousand talentes to the cofferers of thy treasure. ¹⁰ The king therefore tooke the ring that he vsed, from his hand, and gaue it to Aman the sonne of Amadathi of the progenie of Agag, the enemye of the Iewes, ¹¹ and he said to

The second part.
The Iewes danger
to be maffacted.

^a Aman exacted such honour as heathen people gaue to their lesse goddesses, which was also idolatrie, for Mardocheus was willing to giue him ciuill honour, *Euen to kisse the steppes of his feete, but feared* (and refused) *to geue Godlie honour to him.* ch. 13. v. 13. 14. S. Tho. 2. 2. q. 84. a. 1.

^b Such is the preposterous furie of rancour, to appoint the day of executing his malice, before he had got the kings decree.

him: The filuer which thou doest promife, be it thine: but concerning the people doe that which pleafeth thee. ¹² And the kings fcribes were called in the firft moneth, Nifan, the thirtieth day of the fame moneth: and there was written, as Aman had commanded, to al the kings lieutenantes, and iudges of the prouinces, and of diuers nations, as euerie nation could read, and heare according to the varietie of languages, in the name of king Affuerus: and the letters figned with his ring, ¹³ were fent by the kings poftes to al prouinces, that they should kil and deftroy al the Iewes, from boy vnto old man, children, and wemen, in one day, that is, in the thirtieth of the twelfth moneth, which is called Adar, and should fpoyle them of their goodes.

¹⁴ And ^athe content of the letters was this, that al prouinces might know, & prepare them felues againft the day aforefayd. ¹⁵ The poftes that were fent, made haft to fulfil the kings cōmandment. And immediatly the edict hong in Sufan, the king and Aman feasting, and al the Iewes that were in the citie, weeping.

E ch. 13. v. 1.
F

Chapter 4

Al the Iewes lament their imminent danger. 5. Mardocheus willeth Efther to intreate the king for their faf- tie. 11. She fearing to goe to the king contrarie to his law vncalled, 15. yet they al fafting and praying for her, she doth it.

VWhich things when Mardocheus had heard, he rent his garmentes, and was clothed with sackcloth, fprinkling ashes on his head: and in the ftreat of the middes of the citie he cried with a lowed voyce, shewing the anguish of his mind, ² and with this wayling going euen to the doores of the palace: for it was not lawful for one clothed with sackcloth

The third part.
The deliuerie of
the Iewes from
danger.

^a The letter at large is in the *feuen firft verfes of the 13. ch.* of which this is the fumme.

to enter the kings court. ³ In al prouinces alfo, townes, and places, to which the kings cruel decree was come, there was ^a)great mourning with the Iewes, fafting, howling, and weeping, manie vſing ſackcloth and aſhes for their couch. ⁴ And Efthers maides and the eunuches went in, and told her. Which ſhe hearing was aftonyed: and ſhe ſent a garment, that the ſackcloth being taken away, they ſhould put it on him: which he would not take. ⁵ And calling for Athach the eunuch, whom the king had geuen her for a ſeruant to Mardocheus, commanded him to goe and to learne of him, why he did this. ⁶ And Athach going forth went to Mardocheus ſtanding in the ſtreate of the citie, before the palace doore: ⁷ who told him al thinges that had chanced, how Aman had promiſed, that he would bring filuer into the kings treaſures for the ſlaughtre of the Iewes. ⁸ He gaue him alſo a copie of the edict which hong in Sufan, that he ſhould ſhew it to the queene, and ſhould admoniſh her to enter in to the king, and to intreate him for her people. ⁹ Athach returning told Efther al things, that Mardocheus had ſayd. ¹⁰ Who answered him, and bad that he ſhould ſay to Mardocheus: ¹¹ Al the kings ſeruantes, and al the prouinces that are vnder his dominion, know, that whether man, or woman, not called, ſhal enter in to the kings inner court, he muſt immediatly be ſlayne without al delay: vnleſſe perhaps the king ſtretch forth a golden rod vnto him, for a ſigne of clemencie, and ſo he may liue. I therefore how can I enter in to the king, which now theſe thirtie daies haue not bene called vnto him? ¹² Which when Mardocheus had heard, ¹³ he ſent word to Efther agayne, ſaying: Thincke not that thou mayſt deliuer thy owne life only, becauſe thou art in the kings houſe, aboue al the Iewes: ¹⁴ for if thou wilt now hold thy peace, ^b)the Iewes ſhal be deliuered

^a The firſt and beſt remedie in diſtreſſe is to do workes of penance for finnes cōmitted. *1. Cor. 11. v. 31.*

^b Great confidence in Gods helpe when mans helpe fayleth: and in dede this meanes by mouing the kings hart to grant Efthers petition was Gods ſpecial worke.

by an other occaſion: and thou, and thy fathers houſe ſhal periſh. And who knoweth whether thou cameſt to the kingdom therfore, that in ſuch a time thou mightſt be readie? ¹⁵ And agayne Eſther ſent to Mardocheus in theſe wordes: ¹⁶ Goe, and gather together al the Iewes, whom thou ſhalt find in Suſan, and pray ye for me. Eate ye not, and drinke not in three dayes, and three nightes: and I with my handmaydes in like maner wil faſt, and then wil I goe in to the king, doing agaynſt the law, not called, and deliuering my ſelf to death and to peril. ¹⁷ Mardocheus therfore went, and did al things that Eſther had commanded him.

G ch. 15 v. 1.

Chapter 5

Eſther ſtanding in the kings fight he calleth her, 4. ſhe requeſteth that he and Aman wil dine with her. 7. Againe ſhe inuiteth them. 9. Aman is more incenſed againſt Mardocheus, prepareth high gallowes to hang him on.

And the third day Eſther put on royal garments, and ſtood in the court of the kings houſe, which was the inner agaynſt the kings hal: but he ſate vpon his throne in the conſiftorie of the palace, againſt the doore of the houſe. ² And when he had ſeene Eſther the queene ſtanding, ſhe pleaſed his eies, and he put forth toward her the golden rod, which he held in his hand: who going neere, kiſſed the top of his rod. ³ And the king ſaid to her: What wilt thou queene Eſther? what is thy requeſt? yea if thou wilt aſke the halfe part of the kingdom, it ſhal be geuen thee. ⁴ But ſhe answered: If it pleaſe the king, I beſeech thee that thou come to me this day, and Aman with thee to a banquet, which I haue prepared. ⁵ And the king forthwith, cal ye Aman, quoth he, quickly, that he may obey Eſthers wil. The king therfore and Aman came to the banquet, which the queene had prepared for them. ⁶ And the king ſaid to her, after that he had drunke wine abundantly: What doeſt thou deſire to be geuen thee?

H

I ch. 15. v. 4.
K

and for what thing askest thou? although thou aske the halfpарт of my kingdom, thou shalt obteyne. ⁷ To whom Esther answered: ^a)My petition, and requestes are these: ⁸ If I haue found grace in the kings fight, and if it please the king to geue that which I aske, and to fulfil my petition: let the king and Aman come to the banquet, which I haue prepared them, and to morrow I wil open my wil to the king. ⁹ Aman therefore went forth that day ioyful and merie. And when he had seene Mardocheus fitting before the doores of the palace, and not onlie not to haue risen vp to him, but not so much as to haue moued from the place where he fate, he was wrath exceedingly: ¹⁰ and diffembling his anger, and returning into his house, he called together vnto him his freindes, and Zares his wife: ¹¹ and he declared to them the greatnesse of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and with how great glorie the king had aduanced him aboue al his princes and seruantes. ¹² And after these things he said: Queene Esther also hath called none other to the banquet with the king, but me: with whom to morrow also I shal dine with the king. ¹³ And wheras I haue al these things, I thinke I haue nothing so long as I shal see Mardocheus the Iew fitting before the kings doores. ¹⁴ And Zares his wife, & the rest of his frendes answered him: Cõmand a great beame to be prepared, hauing fiftie cubites in height, and speake in the morning to the king, that Mardocheus may be hanged vpon it, and so thou shalt goe ioyful with the king to the banquet. The counsell pleased him, and he commanded an high gallows to be prepared.

Chapter 6

The king hearing the good seruice of Mardocheus in detecting traitors, read in the chronicle (for which he had yet no rewarde) 4. commandeth Aman to honour him next to the king, 11. which he performeth.

^a This prudence in delaying to propose her petition, increased the kings desire to know it, moued him to promise more assuredly, & so bound him the more to accomplish it.

That night the king ^{a)}passed without sleepe, and he commanded the histories and chronicles of former times to be brought him. Which when they were read in his presence, ² they came to that place where it was written, how Mardocheus had uttered the treason of Bagathan, and Thares the eunuches, courting to kill king Affuerus. ³ Which when the king had heard, he said: What honour and reward hath Mardocheus received for this fidelity? His servants and ministers said to him: He hath received no reward at all. ⁴ And the king by and by, who is, quoth he, in the court? For Aman had entered the inner court of the kings house, that he might suggest to the king, and he might command Mardocheus to be hanged fast on the gibbet, which was prepared for him. ⁵ The servants answered: Aman standeth in the court. And the king said: Let him come in. ⁶ And when he was come in, he said to him: What ought to be done to the man, whom the king is desirous to honour? But Aman ^{b)}thinking in his heart, and supposing that the king would honour no other, but himself, ⁷ answered: The man, whom the king desireth to honour, ⁸ ought to be clothed with the kings garments, and to be set upon the horse, that is for the kings saddle, and to take the kings crowne upon his head, ⁹ and let the chiefe of the kings princes and nobles hold his horse, and going through the street of the citie, crie, and say: So shall he be honoured, whomsoever the king will honour. ¹⁰ And the king said to him: Make haste, and taking a robe and a horse, do that thou hast spoken, to Mardocheus the Jewe, which fitteth before the doores of the palace: Beware thou premitte nothing of those things, which thou hast spoken. ¹¹ Aman therefore tooke a robe and a horse, and putting it on Mardocheus, and

^a Gods eye which neuer slepeth saw what Aman intended: and for execution of his owne diuine iustice, vsed this meanes by subtracting slepe that time from the king and inspiring his mind to heare the histories read, and to reward good service donne. *Ioseph.*

^b Ambitious men are most blinde in conceits of their owne desires, and fortunes.

fetting him on the horfe, in the ftreat of the citie went before him, and cried: This honour is he worthie of, whom foeuer the king is willing to honour. ¹² And Mardocheus returned to the palace gate: and Aman made haft to goe into his houfe, mourning and his head couered: ¹³ and he told Zares his wife, and his frendes al things, that had chaunced him. To whom the wife men whom he had in counfel, and his wife answered: ^a)If Mardocheus be of the Iewes feede, before whom thou haft begune to fal, thou canft not refift him, but thou shalt fal in his fight. ¹⁴ As they were yet fpeaking, the kings eunuches came, and compelled him to goe quickly to the banket, which the queene had prepared.

Chapter 7

Efther entertayning the king and Aman againe at a feaft, is promifed to obtaine, whatfoeuer she wil aske. 3. She demandeth faftie for her felf, and al the people, againft Amans crueltie, 6. and Aman is hanged on the gallows, which he had prepared for Mardocheus.

The king therfore and Aman went in, to drinke with the queene. ² And the king faid to her alfo the fecond day, after he was warme with wine: What is thy petition Efther, that it may be geuen thee? and what wilt thou haue done? although thou shalt aske the half part of my kingdome, thou shalt obteyne. ³ To whom she answered: ^b)If I haue found grace in thyne eies ô king, and if it please thee, geue me my life for the which I make request, and my people for the which I befech. ⁴ For we are deliuered I and my people, to be deftroyed, murdered, and to perifh.

^a Either they had read Gods promife to the Iewes *Gen. 13. 15. &c.* or coniectured this by humane prudence.

^b After three dayes faft of al the Iewes with prayers and other workes of penance, Efther asked and obtained the faftie of the whole people more precious to her then halfe of the kingdom.

And would God we were fold for bondmen and bondwomen: it were a tolerable euil, and mourning I would hold my peace: but now it is our enemie, whose crueltie redoundeth vpon the king. ⁵ And king Affuerus anfwering, faid: Who is this, and of what might, that he dare doe thefe things? ⁶ And Efther faid: It is this Aman our aduerfarie and moft wicked enemie. Which he hearing ^a)forthwith was aftonifhed, not enduring to beare the countenance of the king and of the queene. ⁷ But the king being wrath rofe vp, and from the place of the banket went into the garden fet with trees. Aman alfo rofe vp, to intreate Efther the queene for his life, for he vnderftood that there was euil prepared him of the king. ⁸ Who when he was returned out of the garden fet with trees, and had entered into the place of the banket, he found Aman to haue fallen vpon the bed, wherein Efther lay, and he faid: The queene alfo he wil force in my prefence, in my houfe. Neither was the word yet paffed from the kings mouth, and immediatly they couered his face. ⁹ And Harbona, ^b)one of the eunuches which ftood wayting on the king, fayd: Behold the gibbet, which he had prepared for Mardocheus, that fpake for the king, ftandeth in Amans houfe, hauing in height fiftie cubites. To whom the king faid: Hang him vpon it. ¹⁰ Aman therfore was hanged on the gibbet, which he had prepared for Mardocheus: and the kings wrath ceafed.

Chapter 8

*Efther informeth the king that Mardocheus is her vn-
cle, he is aduanced in authoritie, 3. and contrarie letters
are fent that the Iewes be faued, 11. and their enemies
flayne. 15. Mardocheus is in high honour, and his whole
nation is eftemed and feared by other people.*

^a Horreur of a guiltie confcience is commonly the firft torment of a finner. *S. Chriſſocons 4. de Lagaro.*

^b VVhat litle truſt in falſe freindſhippe, when bad men once fal into difgrace.

That day king Affuerus gaue vnto Efther the queene the houle of Aman the Iewes aduerfarie, and Mardocheus went in before the kings prefence.

For Efther confeffed to him that he was her vnclē. ² And the king tooke the ring, which he had commanded to be taken agayne from Aman, and deliuered it to Mardocheus. And Efther appointed Mardocheus alfo ouer her houle. ³ Neither content with thefe things, she ^a)fel downe at the kings feete, and she wept and fpeaking to him prayed him, that he would command that the malice of Aman the Agagite, and his moft wicked deuifes, which he had inuented agaynft the Iewes, fhould be of none effect. ⁴ But he after the maner put forth the golden fcepter with his hand, by the which figne of clemencie was shewed: and fhe ryfing vp ftood before him, ⁵ and faid: If it pleafe the king, and if I haue found grace in his eies, and my requeft feme not contrarie to him, I befech thee, that the old letters of Aman the traytour and enemie of the Iewes, wherein he commanded that in al the kings prouinces they fhould perish, may by new letters be corrected. ⁶ For how can I abide the murder and flaughter of my people? ⁷ And king Affuerus answered Efther the queene, and Mardocheus the Iewe: Amans houle I haue geuen to Efther, and him felf I haue commanded to be hanged on the gallowes, becaufe he durft lay handes on the Iewes. ⁸ Write ye therfore to the Iewes, as pleafeth you, in the kings name, figning the letters with my ring. For this was the cuftome, that no man durft fpeake againft the letters, which were fent in the kings name, and were figned with his ring. ⁹ And the kings fcribes and fecretaries being cald for (and it was the time of the third moneth, which is called Sibān) the three and twentieth day therof letters were written, as Mardocheus would, to the Iewes, and to the princes,

^a Such honour is due to kinges, yea though they be Infideles, becaufe they haue terreftrial maieftie and authoritie from God. And the contrarie opinion and behauiour of heretikes, *vvhich defpice Dominion and blafpheme Maieftie*, is condemned by S. Iude, in *his Epiftle. v. 8.*

and the lieutenantes and iudges, which were rulers ouer the hundred and feuen and twentie prouinces, from India euen to Æthopia: to prouince and prouince, to people and people, according to their languages and characters, and to the Iewes, according as they could read, and heare. ¹⁰ And the faid letters, which were sent in the kings name, were signed with his ring, and sent by ryding postes: which running through al the prouinces, should preuent the old letters with the new meffages. ¹¹ To whom the king gaue commandment, that they should speake to the Iewes in euerie citie, and should command them to be gathered together in one, that they might stand for their liues, and might kil and deftroy al their enemies with their wiues and children and al their houfes, and to take the spoyle of them. ¹² And there was appointed through al the prouinces one day of reuenge, that is, the thirteenth of the twelfth moneth Adar. ¹³ And this was the content of the letter, that in al landes and peoples, which were subiect to the empire of king Affuerus, it should be notified, the Iewes to be readie to be reuenged of their enemies. ¹⁴ And there went forth swift postes carying the meffages, and the kinges edict hong in Sufan. ¹⁵ But Mardocheus going forth out of the palace, and from the kinges prefence, shining in royal garmentes, to wit, hyacinthine and skie colour, bearing a golden crowne on his head, and clothed with a filke and purple cloke. And the citie reioyfed, and was glad. ¹⁶ But to the Iewes there femed a new light to rife, ioye, honour, and dauncing. ¹⁷ With al peoples, cities, and prouinces, whither foeuer the kinges commandmentes came, meruelous reioyning, feastes, and banketes, and holie day: in so much that manie of the other nation and sect, were ioyned to their religion and ceremonies. For great terrour of the name of the Iewes had inuaded them al.

Large L ch. 16.
v. 1.

Chapter 9

The Iewes kil their enemies which would haue killed them, 6. namely the tenne sonnes of Aman are hanged

on gallowes, 13. more flaine the next day. 17. The day folowing is made holie, and fo to be kept euerie yeare.

M**T**herfore in the thirteenth day of the twelfth moneth, which we haue faid now before to be called Adar, when flaughter was prepared for al the Iewes, and their enemies gaped after their bloud, ^athe cafe being changed to the contrarie, the Iewes began to be fuperiours, and ^a)to reuenge them felues of their aduerfaries. ² And they were gathered together in euerie citie, and towne, and place, to extend their hand againft their enemies, and their perfecutors. And none durft refift, becaufe the feare of their greatnes did penetrate al peoples. ³ For both the iudges of the prouinces, and cap-taynes, and lieutenantes, and euerie dignitie, that was chiefe ouer euerie place and worke, extolled the Iewes for feare of Mardocheus: ⁴ whom they knew to be prince of the palace, and to be able to doe very much: the fame alfo of his name increafed dayly, and flew abroad through al mens mouthes. ⁵ Therfore the Iewes ftroke their enemies with a great flaughter, and flew them, repaying them that which they had prepared to doe to them: ⁶ in fo much that in Sufan alfo they killed fiue hundred men, befides the tenne fonnes of Aman the Agagite the enemye of the Iewes: whofe names be thefe: ⁷ Pharfan-datha, and Delphon, and Efphatha, ⁸ and Phoratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, ⁹ and Phermefta, and Arifai, and Aridai, and Iezatha. ¹⁰ Whom when they had flaine, they would not take prayes of their goodes. ¹¹ And by and by the number of them that were killed in Sufan, was brought to the king. ¹² Who faid to the queene: In the citie of Sufan the Iewes haue killed fiue hundred men,

^a VWhere no more danger remaineth remiffion of iniuries is more commendable then reuenge, but where malice continueth, and new danger may probably enfue, iuftice is neceffarie, and afterwards peace may be made more fecurely. *S. Bernard fer. 2. de verb. Apoft.*

besides the ^aten fennes of Aman: how great a flaughter thinkeft thou doe they make in al the prouinces? what askeft thou more, & what wilt thou that I cōmand to be done? ¹³ To whom she answered: If it please the king, let there authoritie be geuen to the Iewes, that as they haue done to day in Sufan, so also they may doe to morrow, and that the tenne fennes of Aman be hanged on gibbettes. ¹⁴ And the king commanded that it should be so done. And forthwith the edict hong in Sufan, and the tenne fennes of Aman were hanged. ¹⁵ The fourteenth day of the moneth Adar the Iewes being gathered together, there were killed in Sufan three hundred men: neither was their substance spoyled by them. ¹⁶ Yea and through al prouinces, which were subiect to the kings dominion, the Iewes stood for their liues, their enemies and persecutors being slayne: in so much that there was fully feuentie five thousand of them that were killed, and no man tooke any of their goodes.

¹⁷ And the thirteenth day of the moneth Adar was the first day with them al of the flaughter, & the fourteenth day they ceased to kil. Which they ordayned to be solemne, so that in it at al times afterward they gaue them selues to good chere, mirth & bankets. ¹⁸ But they that made the flaughter in the citie of Sufan, were occupied in the flaughter the thirteenth and fourteenth day of the same moneth: and in the fifteenth day they ceased to kil. And therefore they ordayned the same a solemne day of good cheere and ioyfulness. ¹⁹ But those Iewes, that abode in townes not walled and villages, ordayned the fourteenth day of the moneth Adar for bankettes and ioy, so that they reioyse in it, and fend one an other portions of bankets and meates. ²⁰ Mardocheus therefore wrote al these things, and being comprised in letters sent them to the Iewes, that abode in al the kings prouinces, as wel those that lay neere, as far of, ²¹ that they should

The fourth
part.

Other thinges
folowing their
deliuerie from
danger.

^a In the first flaughter Amans tenne fennes were slayne and afterwards also hanged. *v. 14.*

take ^a)the fourteenth and fifteenth day of the moneth Adar for feastes, and the yeare alwayes returning should celebrate them with folemne honour: ²² because in the same dayes the Iewes reuenged them felues of their enemies, and mourning and forrow were turned into mirth and ioy, and that these should be dayes of good cheere and gladneffe, and they should fend one to an other portions of meates, and should geue giftes to the poore. ²³ And the Iewes receiued into a folemne rite al things, which they had begune to doe at that time, and which Mardocheus by letters had commanded to be done. ²⁴ For Aman, the fonne of Amadathi of the focke of Agag, the enemye and aduerfarie of the Iewes, purposed euil againft them, to kil them and deftroy them: and he caft Phur, which in our language is turned, a lot. ²⁵ And afterward Elther went in to the king, befeching that his endeouours might by the kings letters be made voyde: & the euil that he had intended againft the Iewes, might returne vpon his owne head. Finally they hong both him and his fannes vpon the gallowes, ²⁶ and fince that time these dayes are called Phurim, that is, of Lottes: because Phur, that is, a lot, was caft into the pot. And al things, that were done, are contayned in the volume of this epiftle, that is, of this booke: ²⁷ and the thinges that they fufteyned, and that were afterward changed, the Iewes ^b)tooke vpon them felues and their feede, and vpon al, that would be ioyned to theyr religion, that it should be lawful for none to paffe without folemnie tie these dayes: which the writing teftifieth, and certaine times require, as yeares continually fuccede one an other. ²⁸ These are daies, which no obliuion shal euer put out: and al prouinces in al the world shal celebrate through out al generations: neither is there any citie, wherein the daies of Phurim, that is, of lottes, muft not

^a The Iewes in Sufan kept the fifteenth day holie, *v. 18.* those that dwelt in other places kept the fourteenth day.

^b A feaft intituted by Mardocheus was accepted and obserued by al the Iewes, as a constitution agreable and not contrarie to the law. *Deut. 4. v. 2. & 12. v. 32.*

be obserued of the Iewes, and of their progenie, which is bound to these ceremonies. ²⁹ And Eſther the queene the daughter of Abihail, and Mardocheus the Iew wrote alſo the ſecond epiſtle, that with al diligence this day ſhould be eſtabliſhed ſolemne for the time to come. ³⁰ And they ſent to al the Iewes, that were in the hundred and ſeuē and twentie prouinces of king Affuerus, that they ſhould haue peace, and receiue truth, ³¹ obſeruing the Daies of lottes, and in their time ſhould celebrate them with ioy: as Mardocheus and Eſther had appoynted, and they tooke vpon them to be obſerued of them ſelues, and of their feede, faſtes, and cries, and the daies of Lottes, ³² and al thinges, which are conteyned in the hiſtorie of this booke, which is called Eſther.

ANNOTATIONS

Pſal. 76. 1 The caſe being changed.) In this whole hiſtorie (as in manie other paſſages of holie Scripture) we ſee the meruelous change of the right hand of the higheſt. Firſt in the verie inſtant of extreme danger, the kinges face with burning eyes ſhewing the furie of his breaſt *ch. 15. v. 10.* was turned into mildnes towards Eſther. *v. 11.* Secondly proud Aman being aduanced in honour & office, aboue al princes of the kinges court, *ch. 3. v. 1.* was ſodainly forced publikely to lead Mardocheus his horſe, whom he moſt hated. *ch. 6. v. 10.* Thirdly, he was conſtrayned with loud voice to proclame his honour, whom he moſt deſpised and threatned. Fourthly, the ſame Aman, before called the father (as it were the onlie gouernour) of the king, *ch. 13. v. 6. ch. 16. v. 11.* was forthwith condemned for a traitor. *ch. 7. v. 8. ch. 16. v. 18.* Fifthly, he that could not abide to ſee Mardocheus, *ch. 5. v. 13.* afterward durſt not looke vpon the king, nor could endure his countenance. *ch. 7. v. 6.* Sixtly, he was hanged on the ſame gallows, which he had prepared for Mardocheus. *ch. 7. v. 9.* Seuently, vvheras he was not content with the death of Mardocheus alone, but procured the kings decree to deſtroy the whole nation, *ch. 3. v. 6.* and ſo feaſted with the king, when the Iewes mourned, *v. 15.* ſhortly after the king ſent new letters for the Iewes faſtie, geuing them leaue to kil whom foeuer they would of their enemies. *ch. 8. v. 8. 11.* Eightly, the ſame day which was deſigned for deſtruction, was made the day of ioy and exultation to the children of God. *ch. 9. v. 1. 17. ch. 16. v. 21. &c.* By which literal ſenſe Gods meruelous prouidence is manifeſtly ſhewed, neuer ſuffering his church to periſh. It hath moreouer

Great, and maruelous changes by the power of God.

Either a figure of our
B. ladie,

And of the Church.

two ſpecial myſtical ſenſes. Firſt, as ſaſtie of temporal life was procured to one nation by Eſthers interceſſion to king Affuerus, ſo general ſaluation is procured to al mankind by mediation of the bleſſed virgin Marie, cruſhing the ſerpents head; and the ſentence of death is changed by new letters, granting euerlaſting life, and glorie to al Gods true ſeruantes. Eſther alſo, as likewiſe Iudith, in figure of the Church (ſaith S. Ierom, *Prologo in Sophon.*) killed the aduerſaries, and deliuered Ifrael from danger of perifhing.

Chapter 10

Affuerus ſubdueth manie countries. 4. Mardocheus vnderſtandeth, and declareth his dreame. 9. God ſeparateth his people from other nations by a better lotte.

But king Affuerus made al the earth, and al the ilandes of the ſea tributaries. ² Whoſe ſtrength and empire, and the dignitie and highneſſe, wherewith he exalted Mardocheus, are written in the bookes of the Medes, and of the Perſians: ³ and how Mardocheus of the Iewes kinred was ſecond after king Affuerus: and great with the Iewes, and acceptable to the people of his bretheren, ſeking good to his people, and ſpeaking thoſe things, which pertayned to the good of his feede.

S. Ierome here aduertifeth the reader that he found al hitherto in the Hebrew. And the parcels which ſolow only in the Septuaginta Greke Edition which either they tranſlated out of the Hebrew, or added by inſpiration of the Holie Ghoſt.

That which is in the Hebrew I haue expreſſed moſt faithfully. And theſe things that ſolow, I found written in the common edition, which are conteyned in the greeke tongue and letters: and in the meane time this chapter was extant after the end of the booke: which according to our cuſtome, we haue marked with an Obelus before it, that is to ſay, a broch.

⁴ And Mardocheus ſaid: Theſe things are done of God. ⁵ I remember the dreame that I ſaw, ſignifying theſe verie things: neither was any of them fruſtrate. ⁶ The litle fountayne which grew into a riuer, and was turned into light, and into the funne, and abounded into manie waters, is Eſther, whom the king tooke to wife, and made her to be queene. ⁷ But the two dragons: I am, and Aman. ⁸ The nations, that were affembled:

The Greke of the
72. Interpreters.

are they that endeouored to defstroy the name of the Iewes. ⁹ And my nation: is Ifrael, which cried to our Lord, and our Lord hath faued his people: and he hath deliuered vs from al euils, and hath done great fignes and wonders among the nations: ¹⁰ and he commanded that there fhould be two lottes, one of the people of God, and the other of al Nations. ¹¹ And both lottes are come to the day appointed euen now from that time before God to al nations: ¹² and our Lord hath remembred his people, and hath had mercie on his inheritance. ¹³ And thefe daies fhall be obserued in the moneth of Adar the fourtenth, and fiftenth day of the fame moneth, with al diligence, and ioy of the people gathered into one affembly, through out al the generations hereafter of the people of Ifrael.

ANNOTATIONS

Chapter 11

An Appendix and conclufion of this hiftorie. 2. The dreame of Mardocheus.

In the fourth yeare when Ptolomee and Cleopatra reigned, Dofitheus, which named himfelf a Prieft, and of the Leuitical kinred, and Ptolomee his fonne brought this epiftle of Phurim, which they fayd Lyfimachus the fonne of Ptolomee did interprete in Ierufalem.

This beginning was in the common edition, which is neither extant in Hebrew, nor with any of ^a)the interpreters.

² In the fecond yeare, when Artaxerxes the greateft reigned, in the firft day of the moneth Nifan, Mardocheus the fonne of Iairi, the fonne of Semei, the fonne of Cis, of the tribe of Beniamin. ³ A Iew which dwelt in the citie of Sufan, a great man and among the firft of the kings

A

The firft part.
The preface,
and occafion
of Efthers ad-
uancement
and Amans
perfecuting the
Iewes.

^a Except the 72.

court, ^a)faw a dreame. ⁴ And he was of that number of captiues, whom Nabuchodonofor the king of Babylon had tranſported from Ierufalem with Ieconias the king of Iuda: ⁵ and this was his dreame: There appeared voices, and tumultes, and thunders and earth quakes, and perturbation vpon the earth: ⁶ and behold ^b)two great dragons, prepared one againſt an other into bat-tel. ⁷ At whoſe crie al nations were rayfed vppe, to fight againſt the nation of the iuft. ⁸ And that was a day of darkeneſſe and danger, of tribulation and diſtreſſe, and great feare vpon the earth. ⁹ And the nation of the iuft fearing their euils, was trubled, and prepared to death. ¹⁰ And they cried to God: and they crying, ^c)a litle foun-tayne grew into a verie great riuer, and abounded into verie manie waters. ¹¹ Light and funne aroſe, and the humble were exalted, and they deuoured the glorious. ¹² Which when Mardocheus had feene, and riſen out of his bed, he muſed what God would doe: and he had it fixed in his mind, deſirous to know what the dreame ſhould ſignifie?

Large B chap. 1.
v. 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Chapter 12

The conſpiracie of two eunuches, detected by Mardocheus, is repeted, 6. and Amans malice againſt him for the fame.

C And he abode that time in the kings court with Bagatha and Thara the kings eunuches, which were porters of the palace. ² And when he vnderſtood their cogitations, and had throughly feene

^a Mardocheus had this dreame before Amans aduancement or his owne and the peoples danger.

^b Mardocheus was a good dragon, and Aman a bad one.

^c Eſther by her fountaine of teares and humble ſupplication, quenched a great flame of Gentiles againſt the Iewes. *ch. 10.*

their cares he learned that they went about to lay hands on king Artaxerxes, and he told the king therof. ³ Who hauing them both in examination, when they had confessed he commanded them to be led to death. ⁴ But the king wrote that which was done, in the comentaries: and Mardocheus also committed the memorie of the thing to writing. ⁵ And the king commanded him, that he should abide in the court of the palace, geuing him giftes for the delation. ⁶ But Aman the fonne of Amadathi the Bugeite was most glorious before the king, and would hurt Mardocheus, and his people, ^{a)}for the two eunuches of the king, which were put to death.

Large D ch. 3.
v. 1.

ch. 3. v. 3. Hitherto the proeme. That which foloweth was fet in that place, where it is written in the volume: *And should spoyle their goodes.* VVhich we found in the common edition only.

ANNOTATIONS

Chapter 13

A copie of the epistle which Aman sent to al prouinces to destroy the Iewes. 8. And Mardocheus his prayer for the people.

And this was the copie of the letter. The most great king Artaxerxes from India vnto Æthiopia, to the princes of an hundred and feuen and twentie prouinces, and to the captaynes, that are subiect to his empire, greeting. ² Wheras I reigned ouer manie nations, and had subdewed al the world to my dominion, I would not abuse the greatnes of my might, but with clemencie and lenitie gouerne my subiectes, that passing their life quietly without any terrour, they might enioy peace wished of al men. ³ But when I demanded of my counsellers how this might be accomplished,

E

^a Here it appeareth that Aman was a fauourer of traitors or perhaps of the same conspiracie.

^a)one that excelled the reft in wifedom and fidelitie, and was fecond after the king, Aman by name, ⁴ told me that there was a people difperfed through the whole world, which vfed new lawes, and doing againft the cuftomes of al Nations, contemned the cōmandmentes of kings, and brake the concord of al nations by their diffention. ⁵ Which when we had learned, feing one nation rebellious againft al kind of men to vfe peruerfe lawes, and to goe againft our commandmentes, and to difturbe the peace and concord of the prouinces fubieft to vs, ⁶ we haue commanded that whomfoeuer Aman fhall fhew, who is chiefe ouer al the prouinces, and fecond after the king, and whom we honour in fteed of a father, they with their wiues and children be deftroyed of their enemies, and that none haue pitie on them the fourteenth day of the twelfth moneth Adar of this prefent yeare: ⁷ that the wicked men going downe to hel in one day, may reftore the peace to our empire, which they had difturbed.

F ch. 3. v. 14.

Hitherto the copie of the letter.

That which foloweth I found written after that place, where it is read, *And Mardocheus going forth, did al thinges, that Efther had commanded him.* Yet it in neither in the Hebrew, nor extant with any of ^b)the interpreters.

ch. 4. v. 17.

G ⁸ But Mardocheus befought our Lord, mindeful of al his workes, ⁹ and faid: Lord Lord king omnipotent, for in thy dominion are al thinges fet, and there is none that can refift thy wil, if thou determine to faue Ifrael. ¹⁰ Thou madft heauen and earth, and whatfoeuer is conteyned in the compaffe of heauen. ¹¹ Thou art Lord of al, neither is there that can refift thy maieftie. ¹² Thou vnderftandeft al thinges, and knoweft that I haue not done this for pride and contumelie, and any defire of glorie, that I adored not the proud Aman, ¹³ (for gladly would I be readie for the faluation of Ifrael to kiffe euen the

^a Great hurt to a king, that is ruled by one counfeler. Salomon teacheth, that *VWhere are manie counfelters, cogitations are confirmed. Prou. 15. v. 22.*

^b Except the 72.

steppes of his feete,) ¹⁴ but I feared lest I should transferre the honour of my God to a man, and lest I should adore any except my God. ¹⁵ And now ô Lord king, the God of Abraham haue mercie vpon thy people, because our enemies wil destroy vs, and extinguiſh thyne inheritance. ¹⁶ Deſpiſe not thy portion, which thou haſt redemed to thyſelf out of Ægypt. ¹⁷ Heare my prayer, and be propitious to thy lot and corde, and turne our mourning into ioy, that liuing we may prayſe thy name ô Lord, and doe not ſhut the mouthes of them that ſing to thee. ¹⁸ Al Ifrael alſo with like mind and ſupplication cried to our Lord, becauſe certayne death did hang ouer them.

ANNOTATIONS

Chapter 14

Elther prayeth in humilitie of ſpirite, that God wil deliuer the people from the crueltie of Aman.

Elther alſo the queene fled to our Lord, fearing the peril that was at hand. ² And when ſhe had laid of her royal garmentes, ſhe tooke clothes meete for weeping and mourning, and for diuers oyntmentes, filled her head with aſhes and dung, and her bodie ſhe humbled with faſtes: and al the places, in which before ſhe was accuſtomed to reioyce, ſhe filled with tearing of her heares. ³ And ſhe befought our Lord the God of Ifrael, ſaying: My Lord, which onlie art our king, helpe me ſolitarie woman, and which haue no other helper beſide thee. ⁴ My peril is in my handes. ⁵ I haue heard of my father that thou Lord didſt take Ifrael out from al Gentiles, and our fathers out of al their predeceſſours before, that thou mighteſt poſſeſſe an euerlaſting inheritance, and thou haſt done to them as thou haſt ſpoken. ⁶ We haue finned in thy fight, and therefore thou haſt deliuered vs into the handes of our enemies: ⁷ for we haue worſhipped their goddeſſes. Thou

art iuft ô Lord. ⁸ And now it fuffifeth them not, that they opprefse vs with moft hard feruitude, but imputing the force of their handes to the might of their idols, ⁹ they wil change thy promiffes, and deftroy thine inheritance, and fhut the mouthes of them that prayfe thee, and extinguiſh the glorie of thy temple and altar, ¹⁰ that they may open the mouthes of Gentiles, and prayfe the ſtrength of idols, and magnifie a carnal king for euer. ¹¹ Deliuer not ô Lord thy ſcepter to them ^a)that are not, leſt they laugh at our ruine: but turne their counſel vpon them, and deftroy him, that hath begune to do cruelly againſt vs. ¹² Remember ô Lord: and ſhew thy ſelf to vs in the time of our tribulation, and geue me confidence Lord king of goddes, and of al power: ¹³ geue me ſpeech wel framed in my mouth in the preſence of the lion, and turne his hart into the hatred of our enemy, that both him ſelf may periſh, and the reſt that conſent vnto him. ¹⁴ But deliuer vs in thy hand, and helpe me, hauing no other helpe, but thee ô Lord which haſt the knowlege of al things, ¹⁵ and knoweſt that I hate the glorie of the wicked, and ^b)deſt the bed of the vncircumciſed, and of euerie ſtranger. ¹⁶ Thou knoweſt my neceſſitie, that I abhorre the ſigne of my pride and glorie, which is vpon my head in the daies of my oftentation, and deſt it as the cloth of a woman in her monthlie floores, and weare it not in the daies of my ſilence, ¹⁷ and that I haue not eaten at Amans table, neither the kings banquet hath pleaſed me, and that I haue not drunke the wine of libamentes: ¹⁸ and that thy handmayde did neuer reioyce, ſince I was tranſported hither vnto this day, but in thee ô Lord the God of Abraham. ¹⁹ O God ſtrong aboue al, heare the voyce of them, that haue no other hope, and deliuer vs from the hand of the wicked, and deliuer me from my feare.

^a *Idoles are nothing in the vworld, 1. Cor. 8.* but bare imaginations of men.

^b Of herſelfe, nor for worldlie glorie ſhe deſired not to marie a heathen king but for the cōmon good ſhe married him, God diſpenſing with the law in this behalf. See *ch. 2.*

ANNOTATIONS

Chapter 15

Mardocheus caufeth Efther to goe to the king and intreate for the people. 10. She is terrified by his countenance, but God turneth his hart, and he calleth her curteoufly to him.

This alfo I found added in the common edition. And he commanded her (*no doubt but Mardocheus commanded Efther*) that ſhe ſhould goe vnto the king, and make petition for her people and for her countrie. ² Remember (quoth he) the daies of thy humilitie, how thou waſt brought vp in my hand, becauſe Aman the ſecond after the king hath ſpoken againſt vs vnto death: ³ and doe thou inuocate our Lord, and ſpeake to the king for vs, & deliuer vs from death.

G

H ch. 13. v. 8.

Moreouer this alfo which foloweth I found in the common Greke.

⁴ And in the third day ſhe layd away ^athe garmentes which ſhe ware, & was clothed in her glorie. ⁵ And when ſhe gliftered in royal apparel, and had inuocated God the ruler and fauour of al, ſhe tooke two wayting maydes, ⁶ and vpon the one in deede ſhe leaned, as it were for delicatnes and verie much tendernes not able to beare vp her bodie: ⁷ but the other of her maydes folowed her ladie, bearing vp her garmentes trayling on the ground. ⁸ But her ſelf in al her countenance of colour like the roſe, alfo with gracious and ſhining eies ^bhid her mind ful of ſorow, and exceding feare. ⁹ She therfore entring through al the doores in order, ſtood before the king, where he fate vpon the throne of his kingdom, clothed with royal garmentes, and glittering in gold, and pretious ſtones, and he was terrible to behold.

^a *Vestimenta oratus* not *ornatus* her praying weede.

^b A notable example for Noble women, how to kepe their ſtate, & remaine neuertheles humble in hart.

¹⁰ And when he had lifted vp his face, and with burning eies had fhewed the furie of his breaft, the Queene fel downe, and her colour being changed into palenes, fhe refted her wearie head vpon her handmayde. ¹¹ And God turned the kings fpirit in to mildnes, and in haft and fearing he lept out of the throne, and holding her vp in his armes, til fhe came to her felf, fpake her fayre with thefe wordes: ¹² What ayleth thee Efther? I am thy brother, feare not. ¹³ Thou shalt not die: for this law is not made for thee, but for the common forte. ¹⁴ Come neere therfore, and touch the fcepter. ¹⁵ And when fhe held her peace, he tooke the golden rod, & put it vpon her necke, and kiffed her, and fayd: Why fpeakeft thou not to me? ¹⁶ Who answered: I faw thee, my Lord, ^aas an angel of God, and my hart was trubled for the feare of thy glorie. ¹⁷ For thou, my lord, art exceding maruelous, and thy face is ful of graces. ¹⁸ And when she fpake, she fel downe agayne, and was almoft in a fwoone. ¹⁹ But the king was trubled, and al his feruantes did comfort her.

K ch. 5. v. 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Chapter 16

A copie of king Artaxerxes letters, which he fent for the faftie of the Iewes, 10. declaring the infolencie of Aman and dutiful feruice of Mardocheus and Efther, 20. commanding al his prince to affift the Iewes, and with them to celebrate the day which is changed from forow to ioy.

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

^a By this comparifon of angels she ment that the king excelled al or moft part of men.

The great king Artaxerxes, from India to Æthiopia to the dukes and princes of an hundred twentie feuen prouinces, which obey our commandment, fendeth greeting. ² Manie haue abufed vnto pride the goodnes of princes, and the honour, that hath beene beftowed vpon them: ³ and they do not only endeuour to opprefse the kings fubiectes, but not bearing the glorie that is geuen them, they worke treafon againft them that gaue it. ⁴ Neither are they content not to geue thanks for the benefittes, and to violate in them felues the lawes of humanitie, but they thincke they can efcape the fentence of God alfo who feeth al things. ⁵ And they haue burft forth into fo great madnes, that fuch as obferue diligently the offices committed vnto them, and do al thinges fo that they are worthie of al mens prayfe, them they endeuour to ouerthrow by fubtil meanes of lies, ⁶ whiles with craftie fraude they deceiue the fimple eares of princes, and efteming others by their owne nature. ⁷ Which thing is proued both out of old hiftories, and by thefe thinges, which are done daily, how ^athe enterprifes of kinges are depraued by the euil fuggeftions of certaine men. ⁸ Wherefore we muft prouide for the peace of al prouinces. ⁹ Neither muft you thincke, if we command diuers things, that it cometh of the lightneffe 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 depriue vs of kingdom and life. ¹³ For by certaine new deuifes and not heard of before he hath fought to kil Mardocheus, by

Ch. 13. v. 6.

^a At laft this king faw his owne errour in beleuing one falfe counfeller ouer much. *ch. 13. v. 3.*

whose fidelitie and benefittes we liue, and Eſther the felow of our kingdom with al their nation: ¹⁴ thincking 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 moſt wicked of men oppoynted to be flayne, in no fault at al, but contrariwiſe vſing iuſt lawes, ¹⁶ and the children of the higheſt and the greateſt, 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 thoſe 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 Suſan, 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 ſend, let it be ſet forth in al cities, that it be lawful for the Iewes to vſe their owne lawes. ²⁰ Whom you muſt helpe, that thoſe, which had prepared them ſelues to their ſlaughter, they may kil the thirtieth 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 alſo this day among other feſtiual daies, and celebrate it with al ioy, that hereafter alſo it may be knowne, ²³ that al, which faythfully obey the Perfians, receiue worthie reward for their fidelitie: and they that lie in wayte againſt their kingdom, periſh for their wicked fact. ²⁴ And euerie prouince and citie, that wil not be partaker of this ſolemnitie, let it periſh by ſword and fyre, and let it ſo be deſtroyed, that not onlie men, but alſo beaſtes haue no acceſſe therto for euer, for an example of contempt, and difobedience.

M chap. 9. v. 1.

ANNOTATIONS

^a As Mardocheus ſuggeſted, the king confirmed the obſeruatiō of a feaſt in memorie of Gods benefice and ſo both Iewes and Gentiles kept it.