

“ Thus saith the Lord, go down to the house  
 “ of the king of Judah, and speak there this  
 “ word; execute ye judgment and righteousness,  
 “ and deliver the spoiled out of the  
 “ hand of the oppressor; and do no wrong;  
 “ do no violence to the stranger, the father-  
 “ less and the widow; neither shed innocent  
 “ blood in this place.” Then adds, “ That  
 “ in so doing they should prosper; but if ye  
 “ will not hear these words, I swear by my-  
 “ self, saith the Lord, that this house shall  
 “ become a desolation,” Jer. xxii.

The king, the princes and rulers were agreed in oppression before the Babylonish captivity; for whatever courts of justice were retained amongst them; or however they decided matters betwixt men of estates, it is plain that the cause of the poor was not judged in equity.

It appears that the great men amongst the Jews were fully resolved to have slaves, even of their own brethren, Jer. xxxiv. Notwithstanding the promises and threatenings of the Lord, by the prophet, and their solemn covenant to set them free, confirmed by the imprecation of passing between the parts of a calf cut in twain; intimating, by that ceremony, that on breach of the covenant, it were just for their bodies to be so cut in pieces.—Yet after all, they held fast to their old custom, and called home the servants whom they had set free.—“ And ye were  
 “ now turned, and had done right in my  
 “ fight, in proclaiming liberty every man to  
 “ his