

Psalm 138:2. Zechariah 8:3, 8 – 9. JOHN 1:17. 18:37. 17:17, 24 – 25. II John 2 – 4.

in strength, while so great a multitude obeys his injunctions?"

5. Now when this man had held his peace, the third of them, who was Zorobabel, began to instruct them about women, and about truth, who said thus: "Wine is strong, as is the king also, whom all men obey, but women are superior to them in power; for it was a woman that brought the king into the world; and for those that plant the vines and make the wine, they are women who bear them, and bring them up: nor indeed is there any thing which we do not receive from them; for these women weave garments for us, and our household affairs are by their means taken care of, and preserved in safety; nor can we live separate from women. And when we have gotten a great deal of gold and silver, and any other thing that is of great value, and deserving regard, and see a beautiful woman, we leave all these things, and with open mouth fix our eyes upon her countenance, and are willing to forsake what we have, that we may enjoy her beauty, and procure it to ourselves. We also leave father, and mother, and the earth that nourishes us, and frequently forget our dearest friends, for the sake of women; nay, we are so hardy as to lay down our lives for them. But what will chiefly make you take notice of the strength of women is this that follows: Do not we take pains, and endure a great deal of trouble, and that both by land and sea, and when we have procured somewhat as the fruit of our labours, do not we bring them to the women, as to our mistresses, and bestow them upon them? Nay, I once saw the king, who is lord of so many people, smitten on the face by Apame, the daughter of Rabsases Themasius, his concubine, and his diadem taken away from him, and put upon her own head, while he bore it patiently; and when she smiled he smiled, and when she was angry he was sad; and according to the change of her passions, he flattered his wife, and drew her to reconciliation by the great humiliation of himself to her, if at any time he saw her displeased at him."

6. And when the princes and rulers looked one upon another, he began to speak about truth; and

\* The reader is to note, that although the speeches or papers of these three of the king's guard are much the same, in our Third Book of Esdras, ch. iii. and iv., as they are here in Josephus, yet that the introduction of them is entirely different, while in our Esdras the whole is related as the contrivance of the three of the king's guards themselves; and even the mighty rewards are spoken of as proposed by themselves, and the speeches are related to have been delivered by themselves to the king in writing, while all is contrary in Josephus. I need not say whose account is the most probable, the matters speak for themselves; and there can be no doubt but Josephus's history is here to be very much preferred before the other. Nor indeed does it seem to me at all unlikely that the whole was a contriv-

he said, "I have already demonstrated how powerful women are; but both these women themselves, and the king himself, are weaker than truth; for although the earth be large, and the heaven high, and the course of the sun swift, yet are all these moved according to the will of God, who is true and righteous, for which cause we also ought to esteem truth to be the strongest of all things, and that what is unrighteous is of no force against it. Moreover, all things else that have any strength are mortal and short-lived, but truth is a thing that is immortal and eternal. It affords us not indeed such a beauty as will wither away by time, nor such riches as may be taken away by fortune, but righteous rules and laws. It distinguishes them from injustice, and puts what is unrighteous to rebuke."\*

7. So when Zorobabel had left off his discourse about truth, and the multitude had cried out aloud that he had spoken the most wisely, and that it was truth alone that had immutable strength, and such as never would wax old, the king commanded that he should ask for somewhat over and above what he had promised, for that he would give it him because of his wisdom, and that prudence wherein he exceeded the rest; "and thou shalt sit with me," said the king, "and shalt be called my cousin." When he had said this, Zorobabel put him in mind of the vow he had made in case he should ever have the kingdom. Now this vow was, "to rebuild Jerusalem, and to build therein the temple of God; as also to restore the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged, and carried to Babylon. And this," said he, "is that request which thou now permittest me to make, on account that I have been judged to be wise and understanding." Today it is the spiritual Temple

8. So the king was pleased with what he had said, and arose and kissed him; and wrote to the toparchs and governors, and enjoined them to conduct Zorobabel and those that were going with him to build the temple. He also sent letters to those rulers that were in Syria and Phœnicia to cut down and carry cedar trees from Lebanon to Jerusalem, and to assist him in building the city. He also wrote to them, that all the captives who should go to Judea I Peter 1:18 – 20. 2:4 – 6. I Corinthians 12:12 – 13, 26 – 27. ance of king Darius's own, in order to be decently and inoffensively put in mind by Zorobabel of fulfilling his old vow for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, and the restoration of the worship of the "one true God" there. Nor does the full meaning of Zorobabel, when he cries out, 3 Esd. iv. 40, "Blessed be the God of truth;" and here, "God is true and righteous;" or even of all the people, 3 Esd. iv. 41, "Great is truth, and mighty above all things;" seem to me much different from this, "There is but one true God, the God of Israel." To which doctrine, such as Cyrus and Darius, &c., the Jews' great patrons, seem not to have been very averse, though the entire idolatry of their kingdoms made them generally conceal it.