

## SERMON.

### ii. SAMUEL xxiv. 14.

*And David said unto God, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of men.*

DAVID's sin, in causing Israel to be numbered, probably consisted in pride, vanity and ambition. When he was afterward humbled under the mighty hand of God, like a true penitent, being more ready to condemn himself than others, he "spake unto the Lord, when he saw the angel, that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, (meaning the people) what have they done?" The people, however, were far from being so guiltless as David supposed. Their sins were the primary occasion of the judgment, that fell upon them. In the beginning of the chapter it is said, "again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah." God took off restraint, and suffered such wrong passions as were working in David's heart, to break out into act; left him to the guidance of those wrong passions, which Satan tempted him to indulge. That in this sense God moved David is evident from 1 Chron. 21 ch. "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." They had offended the Lord, by following Absalom who "stole the hearts of the men of Israel;" and afterward by following "a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri;" and by otherwise abusing the great prosperity which they had enjoyed. Although visited with a three years famine, they did not humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. He therefore suffered the pride, ambition and vanity of their ruler, which also deserved punishment, to break forth into a measure, which brought their case to a crisis, and ripened him and them for severe and humiliating chastisement. He suffered David to number Israel. "Because this was done without any color of necessity, and out of mere ostentation and carnal confidence, as David's own conscience told him,"\* God was displeased with this thing, and smote Israel. David's heart indeed smote him, after he had done this, and he

\* Pool.