CALVIN'S COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH

VOLUME 1

Chapters 1–32



JOHN CALVIN

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Commentary on Isaiah

Volume 1: Chapters 1–32

John Calvin

Translated by the Rev. William Pringle

Monergism Books

Commentary on Isaiah
Volume 1: Chapters 1–32

John Calvin

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Translator's Preface to Volume I

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

All who take delight in the Holy Scriptures are familiarly acquainted with the writings of The Prophet Isaiah. Every variety of taste finds in them its appropriate gratification. Lofty conceptions, illustrated by splendid imagery, and clothed in language usually copious and flowing, sometimes abrupt, but always graceful, leave no room for hesitation to pronounce him, with Bishop Lowth, to be "the most sublime and elegant of the Prophets of the Old Testament." He is regarded with peculiar veneration as an honest, fearless, and able messenger of the Most High God, boldly reproving nobles and monarchs, denouncing the judgments of Heaven against all transgressors, and asserting the claims of the Divine law and government above all human authority. In his Prophecies he takes a wide range, surveys those nations which power or wealth or learning or commerce had raised to the highest celebrity in those remote times, and describes their rise and fall, and wonderful revolutions, so eagerly traced by us in the page of history, as the execution of Jehovah's counsels, and the arrangements of unerring wisdom. But chiefly does he pour out rich instruction concerning the Messiah, whose life and sufferings, and death and glorious reign, he delineates so faithfully, and with such thrilling interest, that he has obtained the appellation of "The Evangelical Prophet." To the devout reader there is added a still more powerful attraction in his seraphic piety, which, breathing throughout all his communications, and kindling a holy flame in the hearts of the children of God, attests the important fact, not only that in the visions of God he reached the noblest heights of inspiration, but — which was far more valuable — that he enjoyed habitual and intimate fellowship with *The Father of Spirits.*

The period during which he exercised the prophetical office is declared, in the inscription of his Prophecies, to have been during the reigns *of Uzziah,*

Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Beyond this general indication nothing certain can be obtained; for dates were only beginning to attract the notice of civilized nations, and had not yet been examined with such carefulness, or denoted with such precision, as their importance demands. The Translator of "The Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets" (volume 1, page 12) tells us that Isaiah flourished between 810 B.C and 698 B.C. This interval of 112 years leaves a large margin, which chronologers have filled up with considerable diversity of views.

Assuming 763 B.C. to be the year in which the prophetic ministry of Isaiah is believed by some to have commenced, we are led to observe this remarkable coincidence, that about thirteen years earlier began the Grecian or Olympic era, which opens with the First Olympiad; and about ten years later began the Roman Era, which opens with the founding of the city of Rome. This reminds us to glance at the contemporary history of nations unlike in their origin and progress, and in the effects which they produced on the human race. Historians, to whom the name of despised Palestine was scarcely known, have traced the brilliant career of those gigantic empires by which it was overshadowed. While amidst a long list of warriors, and poets, and orators, and statesmen, who were supposed to have achieved a deathless fame, those empires hastened to decay, Isaiah and his brethren the prophets were laying the foundations of the universal dominion and glorious reign of Him who *hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written*, King of kings, and Lord of lords. (Revelation 19:16.). During the season of highest prosperity, when the literature of Greece and Rome, which even now exerts a powerful influence on modern Europe, enjoyed its most exalted renown, that undisguised heathenism which disowned the government and denied the perfections of the Most High God, presented a humiliating contrast to those noble and affecting views of the Divine nature and attributes and works which prevailed in the land of Jehovah. The difference reminds us of one of the plagues of Egypt; for there was spread over the nations a moral darkness, *a darkness which might be felt, but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.* (Exodus 10:21, 23.). Rome was proud of having reduced that favoured land to the rank of one of her provinces, and struck medals to represent Judea sitting under a palm-tree bewailing her captivity; but the religion of Judea, instead of being crushed and annihilated, assumed the more lovely aspect of the religion of Jesus, and *went forth conquering and to conquer.*

Many of our Author's published Commentaries were nothing else than reports of his public Lectures. Budaeus [1] has explained the manner in which these reports were prepared. The language was extemporaneous, and, had we not known his prodigious command of the Latin tongue, we might have wondered at the elegance with which he spoke on such occasions; but his slow and distinct utterance, as Scaliger assures us, was such as to enable

[1] See Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets —p. xxiv.

an expert writer to take down the very words which Calvin used. Two or three scribes were usually employed, and a copy, drawn out by a comparison of their manuscripts, was submitted to the perusal of the Lecturer, who, after making any corrections which appeared to be necessary, attested it as a faithful record of what had been uttered.

This Commentary has come down to us in a still more authentic shape. Not only does the Author assert, in his Dedication to King Edward, which was prefixed to the First Edition, that it had been "faithfully and skillfully compiled from his Lectures," [2] but in his Dedication to Queen Elizabeth, prefixed to the Second Edition, he pronounces the revision to have been so thorough and laborious, that "it ought justly to be reckoned a new work." [3] It is highly gratifying to find that, in the exposition of a book so important and extensive as the prophecies of Isaiah, Calvin gave the fruits of his mature judgment, while he was in the full vigour of his age.

Clement Cotton translated this Commentary into English from the French Version, in 1609. His translation, though not altogether suitable to modern taste, is faithful, vigorous, idiomatic, and not inelegant. To this volume is prefixed his Title-page and "Epistle Dedicatorie," together with a curious "Epigram," in which a physician of that period expresses his warm admiration of the great Reformer.

In the concluding volume of this Commentary will be given a Literal Translation of Calvin's Latin Version, and copious Indices similar to those which have already appeared in the other Commentaries.

Auchterarder, 17th May, 1850.

[2] See p. xix.
[3] See p. xvi.

Clement Cotton's Dedication

TO THE HIGH AND MIGHTIE PRINCE,
HENRIE
PRINCE OF GREAT BRITTAINE,
SONNE AND HEIRE APPARANT TO OUR
Soveraigne Lord, James King of *Great Brittaine, etc.*
AND TO THE MOST NOBLE AND
VERTUOUS PRINCESSE,
THE LADY ELIZABETHS GRACE,
His Highnesse most deare Sister; all honour and happinesse, with eternall glorie through Christ Jesus.

Most gracious and renowned Princes, having translated out of French into our English tongue the booke of the prophecie of *Isaiah*, interpreted and expounded by Master *John Calvin*, of reverend memory: I humblie crave that it may be published under your most Princely names and protection. The reason of this my humble petition is, that the honor of so noble a worke may not be imbased by the meanes of my endevours. This Prophet, by birth, was the sonne of *Amos*, esteemed by many to have been brother to *Azarias* King of Judah, and Father in law to King *Manasses*: which being so, this Prophet was by birth of the blood Royal, and descended of the house of *David*, which for the promise of Christ to come of him, was the most noble house of all the Kings of the earth. Being so borne, his education could not be but Princely, and his bringing up in all good learning, wisdome, vertue, and honor. His spirituall graces, not attained unto by ordinarie meanes, but inspired into him immediately by the Spirit of God, were excellent. This appeareth particularly in the sixth Chapter of this Prophecie, declaring that an Angell of God with a burning coale taken from the Lords Altar, and laide to the mouth of the Prophet, refined his lips and his tongue, that they

became pure and precious as the finest Gold. The same is manifest in all the booke of his Prophecie; wherein both the light and the heate of that heavenly fire appeareth. For he not onely declared the will of God sincerely, according to the lawe and testimonie delivered to *Moses*, but also foreshewed the future events of the Kingdome of *Judah*, and of all the flourishing states and Kingdomes of his time.

He Prophecieth also of the birth of Jesus Christ, as if hee had been taught by the Angell *Gabriel*; who brought the annunciation and message of it to the blessed Virgin his mother. Of his passion and death he spake, as if with the Apostle *John* he had stoode by when he was crucified. His resurrection he described, as if with all the Apostles he had stoode upon Mount Olivet, where the Lord tooke the cloudie of glorie as his heavenly Chariot to ascend and goe up to his Father. His zeale and indignation against sinne is evident every where, in his sharp reproofes of the offences of all estates.

Finally, the book of his Prophecy beareth written in the head of it the names of foure Kings, in whose time he prophecied; and before whom as a vessell of golde he bare the name of God with great honour. All which things being royall, it seemed to me most convenient that his booke should still beare in the front of it the names of Princes. And as hee foreshewed that Kings should be Fosterfathers, and Queenes Nurces of the Church of Christ, so my desire was that his booke might be published under the names and protection of Christian Princes.

Moreover, I was led hereunto by the example of this Interpreter, whose exposition upon *Isaiahs* prophesie I translate; namelie, of *M. John Calvin*, a man in his time of excellent pietie and learning; and one of the great lights, whereby it hath pleased God both to chase away the errors of poperie, as the darkness of the shadow of death; and to cause his marvellous and comfortable light of the Gospell to shine unto this present age. For hee dedicated his first exposition of this booke to the young Prince, King *Edward* the sixth, of famous memorie, for the princelie graces, for the zealous love of true religion, and of al heroical vertues, wherewith in his young yeeres he raised an admirable expectation of future glorie, if his precious life had long continued. He was also most worthily renowned with highest glorie, for that gracious reformation in religion, which was established by his regal authority, and which our English Church at this day with great comfort doth enjoy, under the happie government of our Soveraigne Lord the King, your most noble and renowned Father.

Furthermore, the same Author setting out againe this Commentary, amplified and enlarged, he dedicated this second edition to our late most gracious Queene *Elizabeth*, worthie of eternall memorie in this Kingdome, for the reestablishing (after a few yeeres alteration) of the zealous reformation of her most vertuous brother. Which example hath led mee in most humble manner to seeke for the same worke, the high patronage and protection of such Princes, like those to whom hee presented this his service.

To whom I know none so like as your selves, both in regard of your high estate, and also in like most noble descent from the united houses of Yorke and Lancaster. Besides which resemblance, your Highnesse also is of like yeeres to the yong Prince King *Edward*, and in the eies of all the kingdome, of like hope of excellent vertue and zealous proceedings in the advancement of Christian religion.

In like manner your Grace resembleth the most gracious late Queene *Elizabeth,* both in her royall name, and also in the constant expectation of all men, to expresse in time all the princely vertues and graces that shined in that most renowned Princesse, from this Westerne part of the world, to the furthest East, and to the rising of the Sunne.

In which respects, esteeming such a dedication, most like that which my author made of his owne worke, I have most humblie craved that this my translation of it might bee vouchsafed the honour to have your Princelie names written in the beginning of it. For notwithstanding the great difference that is betweene a reverend learned writer and expounder of the holie Scriptures, and the translator of such an exposition, yet this meane service hath also his good use in the Church of God; and is of long and tedious labour to such as take paines therein; which being graciouslie accepted, may encourage others to travell in this kind, and cause many to give thankes to God for you both, by whose most princely favours and protection, they are made partakers of such worthie writings. And I shall alwaies pray Almightie God, with this new yeere, to multiply many more upon you, and dailie replenish your hearts with all princely and heroicall graces, that may enable and adorne Princes of so hie estates, amongst this people.

Your Highnesse, and Graces most humblie devoted, in all loyall and dutiful affection,

Clement Cotton

Dr. Herring's Epigram

An Epigram upon the Translation
of
M. Calvin's Commentary
upon the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Thrice happy (England) if thou knewest thy bliss,
Since Christ's eternal Gospel in thee shined
Thou art. His beetle-blind that sees not this,
Brutishly ingrate that with a thankful mind
Doth not acknowledge Gods great Grace herein,
And learn thereby for to forsake his sin.

God's word hath long in thee been soundly taught,
The sound thereof hath rung throughout the Land,
And many a Soul by Fishers net been caught,
Which erst lay thrall in Satan's cruel band:
This favour great by none can be expressed,
But such as have it felt in their own breast.

Thy native sons in thine own bowels bred,
Like faithful Shepherds have done worthily,
And thee with store of heavenly Manna fed,
Forcing the Wolves to leave their cruelty,
To slink aside, and hide themselves in holes,
In caves and dells, like pur-blind Backs and Moles.

Tyndall, Frith, Philpot, father Latimer,
The Gospel preached by word, by life, by death:
Ivel, Fox, Reynolds, Fulk, and Whitaker
To second them have spent their vital breath.
In hot pursuit of that great Romish Bore,

Who spoiled quite this English vine before.
I spare to speak of Deerings silver voice,
Of Greenhams zeal, of Perkins labours sound,
Of hundreds more of Zion-builders choice,
The like whereof can scarce elsewhere be found:
Such ground-work they of Gods truth here have placed
As never shall by Hels whole force be razt.
Besides all these, of Sorrel Lights the chief,
Beza, and Vrinus, many other more,
Martyr, Musculus, for thy more relief
Are seen in English weed abroad to go
From place to place in every Shire and Torwne,
To teach the Truth and throw all Errors down.
And here presented is unto thy sight
The Royal Prophet Esaias Evangel:
For so me thinks I may it terme aright,
That Prince of holy Prophets doth so well,
So likely Christ's whole history presage,
As if h' had lived in that same very Age.
Whose Oracles great Calvin doth unfold
In thine own native Tongue for thy Souls health.
Here maist thou gather precious Stones and Gold,
And store up heaps of Heavenly lasting wealth;
Here maist thou find with very little Pain
Which would'st not lose for thousand Worlds again.
Here maist thou see the black-mouthed Atheists
Confounded quite by Demonstration clear;
The cunning Papist put unto his shifts,
And made in his right Colours to appear;
Here's Christ, his Truth, and Life, thee set before,
Heavens Gates set open wide: what would'st thou more?
By Francnis Hering, Doctor in Physic.

Calvin's Dedication to the Second Edition

TO HER SERENE HIGHNESS,

NOT LESS ILLUSTRIOUS BY HER OWN VIRTUES THAN BY THE SPLENDOUR OF ROYALTY,

ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF ENGLAND, ETC.

Although, in making improvements on this Commentary, I have bestowed so much care and industry, most noble Queen, that it ought justly to be reckoned a new work, yet, as in the first edition it was dedicated to your brother King Edward, who, though a youth, greatly excelled the men of his age, and whom I wish to be held in remembrance by posterity, as he deserves, I had intended to make no change in that dedication. But since, amidst that wretched and lamentable dispersion of the Church and oppression of pure doctrine, which raged with prodigious violence for a short period, this book, together with the whole doctrine of true godliness, was banished from England for a time, but now, I trust, favored by your happy reign, will be restored to its former privileges, I thought that there would be no impropriety if to the name of a most excellent king I should join your own name, which is regarded by all good men with not less esteem and satisfaction. Not only was an opportunity offered, but necessity appeared to demand, that I should obtain your full protection to this Commentary, the banishment of which, I am aware, was beheld by a great number of your godly subjects with deep sorrow.

Yet it is not so much my object to be favored with your countenance in my personal labors, as humbly to entreat, and by the sacred name of Christ to implore, not only that, through your kindness, all orthodox books may again be welcomed and freely circulated in England, but that your chief care may be directed to promote religion, which has fallen into shameful neglect. And if this is justly demanded from all kings of the earth by the Only-begotten

Son of God, by a still more sacred tie does he hold you bound, most noble Queen, to perform this duty; for when even you, though a king's daughters were not exempted from that dreadful storm which fell with severity on the heads of all the godly, by the wonderful manner in which he brought you out safe, though not unmoved by the fear of danger, he has laid you under obligation to devote yourself and all your exertions to his service. So far are you from having any reason to be ashamed of this deliverance that God has given you large and abundant grounds of boasting, by confirming you to the image of his Son, on whom the Prophet Isaiah bestows this among other commendations, *that from prison and judgment* (Isaiah 53:8) he was raised to the loftiest height of heavenly dominion.

As it is no ordinary honor to resemble such a model, so whenever you recollect, what ought never to be forgotten by you, from what wretched and fearful trembling God rescued you, by openly stretching out his hand, remember also that it was done for the express purpose that you, on the other hand, should, with invincible determination and unshaken firmness of mind, acknowledge your obligation to your Protector and Redeemer, and, laying aside all other kinds of business, a vast number of which I have no doubt, will crowd upon you at the commencement of your reign, labor to have his worship, which for a time was basely and disgracefully corrupted in that kingdom, restored to its former splendor. And if Satan, by presenting many and powerful obstructions, endeavor to produce fear or slothfulness, you are well aware from whom you ought to ask boldness to go steadily forward and to vanquish all opposition; and God, who bestows his blessing on the actions of private individuals, will not fail to grant a happy and desirable issue to his work.

You ought also to be stimulated, venerable Queen, by a sacred regard to duty; for the Prophet Isaiah demands not only from *Kings* that they be *nursing-fathers*, but also from *Queens* that they be *nursing-mothers.* (Isaiah 49:23.) This duty you ought to discharge, not only by removing the filth of Popery, and by cherishing the flock which not long ago lay trembling and concealed, but by gathering the exiles who chose rather to part with the advantages of their native country than to remain in it so long as godliness was banished from it. This will be the crowning proof of your gratitude to God, and a sacrifice of most delightful savor, that the faithful worshippers of God, who, on account of their profession of the Gospel, were constrained to wander far and wide through distant countries, shall now, through your kindness, be restored to their native country. We, too, in whom that mournful spectacle awakened, as it ought to have done, the most poignant grief, have abundant cause for rejoicing, and for congratulating you, when, through the gracious exercise of your royal will, we see the way opened for the return of our brethren, not only to be at liberty to worship God in your Majesty's dominions, but to render assistance to others.

And now, most noble Queen, if you shall be graciously pleased, as I trust

you will, not to disdain this testimony of my respect for you, which some would perhaps reckon to be trivial and of little value, I shall esteem it to be no ordinary kindness, and will endeavor through my whole life to testify my gratitude by every means in my power.

May the Lord guide you, most illustrious Queen, by the Spirit of wisdom, uphold you with invincible courage, protect and enrich your Highness with every kind of blessings!

Geneva, 15th January; the day which, it was reported, had been fixed for your coronation; on which account I more gladly set myself to write, having partially recovered from an attack of quartan ague.

Calvin's Dedication to the First Edition

TO HIS SERENE HIGHNESS,
EDWARD SIXTH, KING OF ENGLAND, etc.
A TRULY CHRISTIAN PRINCE.
JOHN CALVIN.

Though I acknowledge that this Commentary has been faithfully and skilfully compiled from my Lectures, yet, as it was drawn up by another person, I was at first afraid, most illustrious King, that if it should appear in public bearing your name on the Dedication, I might be thought not to have acted properly towards your Majesty. But this doubt was removed chiefly by one consideration, that as a Prophet who was of royal descent, and a most noble ambassador of Christ, the supreme King, is highly appropriate to your rank, so the labor which I had bestowed on the explanation of his Prophecies would be accepted and valued by your Majesty. His experience made him acquainted with five kings exceedingly unlike each other in their dispositions, to whom in uninterrupted succession he officiated as a teacher; and it is unnecessary to inform you which of these you should chiefly select for imitation, or to exhort you to that which you show that you are already sufficiently willing to do.

Uzziah and Jotham were favorable to him, though they were not so courageous as they ought to have been in maintaining the worship of God. His chief contest was with Ahaz, not indeed as an open enemy, but as a cunning hypocrite full of fraud and dissimulation. The servants of God cannot have a more dangerous class of enemies. His successor, Hezekiah, not only treated the holy man with reverence, but modestly submitted to his doctrine like one of the common people, and, what is still more, endured patiently severe reproof when it was found necessary. Manasseh, who was the last of them, and whom a strongly supported Jewish tradition represents as having been

his son-in-law, subjected him to a frightful kind of torture, and wickedly put him to death. But at the very time when he received assistance from those who were not bad kings, and even during the reign of Hezekiah himself, who was so valiant a supporter of godliness, he never ceased to be harassed by sharp and troublesome disputes, and to undergo severe conflicts, so hard and uncommon is it for men to assent to sound doctrine; and not only so, but they who resolve to discharge the prophetical office honestly and faithfully must carry on a continual war with the world. The more earnestly ought godly kings to labor to aid the servants of God by their countenance, that they may not be distressed beyond measure by the insolence of the ungodly.

But as this virtue is excellent and truly heroic, so, if you search the history of all ages from the beginning of the world, it has been uncommon, and there have been very few by whom it was cultivated. Many have indolently and carelessly, as if it had been a matter with which they had no concern, allowed the truth of God to be crushed without making any resistance. But the greater part have been openly hostile, and have opposed it with violence and rage; and would that they who at the present day profess to be Christians were as earnest in upholding the doctrine of salvation as they are haughty in boasting of the name!

Not to mention others, it may justly be regarded as no ordinary consolation amidst the present distresses of the Church, that God has raised you up and endowed you with such excellent abilities and dispositions for defending the cause of godliness, and that you so diligently render that obedience to God in this matter which you know that he accepts and approves. For although the affairs of the kingdom are hitherto conducted by your counsellors, and although your Majesty's most illustrious uncle, the Duke of Sommerset, and many others, have religion so much at heart, that they labor diligently, as they ought to do, in establishing it; yet in your own exceptions you go so far beyond them all as to make it very manifest that they receive no small excitement from the zeal which they observe in you. Not only are you celebrated for possessing a noble disposition, and some seeds of virtues, (which at so early an age is usually thought to be remarkable,) but for a maturity of those virtues far beyond your years, which would be singularly admired, as well as praised, at a very advanced age. Your piety especially is so highly applauded, that the Prophet Isaiah, I am fully convinced, will have one that will regard him with as much reverence, now that he is dead, as Hezekiah did when he was alive.

As to the advantage which you will derive from the work, it is better that you learn that from your own perusal, and I have made some observations on that subject in the Preface. There is only one point on which I have resolved to say a few words to your Majesty. After having proclaimed God's just complaints against an ungrateful people, and threatened against the Jews such punishment as their base apostasy and inveterate rebellion deserved, that the time was at hand when they should be brought into a state of frightful

desolation, the Prophet next speaks of a new and amazing restoration of the Church, and promises that henceforth God will secure that, in spite of enemies, it shall always be in a happy and flourishing condition.

Such gladness and prosperity was tasted by those who, after their return from the captivity in Babylon, having set up their altars for sacrifices, could form the expectation of higher blessings than those which they at that time enjoyed; just as we, by beholding the dawn, are led to expect that the rising of the sun will soon follow. But when, in the brightness of his Gospel, Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, arose, all that had been so eloquently described by the revelations of the Prophet was far exceeded by the event. Within a short time the knowledge of the true God was spread almost throughout the whole world. Pure religion, which formerly lay despised in Judea, as in a dark corner, was circulated through all nations and provinces, and began to be honored in such a manner, that innumerable tongues, in harmony of faith, called on God.

Having collected churches in various places, the Son of God erected his royal throne in a conspicuous situation, where it might be beheld from the rising to the setting of the sun. The churches, endowed with extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, not only obtained prodigious communications of the divine goodness, but were themselves striking exhibitions of astonishing power, which even the blind could perceive. And although the Son of God reigned under the Cross, yet, amidst the arduous conflicts of persecutions, his glory shone brighter, and his triumphs were more splendid than if the Church had enjoyed undisturbed prosperity. At length, the haughty loftiness of the Roman empire, yielding submission to Christ, became a distinguished ornament of the house of God.

But the continuance of this prosperity was prevented by the malice and ingratitude of men; and thus the Spouse of Christ, deprived of so costly a robe, degraded from so high a rank, and stripped of such gorgeous raiment, was afterwards reduced to an unsightly and wretched condition. Some remains, indeed, God preserved, as it were in places of concealment; but, as to the external beauty of the Church, nothing but desolation, confusion, and dispersion, was to be seen for many centuries. And we see how, at this very day, the Roman Antichrist, far and wide usurping and tyrannizing over the sanctuary of God, tears, crushes, and tramples under his feet all that belonged to God. For since the purity of doctrine is there corrupted by monstrous errors, since shocking murder has come into the room of lawful government, since the sacraments are in part debased by gross corruptions, and in part exposed to disgraceful sale, what but melancholy ruin is left of the true and natural beauty of the spiritual building?

Yet in our age, contrary to the expectation of all, the Lord hath again begun to *raise up that which was fallen*, (Amos 9:11,) that there might at least be left among us an outline of the true temple, in which God should be worshipped with purity, and according to the requirements of the Gospel.

Some inconsiderable persons, taken from the common people, have been selected by him as his architects, to promote this work by pure doctrine. It is, indeed, an arduous and extensive work, though Satan should give us no annoyance. But now that he employs every expedient for breaking down the Church, as soon as any portion of it has been erected, what wonder is it if we have great and sorrowful toil, and make small and feeble progress?

Accordingly, the haughty tyrants scorn us, as if, in our endeavors to overthrow the tyranny of the Roman See, we were laboring to overturn Olympus. Those clever and ingenious men (as they imagine themselves to be) indulge in ridiculing our perseverance, in laboring hard to restore the condition of the Church, as if anything fixed or permanent could be obtained. They imagine that they have so solid a foundation, and are so well defended on all sides, that it would be as difficult to destroy Popery as to mingle heaven and earth. But the opinions of those men are somewhat various. The refractoriness of the world being too great to admit of being placed under any restraint, they hold that we labor in vain when we seek to correct vices, and to promote a pure and faithful administration of the Church.

The witticism of Erasmus is well known. "Whom does Capito expect to be his tenth successor?" He could not deny that Wolfgang Capito was a holy man, and labored with the purest motives to reform the Church; but being convinced that it is idle for the ministers of Christ to struggle to correct the wickedness of the world as if they were endeavoring to cause the rivers to run in a contrary direction, Erasmus, imitating the custom of lazy philosophers, represented all of us, in the person of one man, as chargeable with inconsiderate zeal. But on both sides they are greatly mistaken in not considering that, when we repair the ruins of the Church, we give our labors to the Lord, in obedience to his laws and injunctions, and yet the restoration of the Church is his own work. Nor is it without good reason that this is taught in every part of Scripture, and that it is so earnestly enforced by the Prophet Isaiah. Remembering this doctrine, therefore, and relying on the assistance of God, let us not hesitate to undertake a work which is far beyond our own strength, and let no obstacle turn aside or discourage us, so as to abandon our undertaking.

And here I expressly call upon you, most excellent King, or rather, God himself addresses you by the mouth of his servant Isaiah, charging you to proceed, to the utmost of your ability and power, in carrying forward the restoration of the Church, which has been so successfully begun in your kingdom. First, you daily read and hear that this duty is enjoined on you in the kingdom over which you rule. More especially Isaiah, as I have said, calls *Kings the nursing-fathers of the Church*, (Isaiah 49:23,) and does not permit them to withhold that assistance which her afflicted condition demands. Nor ought your mind to be slightly affected by the consideration, that the Prophet pronounces a woe on all kings and nations who refuse to give her their support. Next, your Majesty sees plainly what is urgently demanded by

the times. Though you may not have great success in your labors, yet, knowing that this worship is acceptable to God, and is a sacrifice of most delightful savor, you ought not to be turned aside from your purpose by any event, however calamitous. Seeing, therefore, that God exhorts you to be courageous, and at the same time promises success, why should you not cheerfully obey him when he calls?

In another passage Isaiah says, *Prepare the way, prepare the way for my people.* (Isaiah 62:10.) It is well known how hopeless was the return of the captives to their native country. Nor did this event take place at that time; but the Prophet, beholding by the Spirit what posterity some time afterwards would actually enjoy, lest any of the godly should be disheartened by so sad a spectacle, meets them beforehand with the assurance that there would be no kind of obstructions so powerful and formidable that God would not break through them to deliver his Church. Not less do we need at this day to be cheered by consolation.

It is of high importance, most noble King, that you should be stimulated to activity by the consideration of the duty enjoined on you; for Isaiah exhorts all kings and magistrates, in the person of Cyrus, to stretch forth their hand to the Church, when in distress, to restore her to her former condition. Yet there is this difference between your condition and that of Cyrus, that he who was a stranger to the Lord's flock never was expressly taught freely and willingly to come forward and undertake to be a defender of the Church; but to you, to whom the Lord has not only given adoption, but has likewise assigned a distinguished place among his sons, the Prophet may be said to stretch out his hand and call you to this office. So much the more boldly and resolutely ought you, noble King, to proceed in this course.

The matter is, as I have said, full of great difficulties; and still greater are the annoyances by which it is attended, and the dangers in which it is involved; for Satan never ceases to employ innumerable expedients, if in any way he may succeed in subverting or destroying the holy temple of God; and sometimes God intends to make trial of our steadfastness by such attacks. But if you lay it down as a settled principle, that there is nothing which you and your most excellent Council have hitherto undertaken, or are now performing, for restoring the condition of the Church, which is not supported by the authority of God, you will unquestionably feel how wonderfully he accomplishes all those things which he gives in charge to his servants. From this happy result England will derive inestimable advantage; and we, too, will congratulate you on your prosperity, and that of your whole kingdom. Meanwhile, I shall aid those holy exertions by my prayers, as it is my duty to do, since I have nothing better to offer you.

Farewell, most illustrious King! may the Lord prosper and preserve your Majesty for a long period, aid and guide you by his Holy Spirit, and bless you in all things! — Amen.

Geneva, 25*th December*, 1550.

Calvin's Preface

THE PREFACE TO THE PROPHET ISAIAH
BY JOHN CALVIN

It is customary to make a great number of statements and dissertations about the office of the Prophets. But, in my opinion, the shortest way of treating this subject is to trace the Prophets to the Law, from which they derived their doctrine, like streams from a fountain; for they placed it before them as their rule, so that they may be justly held and declared to be its interpreters, who utter nothing but what is connected with the Law. Now, the Law consists chiefly of three parts: first, the doctrine of life; secondly, threatenings and promises; thirdly, the covenant of grace, which, being founded on Christ, contains within itself all the special promises. As to ceremonies, they were religious exercises which strengthened the attachment of the people to the worship of God and to godliness, and consequently were added to the First Table. The Prophets, therefore, enter more largely into the illustration of doctrine, and explain more fully what is briefly stated in the Two Tables, and lay down what the Lord chiefly requires from us. Next, the threatenings and promises, which Moses had proclaimed in general terms, are applied by them to their own time and minutely described. Lastly, they express more clearly what Moses says more obscurely about Christ and his grace, and bring forward more copious and more abundant proofs of the free covenant.

To make this matter still more clear, we must go a little farther back, to the Law itself, which the Lord prescribed as a perpetual rule for the Church, to be always in the hands of men, and to be observed by every succeeding age. Perceiving that there was danger lest an ignorant and undisciplined nation should need something more than the doctrine delivered by Moses, and that the nation could scarcely be restrained without the use of a tighter rein, God

forbids them to consult magicians or soothsayers, augurs or diviners; enjoins them to be satisfied with his doctrine alone; but at the same time he likewise adds that he will take care that there shall never be wanting a Prophet in Israel. He does this purposely, with the view of meeting an objection which the people might have brought forward, that their condition would be worse than that of the infidels, all of whom had their priests of various orders, their soothsayers, augurs, astrologers, Chaldeans, and such like, whom they had it in their power to visit and consult, but that they would have no one to aid them by his advice in intricate and difficult matters. In order, therefore, to deprive them of every pretense, and to hinder them from polluting themselves by the abominable practices of the Gentiles, God promises that *he will raise up Prophets*, (Deuteronomy 18:15,) by whom he will make known his will, and who shall faithfully convey the message which he has entrusted to them; so that in future there will be no reason to complain that they are in want of anything. There is an exchange (ἑτέρωσις) of the plural for the singular number, when he uses the word *Prophet*; for although, as it is expressly interpreted by Peter, (Acts 3:22,) that passage relates literally and chiefly to Christ, (because he is the head of the Prophets, and all of them depend on him for their doctrine, and with one consent point to him,) yet it relates also to the rest of the Prophets, and includes them under a collective name.

When he promised to give them Prophets, by whom he would make known his will and purpose, the Lord commanded the people to rely on their interpretations and doctrine. And yet it was not intended to make any addition to the Law, but to interpret it faithfully, and to sanction its authority. Hence also, when Malachi exhorts the people to adhere to the purity of faith and to be steadfast in the doctrine of religion, he says,

Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb, for all Israel. (Malachi 4:4.) [4]

He reminds them of the Law of God alone, and enjoins them to be satisfied with it. Does Malachi therefore mean that Prophecies should be despised? By no means; but as the Prophecies are appendages of the Law, and are all briefly summed up in the Law, that exhortation was sufficient; for they who understand that summary of doctrine, and its leading points, and carefully observe them, assuredly will not neglect the Prophecies. It would be absurd to boast of attending to the word, were we to disregard the divine interpretations of it; as many persons at the present day impudently boast of attending to the word, while they cannot at all endure the godly admonitions and reproofs which proceed from the doctrine of the word.

Thus when the Prophets inculcate moral duties, they bring forward nothing new, but only explain those parts of the Law which had been misunderstood. For instance, the people thought that they had discharged their duty admirably, when they offered sacrifices and performed the outward services of religion; for the world measures God by its own standard, and renders

[4] Original text has:Mal. iv. 3. — fj.

to him a carnal and counterfeited worship. The Prophets sharply reprove this, and show that all ceremonies are of no avail, when sincerity of heart is wanting, and that God is worshipped by believing on him, and by actually calling on his name. This had indeed been plainly enough declared by the Law; but it was necessary that it should be earnestly inculcated and frequently brought to their remembrance, and likewise that there should be an exposure of that hypocrisy with which men cloak themselves under the guise of ceremonies. As to the Second Table, the Prophets drew their exhortations from it, for the purpose of showing that men ought to refrain from all injustice, violence, and deceit. All that they do, therefore, is nothing else than keeping up the people's obedience to the Law.

In threatenings and promises, the Prophets have something peculiar; for what Moses had stated in general terms they minutely describe. They have likewise visions which peculiarly belong to them, by which the Lord revealed future events, in order to apply the promises and threatenings to the use of the people, and to declare more fully the will of God. Moses threatens, "God will pursue thee in battle; thou shalt be harassed by enemies abroad and by internal quarrels at home. Thy life shall hang as it were on a thread; thou shalt *tremble at the rustling of a leaf,"* (Leviticus 26:36,) and such like. On the other hand, the Prophets say, "God will arm the Assyrians against thee, he will call for the Egyptians by a hiss, he will raise up the Chaldeans, Israel shall be carried into captivity, the kingdom of Israel shall be destroyed, the enemy shall lay waste Jerusalem and burn the temple." Similar observations might be made about the promises. Moses says, "If thou keep the commandments, the Lord will bless thee;" and then gives a general description of blessings. But the Prophets enter into detail. "This is the blessing which the Lord will bestow upon thee." Again, by Moses the Lord promises in this manner, —

"Though thou be scattered and driven to the utmost parts of the world, yet will I bring thee back." (Deuteronomy 30:4.)

But by the Prophets he says, "Though I drive thee into Babylon, yet after seventy years will I restore thee." [5]

As to the free covenant which God established with the Patriarchs in ancient times, the Prophets are much more distinct, and contribute more to strengthen the people's attachment to it; for when they wish to comfort the godly, they always remind them of that covenant, and represent to them the coming of Christ, who was both the foundation of the covenant and the bond of the mutual relation between God and the people, and to whom therefore the whole extent of the promises must be understood to refer. Whoever understands this will easily learn what we ought to seek in the Prophets, and what is the purpose of their writings; and this is all that seemed necessary

[5] In this comprehensive view of the writings of Moses, as compared with those of the later Prophets, our author does not quote the exact words of the sacred writers. More than one phrase shows that he had chiefly in his eye the promises and threatenings detailed in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 — Ed.

to be stated here on that subject.

Hence we may learn in what manner the doctrine of the word should be handled, and that we ought to imitate the Prophets, who conveyed the doctrine of the Law in such a manner as to draw from it advices, reproofs, threatenings, and consolations, which they applied to the present condition of the people. For although we do not daily receive a revelation of what we are to utter as a prediction, yet it is of high importance to us to compare the behavior of the men of our own age with the behavior of that ancient people; and from their histories and examples we ought to make known the judgments of God; such as, that what he formerly punished he will also punish with equal severity in our own day, for he is always like himself. Such wisdom let godly teachers acquire, if they would wish to handle the doctrine of the Prophets with any good result.

So much for the Prophets in general. To come to the Prophet Isaiah, the inscription plainly shows who he was, and at what time he uttered those prophecies; for it mentions the name of his father, Amoz, who is supposed to have been the brother of Azariah, king of Judah. Hence it is evident that Isaiah was of royal descent, and on this point all the ancients are agreed; and yet neither his birth nor his near relationship to the king, (for the Jews assert that he was the father-in-law of Manasseh,) could prevent him from being slain through dislike of the word; and no greater regard was paid to him than if he had been a person of humble rank, or had belonged to the lowest condition of society.

The time when he prophesied is here pointed out by mentioning the names of the kings. Some think that he began to prophesy towards the end of the reign of King Uzziah. They found their conjecture on the vision related in the sixth chapter, by which, Isaiah tells us, he was confirmed in his office. But that conjecture rests on very slight grounds, as will be shown at the proper place. From this description it plainly appears that he prophesied during the reign of Uzziah; and on that point I cannot entertain any doubt.

However this may be, it is evident that, at the very least, he prophesied more than sixty-four years; for Jotham reigned sixteen years, (2 Kings 15:33;) Ahaz as many, (2 Kings 16:2;) [6] Hezekiah twenty-nine, (2 Kings 18:2.) This amounts to sixty-one years. Add the years that he prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, and afterwards during the reign of Manasseh, by whom he was put to death; and there will be, at least, sixty-four years during which Isaiah continued, without interruption, to discharge the office of a Prophet. There is indeed a highly probable conjecture, amounting almost to certainty, that he prophesied ten years beyond the period which has now been stated; but as this does not clearly rest on historical proof, I shall not debate the matter any farther.

All the servants of God ought carefully to observe this, that they may consider how patiently they ought to submit to their condition, how hard

[6] Original text has:2 Kings xvi. 3; — fj.

and difficult soever it may be, and ought not to reckon it a disgrace that they must endure many and severe trials, while they have before their eyes examples of such patience. It is indeed a very severe trial when they perceive that by their manifold exertions they are doing no good, and imagine that it would be a thousand times better to relinquish their post than to labor so long in vain. Such examples, therefore, they ought frequently to set before them and call to remembrance; how Isaiah, whose labors were numerous and extensive, had little success, and how Jeremiah continued for fifty years to cry aloud to the people, though the result was that they became more and more rebellious, and how no difficulties could turn them aside from their course. We, too, ought to proceed in the discharge of our duty, and patiently to endure every kind of annoyances.

It is proper to observe also the succession of kings, who are here enumerated; for amidst so great a diversity, it is impossible that the state of public affairs could remain unchanged, as we know that, whenever any change takes place in a public station, the greater part of men immediately adopt a new manner of life; and from this source many vexations must have arisen. The unshaken firmness and unbroken courage with which he persevered ought to excite all the servants of God to imitation, that they may never bend or turn aside from the right path.

A question may arise, Was it Isaiah himself, or some other person, that wrote this inscription to his Prophecy? Not one of the commentators whose writings I have hitherto perused answers this question. For my own part, though I cannot fully satisfy my mind, yet I shall tell what I think. The Prophets, after having publicly addressed the people, drew up a brief abstract of their discourse, and placed it on the gates of the temple, that all might see and become more fully acquainted with the prophecy. When it had been exposed for a sufficient number of days, it was removed by the ministers of the temple, and placed in the Treasury, that it might remain as a permanent record. In this way, it is probable, the books of the Prophets were compiled; and this may be inferred from the second chapter of the book of Habakkuk, if it be properly examined, and likewise from the eighth chapter of this Prophecy. (Habakkuk 2:2; Isaiah 8:1.) Those who have carefully and judiciously perused the Prophets will agree with me in thinking that their discourses have not always been arranged in a regular order, but that the roll was made up as occasion served. That these writings have come down to us through the agency of the Priests, whose duty it was to transmit the prophecies to posterity, (though the Priests were often the bitterest enemies of the Prophets,) is a remarkable instance of the providence of God.

Translator's Preface to Volume II

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

In preparing the First Volume of the Commentary On Isaiah, many attempts were made, but without success, to procure the French Translation. After much fruitless labor, and some expense, a copy of that rare work, which happens to be in the possession of the Parker Society, has been kindly lent to the Translator, who takes this opportunity of conveying his warmest thanks for this favor. The references in the foot-notes of the present and future Volumes will give some idea of the assistance derived from that source. But it has also supplied materials for a history, more complete than we could formerly give, of this Commentary, and of the forms in which it was successively brought before the public.

Various scribes, on some occasions, united their efforts to obtain a perfect record of what had been uttered by the Reformer in his private Lessons, as they were called, which he delivered to students of theology. But, in the present instance, we are indebted almost exclusively to the earnest, judicious, and unwearied labors of one man, *Mr. Nicolas Des Gallars*, a minister of Geneva, from whose notes, after having been revised by the Author, the first Latin edition was printed in 1550. He appears to have executed, under the Author's eye, a French Translation, which came forth almost simultaneously with the Latin copy, and enjoyed the advantage of being known to be well authenticated. After the lapse of several years, Calvin availed himself of a season of leisure for re-writing this Commentary, added more than a third to its original size, [7] and made such extensive alterations, that he ventured to call it "a new work." [8] It bears the date of 15th January 1559. The third edition, which is dated 1583, lays claim to still greater accuracy; for it

[7] See page 17.

[8] See Com. On Isaiah, vol. 1, p. 16.

professes to have received corrections from the Author's Manuscript.

While the Commentary was thus extensively circulated, [9] the benefits of it were chiefly confined to those who were acquainted with the Latin language; for even the French reader was left to struggle with all the imperfections which belonged to the first edition. At least, it was only eleven years before the last mentioned date, and eight years after the Author's death, that a new French translation appeared, which was printed at Geneva by *Francois Perrin*, in 1572. There is reason to believe that the first French translation would be treated by the second translator with great deference, and that he would scarcely consider himself to be at liberty to depart from it, except for the purpose of introducing the extensive alterations and additions which had been made to the original work. Let us hope that some future editor, having obtained access to copies now slumbering in the shelves of our continental neighbors, or perhaps of our own countrymen, will enjoy the satisfaction of collating the earlier and later editions in both languages, and will be enabled to reveal the steps by which this valuable Commentary passed from the first rough notes of the labourious scribe to the form which was imparted to it by the fastidious corrections of the Author.

This Volume contains an "Address to the Readers" by *Nicolas des Gallars*, Latinized *Gallasius*, (which appears to have been prefixed to his French translation of the Commentary,) his Epistolary Dedication of the Latin edition of 1583 to a learned author and eminent printer, John Crispin, and a short "Address to the Readers" by the latest French translator, all of which, it is hoped, will be perused with deep interest. The relation in which *Gallars* stood to Calvin, and to his published writings, has thrown around him many pleasing associations; and his style, both Latin and French, displays such judgment, and taste, and scholarship, as justifies the marked preference given to him by the Reformer, and assures the reader that the responsible office which he held could not have been committed to abler hands.

The Notes added to these Volumes shew that it is the aim of the Calvin Society not only to give exact Translations, but to aid the investigation of dark passages by the labors of modern critics. Among the works which have been consulted with greatest advantage may be named "The Prophecies of Isaiah, Earlier and Later, by *Joseph Addison Alexander*, Professor in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey," an exceedingly valuable addition to the stores of exegetical theology, and not a little enhanced by the care with which the learned editor, Dr. Eadie, has superintended the British edition. Yet we are again and again constrained to remark the extent to which the critical researches of our own age have been anticipated by the sagacity of the Reformer, to whom our greatest men delight in acknowledging their obligations. "Calvin," says Professor Alexander, "still towers above all interpreters in large commanding views of revelation, in its whole connection, with extraordinary insight into the logical relations of a passage, even

[9] See page 15.

where its individual expressions were not fully understood. These qualities, together with his fixed belief of fundamental doctrines, his eminent soundness of judgment, and his freedom from all tendency to paradox, pedantic affectation, or fanciful conceit, place him more completely on a level with the very best interpreters of our day than almost any intervening writer."

Auchterarder, *3d September*, 1851.

Gallars' Preface to the Reader

PREFATORY ADVERTISEMENT
BY
NICOLAS DES GALLARS
TO THE READERS

Though in collecting these Commentaries I was astonished, first, at the labor and difficulty, and next at the various opinions of men, yet I thought, Christian Readers, that I must not refuse to labor or shrink from anything, provided that I can be of any service. With respect to the difficulties, I quickly surmounted them, through the clear method of instruction which the Author has been accustomed to employ, as may be seen in his writings, but still more in his speaking. And if some obscure passages, of which there are many in that Prophet, made me pause, it was not because I had not the benefit of his judgment and advice in clearly explaining and revising the whole; for, in consequence of the familiar and daily intercourse which I had with him, those intricacies which might have retarded or perplexed me were easily disentangled and removed. Besides, at any hour when one could go by stealth, that is, when he had any relaxation from the weighty affairs which almost overwhelmed him, I read to him all that I had written, in order that, if he could not closely examine the whole, he might at least add, or take away, or give me directions, as far as was necessary. All this he did carefully, though hardly ever did I read to him two or three verses when he was not immediately called away, either by persons who wanted his advice, or by his friends. Yet reviewing these things with all the fidelity and diligence that I could, I still returned, and frequently put questions to him.

As to my labor, it was partly relieved by some expository remarks which I had collected from his own mouth, while he was preaching; for it is now four years and more since he explained that Prophet to us, in a highly prof-

itable manner, in public Discourses, before giving us the interpretation in the school. At that time, recording not only the faithful exhortations which relate to the correction of vices, to the condition of that age, and to the restoration of the purity of doctrine and of the Church, but also the exact interpretations on which he dwelt largely, in order to draw from them a solid doctrine to be applied to the use of the people, when I returned to the house, I wrote them down in Latin, so far as I remembered and had leisure. That was of great use to me in collecting these Commentaries; not that I put into them everything that I then wrote, or in the same order and method, but so far as I already understood the sentiments, and had been habituated, by some practice, to that mode of interpretation, I had not so much trouble as if I had come quite raw and ill-prepared to that way of writing.

So far as relates to the judgments of men, who must have very various opinions about this labor of mine, I soon foresaw that there would be many of them who would take no great pleasure in that which cost me pain, because they would have preferred to have this written by the Author himself instead of being collected and arranged by me. And indeed I am very much of their opinion; for the whole would have been sent forth by him in a more complete and finished state. But as he was employed in preparing other works, the advantage of which is so evident that it is unnecessary for me to proclaim it; and as he was harassed by so much business that he scarcely had leisure to read, it would hardly have been possible for him to put his hand to that work.

Accordingly, having been for a long time attached to that Prophet, and wishing clearer expositions of many passages, and now enjoying them, I thought that I would do what was good and profitable, if, while I promoted my own benefit, I had regard also to others whose desire might not be less than mine, and whose minds, even supposing that they had not so strong a desire, might be aroused by reading this Commentary, and might receive from it an increase of knowledge. In order, therefore, that you, believing Reader, might enjoy along with me the explanation of that Prophet, I suddenly undertook this labor, lest if we waited longer for these Commentaries, they might be taken from us by some injury or calamity in these wretched times. For we see every day what snares are laid by Satan for the Church, which is newly born, and for her faithful teachers. We meet with treachery in some, from whom we had expected better things; in others we find fickleness and lightness, and others are blinded by the glimmering of this age. There are very few of them who, in defense of the kingdom of Christ, oppose the tyrannical laws of Antichrist.

Let us therefore welcome those who, through the unspeakable mercy of God, are left to us; or rather let us welcome the gifts which God has given them, that hereafter, as far as we shall have opportunity, we may provide for the Church. While we can enjoy their doctrine, let us seize it eagerly as the armor fitted for repelling our enemies; for there is great reason to

believe that the Lord will take vengeance on the malice of men by such punishments as they deserve, and will deprive us of the excellent gifts with which in the present day he has adorned his Church. Many have great gifts of tongues, while others excel in interpretations, and undoubtedly they have strong claims on our attention; but this gift of prophecy, which surpasses all others, and to which we ought to be especially devoted, is generally despised. Hence it arises that many persons are more addicted to ostentation than eager to promote the salvation of the Church, and take more pleasure in vaunting before the people than in edifying the Church of Christ. St. Paul, already perceiving in his time that imminent danger, said,

"Desire to pursue spiritual gifts, but still more that you may prophesy." (1 Corinthians 14:1.)

For in the Christian Church the most important point, and that which we ought above all things to desire, is that the hidden meanings and divine mysteries of Scripture may be explained to us with some advantage. If that is wanting, the rest must gradually be thrown down, as we have found it to be in past ages, to the great injury of the whole Church.

We must therefore devote ourselves to this gift above all others, for fear of abusing those passages of Scripture which have been turned to a wrong purpose, or of being ourselves guilty of torturing those passages to a meaning which is foreign to them. And especially we must throw ourselves on the doctrine of the prophets; for they who are faithfully employed in them open up a road for easily going higher, and lay a firm and solid foundation for salvation. Now, if that exercise was ever necessary, it is at the present time, when we must make war not only against Papists or Jews, but against dreadful monsters which, concealed under the appearance of men, endeavor to overturn all religion and humanity.

Among all the prophets Isaiah justly holds the chief place, because he gives very clear testimonies concerning Christ, and places before our eyes the state and condition of his Church, that is, of his kingdom, as the reading will alone clearly shew, so that it will be unnecessary for me to make a long preface. He who shall have understood him well will be abundantly prepared for reading the other Prophets. The perusal of these Commentaries will enable you better to understand how well adapted the doctrine of Isaiah is to the present time; and if you are diligent and attentive, I am not afraid that you will think that I have labored in vain.

Yet if you compared this work with the Sermons which the Author preached on that Prophet, you might well exclaim, as Æschines did with regard to Demosthenes, "What would you have thought if you had heard him speak it?" He adjusted his sentences so admirably, touched the hearts of his hearers, explained every thing by familiar and obvious examples, and treated his subjects in so popular a manner, that he seemed actually to place it before their eyes. Very frequently, too, an opportunity presented itself of discoursing on some passage, when it would have been impossible

purposely to select out of the whole Scripture a passage better adapted to the place, the persons, and the occasion; so that all were astonished at it, and clearly understood that it had not been directed by the wisdom of a man, but by the Spirit of God; and the advantage which afterwards resulted from it fully verified that conclusion.

If these Sermons can ever be published, (which I should earnestly desire,) you will know these things better, though the truth of what has been said cannot be so clearly perceived by any as by those who have seen them with their eyes. Here you have the substance, however, both of the Sermons and of the Lessons, from which I shall reckon myself to have derived great benefit, if you partake of it as you ought. It was my study, it was the object which I proposed to myself, not to have any favor from men, but to be of advantage to believers; and, so far as my conscience bears me witness, I see not why I ought to dread the judgment of men. I hold it to be certain that they who shall carefully weigh the whole will judge of me with candour; and that, if there be any fault or omission in what I have done, they will cheerfully lay in the balance the benefit which they shall have derived from the work.

Geneva, *December* 27, l551

Gallars' Dedication to the First Edition

EPISTOLARY DEDICATION
BY
NICOLAS DES GALLARS
TO HIS ANCIENT FRIEND,
JOHN CRISPIN

Whenever I call to remembrance, my dear Crispin, (as I cannot but often do,) that eminent and godly pastor of the Church, John Calvin, I have a feeling of deep grief, and at the same time of joy. For when I bring before my mind the candour and uprightness of that man, his kind disposition towards me, and the pleasant and intimate friendship which I enjoyed with him for sixteen years, it is impossible that I should not be deeply affected by the loss of such a friend, or, I ought rather to say, of such a parent. Nor is it only on my own account that I grieve, but rather on account of the whole Church, which has been deprived of so great a man, and has thus sustained a heavy loss by his death.

What labors, what watchings and solicitudes he endured, with what faithfulness and wisdom he attended to the interests of all, with what frankness and courtesy he received those who visited him, how ready and clear were his replies to those who consulted him even on the weightiest matters, how learnedly, both in private and in public, he solved the difficult and perplexing questions which were proposed to him, with what gentleness he comforted the afflicted and cheered those who were faint and sorrowful, with what firmness he resisted adversaries, and with what energy he was wont to restrain the haughty and obstinate, with what strength of mind he bore adversity, what moderation he exercised in prosperity, and, in short, with what ability and cheerfulness he performed all the duties of a true and faithful servant of God, I certainly cannot find words to express! Lest any one should think that

the ardor of my regard for him prompts me to make these statements, let him consider the actual facts, which truly exceed the power both of speech and of thought. Besides the writings and records which convey a stupendous testimony of his virtues, many things were done and many were spoken by him which cannot be made known to all, as they are known to those who were present when he did or uttered them.

When I recall those remarkable events, my grief is alleviated; and the advantage which is derived from them, and which is shared with me by so many godly men, gives me consolation. My joy is of such a nature, and is so steady and full, that it swallows up all my sorrow and lamentation however great. And on this ground also do I congratulate you, my dear Crispin, that you not only peruse with the highest delight the works and writings of that man whom you ardently loved, but labor to impart them to others. Those treasures of wisdom are thus enlarged, and return with high interest to those from whom they come. You thus cause the regret for the loss of so great a man to be alleviated, and the grief produced by his lamented and early death to be diminished.

For the third time, after having been wrought and polished on your anvil, this book now comes forth, which I may truly call a treasure, because it contains vast riches of heavenly grace, and opens up the path to what is greater. Whoever shall give to it a cheerful and labourious perusal, let him know with certainty that he will not return empty; for he will gather what shall be advantageous with regard not only to this Prophet but to all the other Prophets, and to the whole of Scripture, and if he attend to the directions which are scattered throughout the book, he will undoubtedly possess a strong light for beholding and enjoying those things which were hidden and concealed from many. By frequently applying your hand, therefore, to this work, you not only gratify me, who first sent it forth after long and severe toil, but you gratify all those who have perused or even tasted the work. You might have sufficiently perceived and actually known this from the numerous copies which have been already circulated.

I have not been disappointed in the expectation which I at that time formed, when during the whole period of four years, with unwearied toil, having first heard the public Sermons and afterwards the private Lectures, but employing my own judgment and style, I returned home and committed these things to writing. And whenever I recollect that period, during which this Church, which formerly was small and feeble, received wonderful accessions, I cannot but feel the utmost joy. You also may well remember what was its condition when, banished from your native country, you first came hither; and likewise what large additions had been made to it when you brought your family, and settled down permanently here for the express purpose of assisting the efforts of the godly by your skill and industry.

These things I take pleasure in relating, in order that, by calling to remembrance what you have experienced, I may quicken your zeal, and may

stimulate you to perform those things which you have undertaken, and of which it will be impossible for you ever to repent, and may give a fresh impulse even to your cheerful and willing exertions. Proceed then, my dear Crispin, in assisting by your diligence the efforts of those who are devoted to Sacred Literature, and labor not only to promote this work, but also to publish others. You see that many things, though useful in the highest degree, are passed by and almost neglected by those who aim at immediate gain rather than at public usefulness.

The smaller Treatises of this Author were edited by me fifteen years ago; and although since that time he wrote many other Treatises, yet no one put his hand to that work, so as to bring out a uniform edition, (I speak of the Latin copies,) either of those or of others which were afterwards added. I therefore earnestly and repeatedly urge my request, that you will take charge of those works, and also of others with which you are well acquainted, and that you will not allow any of the writings of so great a man to be lost; and, in short, that you will grant the request made to you by godly and studious persons, and that you will fulfill and go beyond those expectations respecting you which you have already excited. May God favor your undertakings, and make you prosperous and happy!

Geneva, *January* 1, 1570

Gallars' Preface to the Second Edition

THE FRENCH TRANSLATOR'S
PREFATORY ADDRESS
TO THE READERS.

It is upwards of twenty years, my dear Readers, since the Lessons of Mr. John Calvin, having been collected by *Mr. Nicolas Des Gallars*, were published under the title of a Commentary, and dedicated to that illustrious Prince, of blessed memory, Edward VI., King of England. Long afterwards, the Author himself, revising that collection printed in Latin and in French, was not satisfied with merely revising it, so as to elucidate what might be obscure on account of its brevity, and to arrange better what was confused, but labored so diligently and so successfully, that he enlarged it in Latin, by more than a third, with excellent and necessary matter for understanding the text, putting everything so completely in its proper order, that if any person will take the trouble of comparing the first Commentary, or Collection of Lessons, with this second edition, he will find that what we have said is true.

What is more, it was not in the school that this Commentary was collected for the second time, but it was written in the house, and word for word, under the eye of the Author, who has so skillfully arranged and digested the whole, that when you read it, you will perceive that in this book, as in others which have already come forth from him, he did much good service to the Church of God, and faithfully pointed out the road to those who wish to make progress in the study of theology, especially by these Commentaries, which, when they are read attentively, will not only be very useful for explaining the true meaning of the prophet Isaiah, but will not less contribute to throw light on many passages of the other books of the Holy Scripture. This has induced me to translate them anew into French, in order that those of you who do not understand the Latin tongue may not be deprived of such an

advantage. Read, and profit in the fear of the Lord.

Chapter 1

COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHET ISAIAH

CHAPTER 1

Isaiah Chapter 1:1-31

1. The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

1. Visio Isaiae filii Amoz, quam vidit super Iudam et Ierusalem in diebus Usiae, Iotham, Achaz, Ezechiae, regum Iuda.

2. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

2. Audite caeli, et ausculta terra; quia sic Dominus loquitur, Filios educavi et sustuli, ipsi tamen scelerate egerunt in me, (vel, rebellarunt contra me.)

3. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

3. Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe dominorum suorum: Israel non cognovit, populus meus non intellexit.

4. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

4. O gens scelesta, populus onustus iniquitate, semen malignorum, filii degeneres! dereliquerunt Iehovam, spreverunt (vel, provocarunt ad iram) sanctum Israelis, alienati sunt retrorsum.

5. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

5. Quorsum adhuc vos percuterem? Adjicietis praevaricationem. Totum caput languori, et totum cor dolori.

6. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in

it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

6. A planta pedis usque ad caput nulla in eo sanitas. Vulnus, tumor, et saniosa plaga. Nec sunt emplastro curatae, nec circumligatae, nec oleo delinitae.

7. Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

7. Terra vestra in vastitatem: Urbes vestrae igni succensae: terram vestram alieni devorant in conspectu vestro, redacta est in solitudinem, juxta subversionem exterorum.

8. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

8. Et residua manebit filia Zion, sicut tugurium in vinea, sicut diversorium in cucumerario, sicut civitas vastata.

9. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

9. Nisi Dominus exercituum residuas nobis fecisset reliquias vel tantillas, quasi Sodoma fuissemus, et similes Gomorrhae.

10. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah:

10. Audite verbum Domini, principes Sodomae: auscultate Legem Dei nostri, populus Gomorrhae.

11. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.

11. Quorsum mihi multitudo sacrificiorum vestrorum? dicit Dominus. Plenus sum holocaustis arietum, et adipe saginatorum animalium: nec sanguinem boum, aut ovium, aut hircorum desidero.

12. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

12. Quando venitis ut appareatis coram facie mea, quis hoc e manu vestra requisivit? nempe conterere atria mea.

13. Bring no more oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new-moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting;.

13. Ne pergatis adducere oblationem vanitatis. Incensum abominatio est mihi. Neomeniam, et sabbathum, et solennes indictiones non potero: vana res est, nec conventum.

14. Your new-moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them

14. Neomenias vestras et solennia vestra odio habet anima mea: superfuerunt mihi loco oneris, fatigatus sum ferendo.

15. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you;

yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

15. Cum expanderitis manus vestras, abscondam oculos meos a vobis. Etiamsi multiplicaveritis orationem, ego non exaudiam. Manus vestrae sanguine plenae sunt.

16. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

16. Lavate, mundemini, auferte malitiam studiorum vestrorum a conspectu oculorum meorum, desinite mala facere.

17. Learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow.

17. Discite benefacere: quaerite judicium: restituite (vel, dirigite) oppressum: jus dicite pupillo: tuemini viduam.

18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

18. Venite, agedum, et disceptemus, dixit Dominus: si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur: si rubicunda fuerint instar purpurae, quasi lana erunt.

19. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

19. Si volueritis, et audieritis, bonum terrae comedetis.

20. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it

20. Quod si nolueritis, et rebelles fueritis, gladio consummemini: quoniam os Domini loquutum est.

21. How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

21. Quomodo facta est meretrix civitas fidelis? plena judicio fuit: et aequitas pernoctavit (vel, habitavit) in ea; nunc autem homicidae.

22. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

22. Argentum tuum versum est in scoriam, et vinum tuum est aqua mixtum.

23. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

23. Principes tui perversi, et socii furum: unusquisque diligit munus, et inhiat mercedibus: causam pupilli non judicant, nec causa viduae pervenit ad eos.

24. Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:

24. Propterea dicit Dominus, (vel, Dominator,) Iehovah exercituum, fortis Israel, Heu! consolationem capiam super hostibus meis, vindicabor de inimicis meis.

25. And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross,

and take away all thy tin:

25. Convertam manum meam super te: purgabo ad liquidum scoriam tuam, et auferam omne stannum tuum.

26. And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, The faithful city.

26. Et restituam judices tuos sicut a principio, et consiliarios tuos ut ab initio. Tum dicetur de te, Civitas justitiae, urbs fidelis.

27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

27. Sion in judicio redimetur, et qui reducentur ad eam, in justitia.

28. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.

28. Contritio autem praevaricatorum et sceleratorum simul fiet; et qui a Domino defecerunt consumentur.

29. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.

29. Nempe pudifient ab arboribus quas concupivistis, et ignominia afficiemini a lucis quos elegistis.

30. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.

30. Eritis certe sicut arbor cujus folium marcessit, et sicut lucus non habens aquas.

31. And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them

31. Eritque fortis vester (alias, Deus) sicut stuppa; et fictor ejus quasi scintilla; et comburentur ambo, nec erit qui extinguat.

1. *The vision of Isaiah* The Hebrew word חזון (*chazon,*) though it is derived from חזה, (*chazah,*) *he saw*, and literally is *a vision*, yet commonly signifies *a prophecy.* For when the Scripture makes mention of special visions which were exhibited to the prophets in a symbolical manner, when it was the will of God that some extraordinary event should receive confirmation, in such cases the word Tibet, (מראה,) *vision*, is employed. Not to multiply quotations, in a passage which relates *to prophecy* in general the writer says, that *the word of God was precious, because* חזון, (*chazon,*) *vision, was of rare occurrence.* (1 Samuel 3:1.) A little afterwards, the word מראה: (mar-ah) is employed to denote the vision by which God revealed himself to Samuel. (1 Samuel 3:13.) In distinguishing between two ordinary methods of revelation, *a vision and a dream*, Moses speaks of *a vision* (מראה) as the special method. (Numbers 12:6.) It is evident, however, that *the seer*, הראה, (*haroeh,*) was the name formerly given to prophets, (1 Samuel 9:9;) but by way of excellence, because God revealed to them his counsel in a familiar manner.

So far as relates to the present passage, this word unquestionably denotes

the certainty of the doctrine; as if it had been said that there is nothing contained in this book which was not made known to *Isaiah* by God himself. The derivation of the word, therefore, deserves attention; for we learn by it that the prophets did not speak of their own accord, or draw from their own imaginations, but that they were enlightened by God, who opened their eyes to perceive those things which otherwise they would not of themselves have been able to comprehend. Thus the inscription of Isaiah recommends to us the doctrine of this book, as containing no human reasonings, but the oracles of God, in order to convince us that it contains nothing but what was revealed by the Spirit of God.

Concerning Judah Were we to render it to *Judah*, it would make little difference, for the preposition על (*al*) has both significations, and the meaning will still be, that everything contained in this book belongs strictly to *Judah and Jerusalem.* For though many things are scattered through it which relate to Babylon, Egypt, Tyre, and other cities and countries, yet it was not necessary that those places should be expressly enumerated in the title; for nothing more was required than to announce the principal subject, and to explain to whom Isaiah was chiefly sent, that is, *to Jerusalem, and the Jews.* Everything else that is contained in his prophecies may be said to have been accidental and foreign to the subject.

And yet it was not inconsistent with his office to make known to other nations the calamities which should overtake them; for in like manner Amos did not go beyond the limits of his calling, when he did not spare the Jews, though he was not sent to them. (Amos 2:4, 5.) A still more familiar instance is found in the calling of Peter and Paul, the former of whom was appointed to the Jews, and the latter to the Gentiles. (Galatians 2:8.) And yet Peter did not rush beyond the limits of his office, by preaching to the Gentiles; as, for example, when he went to Cornelius: (Acts 10:17:) nor did Paul, when he offered his services to the Jews, to whom he immediately went as soon as he entered into any city. (Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:2, 10; 18:4,19.) In the same light ought we to view Isaiah; for while he is careful to instruct the Jews, and directs his labors expressly towards that object, he does not transgress his proper limits when he likewise takes a passing notice of other nations.

Judah and Jerusalem He takes *Judah* for the whole nation, and *Jerusalem* for the chief city in the kingdom; for he does not make a distinction between *Jerusalem* and *the Jews*, but mentions it, by way of eminence, (κατ᾽ ἐξοχὴν,) as the metropolis, just as if a prophet of the present day were to address the kingdom of France, and Paris, which is the metropolis of the nation. And this was of great importance, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem might not hold themselves exempted, as if they were free from all blame, or placed above the laws on account of their high rank, and thus might send the meaner sort of people to be instructed by homely prophets. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that *Jerusalem* is mentioned separately, on account of its being situated in the tribe of Benjamin; for the half of that tribes which

was subject to the posterity of David, is included under the name of *Judah*

2. *Hear, O heavens* Isaiah has here imitated Moses, as all the prophets are accustomed to do; and there cannot be a doubt that he alludes to that illustrious Song of Moses, in which, at the very commencement, he calls *heaven and earth* to witness against the people:

Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. (Deuteronomy 32:1.)

This is unquestionably a very severe protestation; for it conveys this meaning, that both turn to the elements which are dumb and devoid of feeling, because men have now no ears, or are bereft of all their senses. The Prophet, therefore, speaks of it as an extraordinary and monstrous thing, which ought to strike even the senseless elements with amazement. For what could be more shocking than that the Israelites should revolt from God, who had bestowed on them so many benefits? Those who think that by *heaven* are meant angels, and by *earth* men, weaken too much the import of those words, and thus destroy all their force and majesty.

Almost all the commentators consider the clause to end with the words, *for the Lord hath spoken*; as if the Prophet had intimated, that as soon as the Lord opens his sacred mouth, all ought to be attentive to *hear* his voice. And certainly this meaning has the appearance of being more full; but the context demands that we connect the words in a different manner, so as to make the word hear to refer, not in a general manner to any discourse whatever, but only to the expostulation which immediately follows. The meaning therefore is, Hear the complaint which the Lord brings forward, *I have nourished and brought up children*, etc. For he relates a prodigy, which fills him with such horror that he is compelled to summon dead creatures as witnesses, contrary to nature.

That no one may wonder at the circumstance of his addressing dumb and lifeless objects, experience very clearly shows that the voice of God is heard even by dumb creatures, and that the order of nature is nothing else than the obedience which is rendered to him by every part of the world, so that everywhere his supreme authority shines forth; for at his bidding the elements observe the law laid down to them, and *heaven and earth* perform their duty. The *earth* yields her fruits; the sea flows not beyond her settled boundaries; the sun, moon, and stars perform their Courses; the *heavens*, too, revolve at stated periods; and all with wonderful accuracy, though they are destitute of reason and understanding But man, endued with reason and understanding, in whose ears and in whose heart the voice of God frequently sounds, remains unmoved, like one bereft of his senses, and cannot bend the neck to submit to him. Against obstinate and rebellious men shall dumb and lifeless creatures bear testimony, so that they will one day feel that this protestation was not in vain.

I have nourished Literally it runs, *I have made them great*; [10] but as he

[10] Feci magnos. The term feci (I have made) exhibits the force of the Pihel form, גדלתי (giddalti),

is speaking about children, we cannot obtain a better rendering than *I have nourished*, or, *I have brought up*; [11] for instead of the verb, to nourish, [12] the Latins employ the phrase, *to bring up children* [13] But he afterwards mentions other benefits which he had bestowed on them in rich abundance; as if he had said, that he not only had performed the part of a kind father, by giving them food and the ordinary means of support, but had labored to raise them to an honorable rank. For in every sort of kindness towards them he had, as it were, exhausted himself, as he elsewhere reproaches them,

What could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done? (Isaiah 5:4.)

A similar charge the Lord might indeed have brought against all nations; for all of them he feeds, and on all he confers great and multiplied benefits. But he had chosen the Israelites in a peculiar manner, had given them a preference above others by adopting them into his family, had treated them as his most beloved children, had tenderly cherished them in his bosom, and, in a word, had bestowed on them every kind of blessings.

To apply these observations to our own times, we ought to consider whether our condition be not equal, or even superior to that which the Jews formerly enjoyed. Their adoption into the family of God bound them to maintain the purity of his worship. Our obligation is twofold; for not only have we been redeemed by the blood of Christ, but he who once redeemed us is pleased to favor us with his Gospel, and in this manner prefers us to all those whom he still allows to remain blinded by ignorance. If we do not acknowledge these things, how much severer punishment shall we deserve? For the more full and abundant the grace of God which hath been poured out on us, the higher will be the ingratitude of which it shall convict us.

They have revolted. [14] Jerome translates it, *they have despised*; [15] but it is plain enough, from many passages, that פשע (pashang) means something more, namely, *revolt.* God declares, that by no acts of kindness could they be kept in a state of obedience, that they were utterly disaffected and estranged, like a son who leaves his father's house, and thus makes manifest that there remains no hope of his improvement. It is indeed a monstrous thing that children should not be obedient to their father, and to a Father who is so kind, and who gives unceasing attention to his family. Lycurgus refused to enact a law against ungrateful persons, because it was monstrously unnatural not to acknowledge a benefit received. A child who is ungrateful to his father

which, as in other instances, approaches the meaning of the Hiphil form, הגדלתי, (higdalti.) --- Ed

[11] Educavi, vel sustuli.

[12] Enutrire.

[13] Tollere liberos.

[14] Our Author, in his Latin version of the Prophet, (see p. 33,) has rendered this word by "scelerate egerunt in me" — "they have acted wickedly towards me;" and, in the margin, by "rebellarunt contra me," — "have rebelled against me." Without taking notice of either of these translations, he has here introduced a third, "defecerunt" — "have revolted," for which it would be easy to produce authorities. The participle, פושעים (poshegnim,) at Hosea 14:10, is defined by Aben Ezra (quoted by Buxtorff) to mean מהרשות, שיוצאים (sheyotzeim meharshoth,) those who withdraw from authority, who set at nought, or oppose, the authority of a lawful magistrate. --- Ed

[15] Spreverunt.

is therefore a double monster; but a child who is ungrateful to a kind and generous father is a threefold monster. For he employs the word *children*, not for the purpose of treating them with respect, but in order to exhibit that *revolt* in a more striking manner, and in more hateful colors.

3. *The ox knoweth his owner* This comparison marks the more strongly the criminality of the *revolt*; for the Lord might have compared his people to the Gentiles; but he is still more severe when he compares them to dumb beasts, and pronounces them to be more stupid than the beasts are. Though beasts are destitute of reason and understanding, still they are capable of being taught; to such an extent, at least, as to recognize those who feed them. Since, therefore, God had not only fed this people at a stall, but had *nourished* them with all the kindness which is wont to be exercised by a father towards his sons, and had not only filled their bellies, but supplied them daily with spiritual food; having perceived them to be so exceedingly sluggish, he justly considers that they deserve to be taught in the school of beasts, and not of men; and therefore he sends them to the oven and asses to learn from them what is their duty. Nor ought we to wonder at this; for the beasts frequently observe the order of nature more correctly, and display greater kindness, than men themselves.

Not to multiply instances, it will be sufficient to notice that which is here mentioned by Isaiah, that the beasts, though they are exceedingly dull and stupid, do, notwithstanding, obey their masters and those who have the charge of them. But if we choose to attend to other points in which they excel men, how many shall we discover? What is the reason why scarcely any animal is cruel to its own species, and that it recognizes in another its own likeness? What is the reason why all animals commonly bestow so much care in rearing their young, while it frequently happens that mothers, forgetful of the voice of nature and of humanity, forsake their children? What is the reason why they are accustomed to take no more meat and drink than what is sufficient for sustaining their life and their strength, while men gorge themselves, and utterly ruin their constitutions? In a word, What is the reason why they do not, in any respect, transgress the laws which nature has prescribed to them?

The papists, who are accustomed to set aside the true meaning of the Scriptures, and to spoil all the mysteries of God by their own fooleries, have here contrived an absurd fable; for they have falsely alleged that the *oxen* and *asses* in the stall worshipped Christ when he was born; by which they show themselves to be egregious asses. (And indeed I wish that they would imitate the ass which they have invented; for then they should be asses worshipping Christ, and not lifting up the heel against his divine authority.) For here the Prophet does not speak of miracles, but of the order of nature, and declares, that those who overturn that order may be regarded as monsters. We must not contrive new miracles for the purpose of adding to the authority of Christ; for, by mingling the false with the true, there is danger lest both

should be disbelieved; nor can there be any doubt but that, if such a miracle had been wrought, the Evangelists would have committed it to writing.

Israel doth not know. The name *Israel*, which he contrasts with those beasts, is emphatic. We know how honorable it was for the posterity of Abraham to be known by this name, which God had bestowed on the holy patriarch, because he had vanquished the angel in wrestling. (Genesis 32:28.) So much the more dishonorable was it for bastard and rebellious children to make false boasting of that honor. First, there is an implied reproof, not only because those who do not at all resemble the holy mall do wrong in assuming his name, but because they are ungrateful to God, from whom they had received most valuable blessings. Secondly, there is also conveyed an indirect comparison; for the higher their rank was in being far exalted above all other nations, so much the greater disgrace is flow intended to be expressed by separating them from other nations under the honorable designation of *Israel*

The Greek translators have added the word *me* [16] ; but I prefer to repeat what he had said before, *Israel doth not know* His Owner, that is, God; nor *his crib*, that is, the Church, in which he had been brought up, and to which he ought to be attracted; while those beasts, on the other hand, recognize the master by whom they are nourished, and willingly return to the place where they have been fed.

4. *Ah sinful nation*! [17] Though he held already reproved their crime with sufficient severity, yet, for the purpose of exposing it still more, he adds an exclamation, by which he expresses still more strongly his abhorrence of such base ingratitude and wickedness. Some are of opinion that the particle הוי (*hoi*) denotes grief; Jerome renders it *vae* (*Wo to*); but for my part I reckon it sufficient to say that it is an exclamation, suggested partly by astonishment, and partly by sorrow. For we burst into loud cries, when the disgracefulness of the action is such as cannot be expressed in plain terms, or when we want words to correspond to the depth of our grief Where we have rendered *wicked nation*, the Greeks have translated ἁμαρτωλὸν that is, *a sinner*; and such is likewise the rendering of the Vulgate. But the Hebrew word denotes those who are given up to crime; and the Prophet unquestionably charges them with abandoned wickedness.

A people laden with iniquity The force of the metaphor ought to be observed; for not only does he mean that they are sunk in their iniquity, as in a deep mire, but he likewise brings a charge against them, that they sin, not through mistake or thoughtlessness, as frequently happens with those who are easily led astray, but that they follow out their rebellion with a firm purpose of mind; as if he had said that they were the slaves of sin, or sold to act wickedly.

When he adds, *a seed of evil-doers,* he means *a wicked seed.* Others, with

16, , — But Israel doth not know me, and the people doth not understand me

17 This comes very near the rendering of the Septuagint,

greater ingenuity, consider this passage to mean, that they are declared to be unworthy of holding a place among the children of Abraham, because they are bastards, and not related to him; as they are elsewhere called the seed of Canaan, and are reproached with being *uncircumcised*, (Jeremiah 9:26,) as if they had been the descendants of heathens and foreigners. But it is customary with the Hebrews to employ the phrase, "children of the good" for "good children," a mode of expression which has been imitated by the Greeks. [18]

Degenerate children. The word משחיתים (*mashchithim*) literally means *corrupting*, and accordingly translators supply the word *themselves*, or, *their pursuits*. But I reckon that degenerate is a more appropriate rendering; for the Prophet means that they are so depraved as to be altogether unlike their parents. The four epithets which are here bestowed by him on his nation are far from being honorable, and are widely different from the opinion which they had formed about themselves. For this is the manner in which we must arouse hypocrites; and the more they flatter themselves, and the farther they are from being regulated by the fear of God, so much the more ought we to wield against them the thunderbolts of words. On such persons a milder form of instruction would produce no effect, and an ordinary exhortation would not move them. It is necessary, also, to remove that false conviction of their holiness, righteousness, and wisdom, which they commonly employ as a disguise, and as the ground of idle boasting.

For they have forsaken the Lord He assigns the reason why he reproves them with such sharpness and severity. It is, that they may not complain, as they are wont to do, of being treated with excessive harshness and rigour. And first he upbraids them with that which is the source of all evils, their revolt from God; for, as it is the highest perfection of righteousness to *cleave to* God, agreeably to those words of Moses, *Now, Israel, what doth thy God require from thee but that thou shouldst cleave to him*? [19] so, when we have revolted from him, we are utterly ruined. The design of the Prophet is, not to convince the Jews that they are guilty of a single crime, but to show that they are wholly apostates.

The following words, *they have provoked the Holy One of Israel*, whether the word be rendered *provoke*, or *despise*, the latter of which I prefer, are undoubtedly added in order to place their sin in a still stronger light; for it was shamefully base to treat with contempt the favor of him who had chosen them alone out of all the nations to be adopted into his family. This is also

[18] Vigerus remarks, that , when construed with the genitives of nouns, denoting artists, nations, or any particular condition or profession of men, is put for the nouns themselves; and he adduces the following instances, , , , which is far more elegant than ´ etc.; and in like manner, K , sons of the Celts, or, Gauls, that is, Gauls; , sons of the wretched, that is, the wretched — Ed

[19] Our Author, quoting from memory, has mingled two passages: And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul? (Deuteronomy 10:12.) Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave and swear by his name. (Deuteronomy 10:20.) — Ed.

the reason why he calls himself *the Holy One of Israel*; because, by admitting them to alliance with him, he had at the same time adorned them with his *holiness*; for wherever this name occurs it is ascribed to him on account of the effect. What barbarous pride was there in despising so great an honor! If any one choose rather to render the word *provoke*, the meaning will be, that they rejected God, as if they expressly intended to *provoke his anger*; which shows how detestable their apostasy is.

They are gone away backward The meaning is, that when the Lord laid down to them a fixed way and rule of living, they were hurried along by their sinful passions; but he confirms the statement which he had just now made, that their licentiousness was so unbridled that they utterly revolted from God, and deliberately turned aside from that course to which their life ought to have been directed.

5. *Why should ye be stricken any more*? Some render it, *Upon what*? or, *On what part*? and interpret the passage as if the Lord had said that he had not another scourge left; because so various are the methods by which he has attempted to bring them back to the path of duty, that no other way of chastising them remains to be tried. But I prefer to render it *Why*? because this corresponds to the Hebrew word, and agrees better with the context. It is equivalent to phrases in daily use, *To what purpose? For what object*? [20] He means that the Jews have proceeded to such a pitch of wickedness and crimes, that it is impossible to believe that chastisements will do them any good; for when desperate men have been hardened, we know that they will rather be broken to shreds than submit to correction. He complains of their prodigious obstinacy, like a physician who should declare that every remedy had been tried, and that his skill was now exhausted.

At the same time he charges them with extreme malice; for when ungodly men are not even humbled by punishments, they have arrived at the very height of wickedness; as if the Lord had said, "I see that I should do you no good if I were to chastise you;" for although chastisements and afflictions are the remedies which God employs for curing our vices, yet, when they are found to be of no advantage to us, we are past hope. True, indeed, God does not on that account cease to punish us, but, on the contrary, his wrath against us is the more enflamed; for such obstinacy God abhors above all things else. But he justly says that his labor is lost when he does not succeed in bringing us to repentance, and that it is useless to apply remedies to those who cannot be cured. Thus he does not fail to double their chastisements and afflictions, and to try the very utmost of what can be done, and he is even compelled to take this course until he absolutely ruin and destroy them. But in all this he does not discharge the office of a physician; but what he laments is, that the chastisements which he inflicts will be of no avail to his people.

You will yet grow more faithless It is a confirmation of the former state-

[20] A quel propos? Pour quelle fin?

ment, and therefore I separate it from the former clause, though there are some who put them together. It is as if he had said, "Still you will not cease to practice treachery; yea, you will add to your crimes; for I perceive that you rush to the commission of iniquity as if you had leagued and banded yourselves for that purpose, so that we can no longer hope that you will slacken in your course." The design of God is to exhibit their incorrigible disposition, that they may be left without excuse.

The whole head is sick. Others translate it *every head*, and suppose that those terms denote the princes and nobles of the nation. I rather agree with the opinion of those who render it *the whole* head; for I consider it to be a plain comparison taken from the human body, to this effect, that the body is so severely afflicted that there is no hope of returning health. He points out two principal parts on which the health of the body depends, and thus shows the extent of the disease which, he tells us, has infected this wretched people to such a degree that they are wasting away; that the disease exists not in a single member, or in the extremities of the body, but that *the heart* itself has been wounded, and *the head* is severely afflicted; in short, that the vital parts, as they are called, are so much injured and corrupted that it is impossible to heal them.

But here also commentators differ; for some of them view this state of disease as referring to sins, and others to punishments. Those who view it as referring to sins interpret it thus: "You are like a rotten and stinking body, in which no part is sound or healthy. Crimes of the worst description prevail amongst you, by the infection of which every thing is corrupted and debased." But I choose rather to interpret it as referring to punishments; for unquestionably God still proceeds with this complaint, that the nation is so obstinate as to be incapable of being cured by any chastisements, because, though it has been beaten almost to death, or at least has been maimed and frightfully torn by repeated blows, still it is not reformed. Such too is the import of —

6. *From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it* Here he proceeds with the same comparison, and repeats the same statement; for certainly those who explain the former part of the verse, as referring to punishments, do not sufficiently consider the remaining part of the context. If we shall admit that a nation corrupted by vices is compared to a diseased body, what is the meaning of the words which immediately follow, that *the wounds have not been bound up or mollified with ointment*? It is plain that the Prophet speaks of afflictions by which the nation had almost wasted away, and that he adduces this long-continued weakness as a proof of hardened impenitence. He calls it a *putrifying sore*, from which diseased matter is continually flowing, as if some concealed fountain were perpetually sending forth an additional supply of venom. By this comparison he shows that the wound is incurable, because that supply cannot be stopped. All this is prodigiously heightened by affirming that no remedies

have been applied; for the three metaphors which he joins together — *they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment* — have all the same meaning that the nation, without any hope of relief, without comfort, without remedy, is reduced to such a state of distress, that in such punishments the utmost severity of God is openly displayed.

7. *Your country is desolate* Literally, it is *desolation*; and thus Isaiah goes on to speak more fully and plainly of what he had already said figuratively about chastisements, that the country has been reduced to a frightful state of devastation: for I choose to interpret all those statements as relating to past occurrences, because the Prophet does not threaten the vengeance of God, but describes those heavy calamities which have already happened. He upbraids them with indolence and stupidity in remaining unmoved by their afflictions.

Like the destruction of strangers [21] . This is added for the sake of heightening the picture; for the opinion that זרים (*zarim*) is here put for זרם (*zerem*), *an inundation*, is farfetched. That word might no doubt be applied to enemies, but it is better to take it as literally denoting *foreigners.* The calamity is more grievous when it is brought on by men who are unknown, and who have come from a distant country, who lay waste with far greater recklessness and cruelty than neighboring tribes. Such men destroy cities, burn houses, buildings, and villages, and spread desolation all around. In short, they rush forward with barbarous ferocity, bent on murders and conflagrations, and are more eager to inflict damage than to make gain. But neighbors, when they have subdued a country, can retain possession of it by having a garrison, and as soon as a revolt is attempted, or an insurrection takes place, can send additional troops; and therefore they are not so cruel; nor do they lay waste a country from which they hope to derive some advantage. It is therefore no ordinary calamity, but the most shocking of all calamities, that is here described.

Hence we ought to learn that, when God begins to punish us, if we do not repent, he does not immediately desist, but multiplies the chastisements, and continually follows them up with other afflictions. We ought therefore to abstain from such obstinacy, if we do not wish to draw down upon ourselves the same punishments, or at least to deserve the same reproach which was brought against the Jews, that though they had received sharp warnings, and had felt the hand of God, still they could not be corrected or reformed.

[21] In the English version it runs, as overthrown by strangers; and the marginal reading, adhering more closely to the Hebrew idiom, is, as the overthrow of strangers. The interpretation rejected by Calvin has been approved by some able critics; and Lowth, distrusting the philological views given by his predecessors, has resorted to a conjectural alteration of the Hebrew text: — "This reading, though confirmed by all the ancient versions, gives us no good sense; for your land is devoured by strangers, and is desolate as if overthrown by strangers, is a mere tautology, or, what is as bad, an identical comparison. Aben Ezra thought that the word, in its present form, might be taken for the same with זרם, an inundation. Schultens is of the same opinion, (see Taylor's Concord;) and Schindler, in his Lexicon, explains it in the same manner, and so, says Kimchi, some explain it.'' After enumerating the attempts of Abendana ``to reconcile it to grammatical analogy,'' he adds, ``but I rather suppose the true reading to be זרם, and have translated it accordingly: the word זרים in the line above, seems to have caught the transcriber's eye, and to have led him into this mistake.'' --- Notes on Isaiah. --- Ed

Moreover, we ought not to wonder that we are visited with so great an amount and variety of afflictions, of which we see no end or limit, for by our obstinacy we fight with God and with his stripes. It must therefore happen with us as with wincing and unruly horses, which, the more obstinate and refractory they are, have the whip and spur applied to them with greater severity. In the present day there are many who almost accuse God of cruelty, as if he always treated us with harshness, and as if he ought to chastise us more gently; but they do not take into account our shocking crimes. If those crimes were duly weighed by them, they would assuredly acknowledge that, amidst the utmost severity, the forbearance of God is wonderful; and that we may not think that in this case the Lord was too severe, we must take into consideration the vices which he afterwards enumerates.

Here an objection will be started. Why does Isaiah declare that the nation endured such a variety of afflictions, while we have already mentioned that he began to prophesy under Uzziah, [22] during whose reign the kingdom of Judah was in a prosperous condition? (2 Chronicles 26:5-15.) For although, towards the end of his life, the kingdom of Israel met with some disasters, still this did not affect the kingdom of Judah. Accordingly, the Jews think that these words relate to the reign of Jotham, (2 Kings 15:32,) and not of Uzziah. Their opinion appears at first sight to have little weight; and yet, when the whole matter is examined, it is not destitute of probability; for we know that the prophets did not always attend to chronological arrangement in collecting their prophecies; and it is possible that this discourse of Isaiah was placed first in order for no other reason but because it contains a summary view of that doctrine which is afterwards to be delivered.

Others think that they can easily get rid of the difficulty by interpreting the whole passage as a description of vice, and not of punishments; but what is said about the burning of cities and about the desolation of the country cannot easily be disposed of in that manner. If it is supposed that the Prophet speaks of the future and not the present condition of that kingdom, and that in the name of God he foretells approaching calamities, though they did not behold them with their eyes, I do not greatly object to that view, though it is probable that he treats of events which were known to them. It is a real narrative, and not a prediction, though in the next verse I acknowledge he announces the approaching result.

8. *And the daughter of Zion shall be left* [23] *as a cottage in a vineyard* He alludes to a custom which exists in France, that the vinekeepers rear *a cottage* for themselves when the grapes begin to ripen. His next comparison, which is closely allied to the former, is taken from a custom of that nation of protecting also *gardens of cucumbers* [24] by means of men who kept watch

[22] Called also Azariah, 2 Kings 15:1. — Ed.

[23] Residua manebit.

[24] A lively French traveler, Tavernier, who flourished about the middle of the seventeenth century, in describing the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, gives the following account: — "There we see large beds of melons and of cucumbers, but especially of the latter, of which the

during the night. He next explains what he intended to convey by both comparisons.

Like a besieged city This may be explained in two ways; either that the whole country will be wasted, with the solitary exception of the *city*, which shall be left standing like *a cottage*, or that the city itself will be destroyed. The former interpretation is adopted by the Jews, and they understand this passage to relate to the siege of Sennacherib; but I think that it has a wider signification, and embraces other calamities which followed afterwards. This may indeed refer to the neighboring country, from the misery and devastation of which it was impossible but that the city should sustain much damage; but I consider the Prophet's meaning to be, that the evils of which he speaks shall reach even to *the city* itself, until, broken and ruined, it shall wear the aspect of a mean *cottage*

The daughter of Zion is the name here given to Jerusalem, in accordance with what is customary in Scripture to give the designation of *daughter* to any nation, in the same manner as *the daughter of Babylon* (Isaiah 47:1) and *the daughter of Tyre* (Psalm 45:12) are names given to the Tyrians and Babylonians. *Zion* is the name here employed rather than *Jerusalem*, on account of the dignity of the temple; and this figure of speech, by which a part is taken for the whole, is frequently employed.

9. *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us* Here he concludes what he had formerly declared concerning God's chastisements, that the desolation which shall take place — or rather which is present, and which they now behold — may be compared to the destruction of *Sodom*, were it not that the Lord snatched as it were from the *burning a very small remnant.* And this verse confirms what I formerly said, that the Prophet's description of the calamities which had already taken place is interwoven with those events which were immediately at hand, as if he had said, Be not deceived by flatteries; you would be in the same condition that Sodom and Gomorrah now are, were it not that God, in compassion on you, has preserved *a remnant.* This agrees with the words of Jeremiah,

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. (Lamentations 3:22.)

Hence we ought to observe two things. First, the Prophet here describes utter destruction; and yet, because God had to deal with his Church and his beloved people, that judgment is mitigated by special grace, so that out of the general ruin of the whole nation God rescues his people, whom he justly compares to *a very small remnant.* But if God punished the crimes of the Jews by such dreadful chastisements, let us consider that we may share the same fate if we imitate their rebellion: for God had set apart that nation

inhabitants of the Levant are particularly fond. Most frequently they eat them without peeling, and afterwards drink a glass of water. Throughout the whole of Asia this is the ordinary food of the common people for three or four months. The whole family lives on it; and when a child asks for something to eat, instead of giving it bread, as in France and other places is the custom, in the Levant they offer it a cucumber, which it eats raw just as it has been fresh pulled. Cucumbers in the Levant have a peculiarly excellent flavour, and though they are eaten raw they never do any injury." — Ed.

for himself, and had distinguished them from the ordinary lot of other men. Why then should he spare us if we shall be hardened in our ungodliness and treachery? Or rather, what is likely to be the result of that mass and sink of crimes in which men throughout the whole world give way to their passions? Unquestionably it will be the same with the fate of *Sodom and Gomorrah*, unless his vengeance shall be restrained by a regard to that gracious covenant in which he promised that the Church shall be eternal; and this threatening, which is truly awful and alarming, is applicable to all obstinate and incurable men, whose vices no punishments can destroy or weaken.

Again, we ought to observe that saying of Jeremiah, which I have already glanced at, that it must be attributed to the tender mercies of God that we are not altogether destroyed. (Lamentations 2:22.) For if We Shall Consider the vast amount Of wickedness which prevails among all classes, we shall wonder that even a single individual is left, and that all have not been removed from the land of the living; and in this way God *withdraws his hand*, (Ezekiel 20:22,) that there may be some Church preserved in the world. This is the reason assigned by Paul, who is the best interpreter of this passage, when, by quoting it, he represses the haughtiness of the Jews, that they may not boast of the mere name, as if it had been enough that they were descended from the fathers; for he reminds them that God could act towards them as he had formerly done towards the fathers, but that through his tender mercies *a remnant shall be saved*. (Romans 9:27.) And why? That the Church may not utterly perish; for it is through the favor which he bears towards it that the Lord, though our obstinacy lays him under the necessity of trying the severest judgments, still reserves some small *seed*. (Romans 9:29.) This statement ought to yield us powerful consolation even in those heaviest calamities in which we are apt to think that it is all over with the Church; that, though everything should go into confusion, and the world, as we say, be turned upside down, we may persevere with unshaken fortitude, and may rest assured that God will always be mindful of his Church.

A very small remnant This clause may be connected either with what goes before or with what follows, and accordingly some render it, *We would have been almost like Sodom*. But I prefer connecting it with the former clause, so as to deduce that the number which God had *reserved* out of the destruction is *small*. Some think that: כ (*caph*) is here used affirmatively, so as to express the matter more strongly; and I have no objection to that view, though we may take it in its natural and literal signification, as if he had said, "and that shall be a small number." This declaration ought to be carefully observed; for if the Church does not spread far and wide, men are wont to despise her. Hence it comes that hypocrites are proud of their numbers; and weak men, terrified by the pompous display of those numbers, stagger. We also learn from it that we ought not to judge by the largeness of the number, unless we choose to prefer the chaff to the wheat, because the quantity is greater; but we ought to be satisfied with knowing that, though

the number of the godly be small, still God acknowledges them as his chosen people; and we ought also to call to remembrance that consolatory saying,

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure
to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32.)

10. *Hear the word of the Lord* He confirms what he had formerly said, that the Lord's vengeance is not cruel; because they deserved far more severe punishment. For although there was a difference between them and the inhabitants of *Sodom* as to punishment, yet their guilt was the same; so that equal punishment might have been inflicted, if the Lord had not spared them. It amounts to this, that, if they have received milder treatment, it is not because they have sinned less heinously than the inhabitants of *Sodom*, but it must be ascribed to the mercy of God.

When he gives to the *rulers* the name of *Sodom*, and distinguishes the *people* by the name of *Gomorrah*, this does not point out that there is a difference, but rather that their condition is alike. But by repeating the same thing twice, the diversity of the names lends additional elegance; as if he had said, that there is no greater difference between the rulers and the *people* than there is between *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. There is, no doubt, an allusion to the various ranks of men, by assigning to them, separately, as it were, two cities; but as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* mean the same thing, we perceive that he throws them, as it were, into one bundle. In short, the meaning is, "If any one shall form an opinion about the people and the rulers, he will find that there is as close a resemblance between them as between Sodom and Gomorrah, or between one egg and another; for no one part is more sound than any other part."

The Prophet begins with stripping the Jews of their disguises, and justly; for while all hypocrites are accustomed to employ strange coverings for concealing themselves from view, that nation was particularly addicted to this vice, and on no subject did the prophets contend with them more keenly or fiercely. Along with their vaunting about pretended holiness pride also reigned, and they boasted of the grandeur and excellency of their nation as much as of ceremonies and outward worship. So much the more were they offended at the great harshness with which Isaiah addressed them. But it was necessary to drag their wickedness from their lurking places, and therefore the more haughty their demeanour, the greater is the vehemence with which the Prophet thunders against them. In the same manner ought we to deal with all hypocrites.

The word of the Lord The Prophet takes the *word* and the *law* for the same thing; and yet I fully believe that he purposely employed the term *law*, in order to glance at their absurd opinion; because, by imagining that the offering of sacrifices, unaccompanied by faith and repentance, can appease God, they put an absurd interpretation on the *law*. By these words he reminded them that, by quoting Moses to them, he introduces nothing new and makes no addition to the law; that it is only necessary for them to hear

what the will of God is; and that on this subject he will faithfully instruct them. Lest they should suppose that, by an unfounded belief of their own righteousness, they can deceive God, he likewise reminds them that the *law* gives no countenance to them in this matter.

11. *To what purpose is he multitude of your sacrifices to me*? Isaiah now introduces God as speaking, for the purpose of making known his own meaning; for it belongs to a lawgiver not only to issue commands, but likewise to give a sound interpretation to the laws, that they may not be abused. Beyond all doubt, the former reproof was exceedingly unpalatable and oppressive to them; for what language expressive of stronger disapprobation or abhorrence could have been employed? They gloried in the name of Abraham, boasted that they were his children, and on this ground maintained a haughty demeanor. This is the reason why the Prophet arms himself with the authority of God against them; as if he had said, "Know that it is not with me but with God that you have to do."

Next he explains the intention and design of God in demanding sacrifices; that he does so, not because he sets a high value on them, but in order that they may be aids to piety; and, consequently, that the Jews were greatly mistaken who made all their holiness to consist of those services. For they thought that they had performed their duty admirably well when they offered sacrifices of slain beasts; and when the prophets demanded something beyond this, they complained that they were treated harshly. Now the Lord says that he rejects and abhors them, which may appear to be excessive severity, for it was by him that they were appointed. But it ought to be observed that some of the commandments of God ought to be obeyed on their own account, while others of them have a remoter object. For instance, the law enjoins us to serve and worship God, and next enjoins us to do good to our neighbors. (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18.) These things are in themselves acceptable to God, and are demanded on their own account. The case is different with ceremonies; for they are performances which are not demanded on their own account, but for a different reason. The same thing may be said of fasting*;*

For the kingdom of God does not consist in meat and drink; (Romans 14:17;)

and therefore fasting is directed to another object.

It follows, therefore, that ceremonies were not appointed in such a manner as if they were a satisfaction by which he should be appeased, but in order that by means of them the nation might be trained to godliness, and might make greater and greater progress in faith and in the pure worship of God. But hypocrites observe them with the most scrupulous care, as if the whole of religion turned on this point, and think that they are the most devout of all men, when they have long and anxiously wearied themselves in observing them. And that they may be thought more devout, they likewise add something of their own, and daily contrive new inventions, and most

wickedly abuse the holy ordinances of God, by not keeping in view their true object. All their ceremonies, therefore, are nothing else than corruptions of the worship of God. For when their whole attention is given to the outward and naked performance, in what respect do their sacrifices differ from the sacrifices of the Gentiles, which, we know, were full of sacrilege, because they had no regard to a lawful end?

This is the reason why the Lord rejects those ceremonies, though they had been appointed by his authority, because the nation did not consider the object and purpose for which they were enjoined. The unceasing contest between the prophets and the nation was to tear off these masks, and to show that the Lord is not satisfied with merely outward worship, and cannot be appeased by ceremonies. In all places godly ministers have experience of the same kind of conflicts; for men always form their estimate of God from themselves, and think that he is satisfied with outward display, but cannot without the greatest difficulty be brought to offer to him the integrity of their heart.

All the perplexity of this passage will be easily removed by Jeremiah, who says,

When I redeemed your fathers out of Egypt, I did not order them to offer sacrifices to me; I only enjoined them to hear me and to keep my commandments. (Jeremiah 7:22.)

For he shows that the observance of ceremonies depends wholly on the word, and that it is as idle and unprofitable to separate there from the word as it would be for the soul to be parted from the body. To this also belongs the argument in Psalm 50:13, 14, —

Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows to the Most High.

And in another passage the same Jeremiah says,

"Trust not in words of falsehood, saying, The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are we.
But rather excel in doing good, etc." (Jeremiah 7:4.)

The Prophet Micah likewise says, "Doth the LORD take pleasure in thousands of rams, or in ten thousand rivers of oil?" Immediately afterwards he adds,

"I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requireth from thee, namely, to do justly, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with thy God." (Micah 6:7, 8.)

From these passages it is evident that the reason why ceremonies are condemned is, that they are separated from the word as from their soul. Hence we see how great is the blindness of men, who cannot be convinced that all the pains they take to worship God are of no advantage unless they flow from integrity of heart. Nor is this vice confined to the common people, but is found in almost all men; and in those who in their opinion excel all others. Hence springs the notion of the efficacy which belongs to the mere

performance of the outward act — or, as they call it, *the opus operatum* — which Popish doctors have contrived, and which at the present day keeps a firm hold of the minds of many. Now here it is not man but God himself who speaks, and who pronounces, by an unchangeable decree, that all that men do is in vain offered for his acceptance, is empty and unprofitable, unless they call upon him with true faith.

12. *Who hath required this at your hand*? What an admirable confutation of false worship, when God declares that they will not come before him according to the appointed manner, and makes a general declaration, that in vain do they offer to him anything which he does not require; for he does not choose to be worshipped in any other way than that which has been enjoined! For how comes it that men are so highly delighted with those inventions, but because they do not consider that all their services are neither profitable to themselves nor acceptable to God? Otherwise they would immediately recollect that obedience is all that remains for them to do; (1 Samuel 15:22;) and they would not so insolently vaunt of their exertions, which the Lord looks upon with scorn, not only because he derives no advantage from it, but because he does not wish that men should attribute to him what they have rashly undertaken without his authority, or suffer the caprice of men to pass for a law: Yet in order to express still stronger contempt, he immediately adds, that they improperly give the name of *obedience* to that which he considers to be labor thrown away; namely, that their close attendance at the temple amounts to nothing more than treading its pavements; as if, in reference to their hypocritical prayers, he had said, "Truly they lay me under deep obligations by stunning my ears."

13. *Bring no more vain oblations* This is a useful admonition for restraining the irregular desires of those who do not cease to follow inveterately unmeaning and hypocritical worship, that, warned by God, they may at length repent, if they would listen to any advice. But hence we learn how hard it is to shake the false confidence of hypocrites, when they have once been hardened, since they cannot even endure to hear God plainly warning them not to go on in losing their pains, and in the practice of such madness.

Incense is an abomination to one To press them more closely, he proceeds farther, and declares that such worship is not only unprofitable, but even that he detests and abhors it; and justly, because the profanation of the worship of God, in which his name is falsely employed, is not free from sacrilege. For as nothing is more dear to God than his own glory, so there is nothing which he more strongly detests than to have it infringed by any kind of corruptions: and this is done, when any sort of unmeaning service is put in the room of true worship. The meaning of this passage has been mistaken by some, who have thought that the Prophet speaks of the repeal of the law; for that is not his object, but he recalls the people of his time to the right manner of observing ceremonies, and shows with what design and for what purpose they were instituted. For since the beginning of the world

the worship of God was spiritual, and the diversity of our worship from that which prevailed under the Old Testament had a reference to men, but not to God. In God there is no change, (James 1:17,) but he accommodates himself to the weakness of men. That kind of government therefore was suitable to the Jews, just as a preparatory training [25] is needed for children. For what purpose they were instituted, and what is the right manner of observing ceremonies, he now describes.

14. *Your new-moons* The Prophet adds nothing new to his former doctrine; but with respect to all ceremonies, in which there is no spiritual truth, but only the glare of a false pretense, he declares generally that they are not merely useless but wicked. Hence we ought to observe that we labor to no purpose, if we do not worship God in the right manner, and as God himself enjoins. In all things God delights in truth, but especially in the worship due to his majesty. Besides, not only do we lose our labor, but the worship of God (as we have already said) is perverted; and nothing can be more wicked than this. Now all superstitions are so many corruptions of the worship of God; it follows, therefore, that they are wicked and unlawful.

Superstition may be viewed, either in itself, or in the disposition of the mind. *In itself* when men have the audacity to contrive what God has not commanded. Such are those actions which spring from *will-worship*, (ἐθελοθρησκεία, Colossians 2:23,) Which is commonly called devotion. One man shall set up an idol, another shall build a chapels another shall appoint annual festivals, and innumerable things of the same nature. When men venture to take such liberties as to invent new modes of worship, that is superstition. *In the disposition of the mind*, when men imitate those services which are lawful and of which God approves, but keep their whole attention fixed on the outward form, and do not attend to their object or truth. In this manner the Jews earnestly adhered to the ceremonies which Moses had enjoined, but left out what was of the greatest importance; for they paid no regard to a pure conscience, never mentioned faith and repentance, had no knowledge of their guilt, and — what was still worse — separated Christ from them, and left no room for the truth. This plainly shows, as I have already stated, that it was a spurious and deceitful mask; so that their sacrifices did not at all differ from the sacrifices of the Gentiles. It is therefore not wonderful that the Lord calls them *abomination*

I shall not stay to notice the phrases here used, which are various; and yet they ought not to be lightly passed over. For the Lord perceives how great is the wantonness of men in contriving modes of worship; and therefore he heaps up a variety of expressions, that he may more powerfully restrain that wantonness, and again declares that those actions are hateful to him. Moreover, because men flatter themselves, and foolishly entertain the belief that the Lord will hold in some estimation the idle contrivances which they have

[25] Poedagogia. In what sense our Author uses this term may be gathered from his Commentary on Galatians 3:24. The law was our schoolmaster ( ) to Christ. — Ed

framed, he declares, on the contrary, that he regards them with detestation and abhorrence.

15. *When ye spread forth your hands* The ancient custom of *spreading forth the hands* in prayer did not arise from superstition; nor did that practice, like many others, obtain currency through foolish and idle ambition; but because nature herself prompts men to declare, even by outward signs, that they betake themselves to God. Accordingly, since they cannot fly to him, they raise themselves by this sign. No injunction, certainly, respecting this sign, was given to the fathers; but they used it as men divinely inspired; and by this very sign all idolaters are convicted of gross blindness; for, while they declare by an outward attitude that they betake themselves to God, in reality they betake themselves to idols. In order to convict them more strongly, the Lord permitted the uninterrupted use of this custom to continue among them. The Prophet, therefore, does not condemn the *spreading forth of the hands*, but their hypocrisy; because they assumed the appearance of men who called on God, while in their heart they were wholly averse to him, as he elsewhere declares more fully that

"this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honors me, but have removed their heart far from me"
(Isaiah 29:13.)

The Lord saith that he is *nigh*, but it is
to those who call upon him in truth. (Psalm 145:18.)

Where hypocrisy is, there can be no true calling on God. And yet this passage does not contradict what is said elsewhere, "When they shall spread forth their hands, I will hear." [26] For in that passage the Lord speaks of that *calling* which proceeds from confidence in him. Faith is the mother of calling on God; and if that be absent, nothing is left but empty mockery.

Yea, when ye make many prayers He amplifies the former statement by threatening that he will be deaf to their cries, to whatever extent they may multiply prayers; as if he had said, "Though you be constant in prayer, that diligence will be of no avail to you." For this also is a fault which belongs to hypocrites, that the more their prayers abound in words, they think that they are more holy, and will more easily obtain what they wish. Thus their idle talkativeness is indirectly rebuked.

Your hands are full of blood Here he begins to explain more fully the reason why he disapproves, and even disdainfully rejects, both their prayers and their sacrifices. It is because they are cruel and bloody, and stained with crimes of every sort, though they come into his presence with hypocritical display. Though he will afterwards add other kinds of crime, yet as he had

[26] Our Author seems to allude to Isaiah 65:24, It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. This conjecture is confirmed by the remarks which immediately follow on the word call, as the leading word in the passage. It appears to have escaped his recollection, that in this instance the spreading forth of the hands is not mentioned, though it occurs in an analogous passage of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple — What prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, when he shall spread forth his hands in this house; then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling-place. 2 Chronicles 6:29, 30. — Ed.

mentioned the *spreading forth of the hands*, so he speaks of the *hands*, and says that in them they carry and hold out a testimony of their crimes, so that they need not wonder that he thrusts them back so harshly. For, on the other hand, the phrase, *to lift up clean hands*, was employed not only by prophets and apostles, (1 Timothy 2:8,) but even by profane authors, who were driven by mere instinct to reprove the stupidity of men; if it were not that God perhaps forced them to make this confession, in order that true religion might never be without some kind of attestation.

And yet the Prophet does not mean that they were robbers or murderers, but reproves the tricks and deceit by which they obtained possession of the property of others. God judges in a different manner from men; for the hidden tricks and wicked arts, by which wicked men are accustomed to deceive and take advantage of the more simple, are not taken into account by men; or if they are taken into account, they are at least extenuated, and are not estimated according to their just weight. But God, dragging forth to light those very men of dazzling reputation, who under specious pretenses had been in the habit of concealing their unjust practices, plainly declares that they are murderers. For in whatever way you kill a man, whether you cut his throat or take away his food and the necessaries of life, you are a murderer. Consequently, God does not speak of men who are openly wicked, or whose crimes have made them openly infamous, but of those who wished to be thought good men, and who kept up some kind of reputation.

This circumstance ought to be carefully observed; for on the same grounds must we now deal with wicked men, who oppress the poor and feeble by fraud and violence, or some kind of injustice, and yet cloak their wickedness by plausible disguise. But with whatever impudence they may exclaim that they do not resemble thieves or assassins we must reprove them with the same severity which the Prophet employed towards persons of the same stamp; for when we speak in the name of God, we must not judge according to the views and opinions of men, but must boldly declare the judgment which the Lord hath pronounced.

16. *Wash you, make you clean* He exhorts the Jews to repentance, and points out the true way of it, provided that they wish to have their obedience approved by God. Hence we conclude that nothing can please God, unless it proceed from a pure conscience; for God does not, like men, judge of our works according to their outward appearance. It frequently happens that some particular action, though performed by a very wicked man, obtains applause among men; but in the Sight of God, who beholds the heart, a depraved conscience pollutes every virtue. And this is what is taught by Haggai, holding out an illustration drawn from the ancient ceremonies, that *everything which an unclean person has touched is polluted*; from which he concludes that nothing clean proceeds from the wicked. Our Prophet has already declared, that in vain do they offer sacrifices to God, in vain do they pray, in vain do they call on his name, if integrity of heart do not sanctify

the outward worship. For this reason, in order that the Jews may no longer labor to no purpose, he demands that *cleanness*; and he begins with a general reformation, lest, after having discharged one part of their duty, they should imagine that this would be a veil to conceal them from the eyes of God.

Such is the manner in which we ought always to deal with men who are estranged from God. We must not confine our attention to one or a few sores of a diseased body but if we aim at a true and thorough cure, we must call on them to begin anew, and must thoroughly remove the contagion, that they who were formerly hateful and abominable in the sight of God may begin to please God. By the metaphor *washing*, he unquestionably exhorts to remove inward pollution, but shortly afterwards he will also add the fruits of actions.

When he bids them *wash*, he does not mean that men repent by their own exercise of free-will; but he shows that there is no other remedy but this, that they shall appear pure in the sight of God. Now, we know that the sacred writers attribute to men what is wrought in them by the Spirit of God, whom Ezekiel calls *clean water*, because to him belongs the work of repentance. (Ezekiel 36:25.)

Put away the evil of your doings The Prophet now comes to describe the fruits of repentance; for not only does he explain without a metaphor what it is to wash and to be cleansed, but he enjoins them to exhibit in their whole life, and in every action, the evidence of their being renewed. Yet he confirms the former statement, that the pollution of the people is *before the eyes* of God, that it stains and debases all their actions, and thus makes it impossible that they shall be pleasing in his sight. And he particularly mentions *the eyes of God*, lest, when they employed a veil to hinder themselves from seeing, they should vainly imagine that God shared with them in their blindness.

Cease to do evil He still proceeds to reprove their manner of life. This passage is commonly interpreted as if by *doing ill* the Prophet meant loving ill; but it ought strictly to be understood as denoting those crimes by which a neighbor is injured; so that in the exhortation, *Learn to do well,* which occurs in the next verse, the expression *to your neighbor* ought to be supplied; for he speaks of the injuries and kind offices which Eve perform to our neighbors. Now since repentance has its seal in the heart of man, he describes it by those outward appearances by means of which it is, in some measure, brought before the eyes of men. There is no man who does not wish to be reckoned a good man; but the true character of every man is manifested by his actions. He therefore calls them to the performance of those outward actions by which they may give evidence of their repentance.

He comprehends under two heads the fruits of repentance, *ceasing to do evil*, and *doing well.* First, we must cease to commit every act of injustice; for we must not imitate those spendthrifts who wish to be thought bountiful, and fraudulently take from one person what they bestow on another. Again, we must not resemble those idle people who think that they have done enough, if

they have kept themselves from doing harm, and from invading the property of their neighbors, but are not careful to perform acts of kindness. He intended, therefore, to include both; for under those two heads the keeping of the second table of the law is comprehended.

17. *Learn to do well* As he had just now, ill enjoining them to *cease to do evil*, charged them with the continual practice of iniquity as if he had said that their whole life was a constant habit of sinning; so now he enjoins them to become skilled in acts of kindness, and in entreating them to *learn* this, he addresses them as scholars who had not yet learned their earliest lessons. And first he bids them *seek judgment*. Others render it, inquire respecting *judgment*, of which I do not approve; for by the word *seek* the Prophet meant more than this, he meant what we call the actual practice of it. By the word *judgment* he denotes what is good and right; as if he had said, "Aim at uprightness."

Relieve the oppressed The Prophet, after his wonted manner, adds to the general description the mention of particular classes; and although he has already given a special exhortation to kindness and justice, yet wishing to press them more closely, he enters into a more careful enumeration of certain classes, so as to present a more complete view of the subject. For otherwise men always wish to be reckoned good and righteous, and can scarcely be moved by general instruction; but when we come to particular cases, they are forced, as it were, to deal with the matter in hand, and are compelled to yield, or at least become more tractable, of which we have daily experience.

Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow The Prophet here selects two classes, by means of which the wickedness of men is more fully exposed; for it seldom happens that the causes of the *fatherless and widows* are defended, because men do not expect from them any rewards. To such an extent are they exposed to every kind of injustice, that no man comes forward in defense of them, because there is no man who follows justice on its own account; and not only so, but there is a very great number of persons who are ready to plunder the poor and needy. This proves that there is no one who cares about exercising judgment; for we need not at all wonder that men of wealth and influence have friends to assist them, who are excited and allured by the expectation of reward. But the Lord declares that he takes charge of *the fatherless and widows*, and will avenge them if they shall sustain any injury.

"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict then in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry: and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." (Exodus 22:22-24.)

The same declaration is now extended to all others, who are oppressed and groan under the violence and lawless passions of men of rank and influence.

This ought to yield the highest consolation to all the children of God, who are enjoined to *possess their souls in patience*. (Luke 21:19.) Whatever may be the haughty boasting of enemies, this will not prevent the people of God

from glorying amidst their tribulations, while such considerations as these shall have an abiding place in their minds: “The Lord will be our avenger. Though men disregard us, he takes care of us. He will aid the destitute, and will defend their cause.”

18. *Come now, and let us reason together* [27] The Hebrew word נא (*na*) is commonly translated *I pray*, or *therefore*; but I think that it denotes the confidence of a good cause, and thus is an exhortation, *Come.* For the Lord declares that the Jews will have nothing, to reply, and that, even though they obtain an opportunity of clearing themselves, they will still be speechless. And certainly this is the way in which hypocrites ought to be treated; for they boldly enter into disputes with God, and there is no end of their reasonings. Accordingly, he tells them that, if they choose to debate, he will be equally prepared on the other side.

The question will perhaps be put, Why does the Prophet speak chiefly about the second table of the law, and not rather about the worship of God? For we know that there were good reasons why God assigned the foremost place to the first table, when he divided the law; and there can be no doubt that, as it comes first in order, so it is likewise of greater importance. I reply, when the Prophets reprove the hypocrisy of men, they employ various modes of address. Sometimes they complain that the Sabbath has been profaned; sometimes they say that men do not call on God; but for the most part they censure idolatry, and raise their voice against superstitions. But here Isaiah complains that their duties towards their neighbors have not been performed.

Still in all these cases the object is the same, to show that our actions are of no value in the sight of God, when they do not proceed from a good conscience, and when we are destitute of the fear of God. This fear they sometimes denote by “calling on the name of God,” sometimes by “keeping the Sabbath,” and sometimes by other actions; but as the distinction between true worship and hypocrisy is most clearly and manifestly pointed out by means of the duties of brotherly kindness, there are good reasons why the mention of those duties is brought forward by Isaiah. For hypocrites are careful to perform outward worship and ceremonies; but inwardly they are full of envy, they swell with pride and contempt of the brethren, they burn with covetousness and ambition; and while they conceal themselves under those masks, they cannot easily be detected. They must, therefore, be tried by this rule, as by a touchstone, and thus it must be ascertained whether or not they fear God.

We might, indeed, be deceived, were it from the second table only that we formed our judgment about the godliness of a man; but if any one discharge the duties of the first table, which are evidences of godliness and of the worship of God, he must then be brought to this standard, Does he act

[27] ונוכחה (venivvakechah), and let us settle our dispute. --- Bishop Stock. ``Both of us, I and you, that we may ascertain which of us has committed an offense against the other; and if you have sinned against me, still I hope to convert you.'' --- Jarchi.

inoffensively towards other men? Does he abstain from every act of injustice? Does he speak truth? Does he live in the exercise of kindness to his brethren? This is the reason why Christ pronounces

mercy, judgment, and faith, to be the weighty matters of the law, (Matthew 23:23,)

and censures the Pharisees because, in their eagerness about tithes and offerings, they attended only to smaller matters, and neglected true righteousness. By *faith* he means fidelity, or what we commonly call *loyalty.* [28] By *judgment* he means every kind of uprightness, when we render to every man what belongs to him, and do not allow others to be injured, but assist them, as far as lies in our power.

But if these are *the weighty matters of the law*, in what order ought we to place the commandments of the second table? I answer, they retain their due importance and order; but by means of those duties which Christ so rigidly demands, and on which he dwells so largely, hypocrisy is more fully detected, and we are better enabled to judge whether a man sincerely fears God or not. In the same sense ought we to understand that passage, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*; (Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13;) for mercy is an evidence and proof of true godliness. Again, it is pleasing to God, because it is a true demonstration of the love which we owe to our fellow-men; but sacrifices are pleasing to him for a different reason. It is now, I think, sufficiently plain why the Prophet Isaiah mentions kindness rather than faith or calling upon God; and why the prophets employ such variety in their modes of address, when they endeavor to bring back hypocrites to the true worship of God, and when they bid them show it by its fruits.

Though your sins be as scarlet It is as if he had said, that he does not accuse innocent persons, and has no wish to enter into controversy; so that the charges which he makes against them are not brought forward or maintained without strong necessity. For hypocrites are wont to find fault with God, as if he were too severe, and could not be at all appeased. They go still farther, and discover this excuse for their obstinacy, that it is in vain for them to attempt to return to a state of favor with God. If every other expedient fail, still they fly to this, that it is not proper to make such rigid demands on them, and that even the very best of men have something that needs to be forgiven. The Prophet anticipates the objection, by introducing the Lord speaking ill this manner — "For my part, if it be necessary, I do not refuse to dispute with you; for the result will be to show that it is your own obstinacy which prevents a reconciliation from taking place between us. Only bring cleanness of heart, and all controversy between us will be at an end. I would no longer contend with you, if you would bring me an upright heart."

Hence we obtain a declaration in the highest degree consolatory, that God does not contend with us as if he wished to pursue our offenses to the utmost.

[28] Loyauté

For if we sincerely turn to him, he will immediately return to favor with us, and will blot out all remembrance of our sins, and will not demand an account of them. For he is not like men who, even for a slight and inconsiderable offense, often refuse to be reconciled. Nay, so far is he from giving us reason to complain of his excessive severity, that he is ready to cleanse us, and to make us as white as snow. He is satisfied With cleanness of heart, and if, notwithstanding of this cleanness of heart, there be any offense, he forgives it, and acquits those who have provoked him.

19. *If ye be willing and obedient* Isaiah continues to plead the cause of God against the people, and states in a few words, that not only must the people bear the blame of all the calamities which they endured, but that it lies in their own power to regain immediately prosperity and happiness; because God is always ready to forgive them, provided that they do not harden their hearts. But because happiness appears here to be placed in the power of men, and at their disposal, the papists openly maintain that men, by the exercise of their own will, are free to choose either good or evil. When God charges men with obstinacy, we must not on that account believe that he describes the nature or extent of their ability.

But it would be useless to say, *if ye be willing*, unless it were in the power of men to will. I answer, though the choice be not so free as they pretend that it is, yet sinners are justly chargeable with being the voluntary agents of their calamities, because it is of their own accord, and not by compulsion, that they provoke God to anger. It is therefore true, that it is a special gift of God when a man aims at what is good; but it is equally true that it is their own wickedness that hinders the reprobate from applying their mind to it, and, consequently, that the whole blame of their obstinacy rests with themselves. On this depends the reproach brought against the people, that they would have led a prosperous and happy life, if they had been submissive and obedient to God. For since God is by nature disposed to acts of kindness, nothing but our ingratitude and enmity hinders us from receiving that goodness which he freely offers to all. On the other hand, he adds a sharp and heavy threatening, that it is in his power to take vengeance; lest they should imagine that they who despise God will escape without punishment. It ought also to be observed, that the only rule of living well is to yield obedience to God and his word; for to *will* and to *hear* mean nothing else than to comply with the will of God.

A change of the construction of the words (*hypallage*) has been admitted into this sentence; for the meaning fully brought out would stand thus: “if your mind be ready, and your will be disposed, to obey;” or, which amounts to the same thing, “if you render obedience to me, and lend an ear to my word.” since, therefore, God places the happiness of men in obedience, it follows that our life is properly conducted, when we hear God speaking, and obey him in all things. How great, therefore, is the wickedness of men, when they refuse to listen to God who is continually speaking to them, and reject

the happiness which he has provided and offered! It was proper that their wayward dispositions should be subdued, lest those wretched men should draw down on themselves the wrath of God, and willingly throw themselves, like wild beasts, on the edge of the sword. We must likewise observe, that he at length threatens them with final destruction, if they shall obstinately refuse to submit themselves to God.

Ye shall eat the good of the land He means the fruits which the earth yields for supplying the necessaries of life; for in some sense the earth may be said to be unkind when it does not produce its fruits, and keeps them, as it were, in its bosom. Yet I have no doubt he alludes to the promises of the law, in which God declares, that to those who fear him he will bless the earth and will cause it to produce a great abundance of all good things.

The Lord shall make thee plenteous in the fruit of the ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. (Deuteronomy 28:11.)

And yet, when he offers to us the conveniences of the earthly life, it is not because he wishes that our attention should be confined to our present happiness, which alone hypocrites value, and which entirely occupies their minds; but in order that, by the contemplation of it, we may rise to the heavenly life, and that, by tasting so much goodness, he may prepare us for the enjoyment of eternal happiness. More especially was God accustomed to act in this manner towards the ancient people, that, by tasting present benefits, as by a shadow, they might be called to the heavenly inheritance. This distinction ought to be carefully observed, that we may apply this instruction to ourselves, according to the degree of prosperity to which God has exalted us. The Prophet intended to show that true happiness, with its accompaniments, consists in obedience to God; and that the wicked, by their obstinacy, bring upon themselves every kind of calamities, and therefore that all our distresses ought to be ascribed to the sins and crimes which we have committed.

20. *But if ye refuse and rebel* The wicked always think that the severity of the punishment is greater than their guilt, even though the Lord chastise them very gently; and although they do not venture to justify themselves entirely, yet they never cease, as I formerly said, to accuse God of excessive severity. But the Prophet threatens that there will be no end of their calamities till they be destroyed; and lest they should imagine that they had nothing more to fear than those slight and inconsiderable punishments which they had hitherto suffered, he declares that far heavier judgments of God are still awaiting them.

The papists torture this passage to support the doctrine of freewill, and argue in the following manner: — "If men be happy whenever they are willing to obey God, it follows that this is placed in our own power." The argument certainly is very childish; for the Lord does not inform us by the Prophet what is the nature or extent of our capacity for good or evil; but he reminds us that it is our own fault if we do not enjoy good things, and

that the calamities with which we are afflicted are the punishments of our disobedience. The question, whether a man can make his bad will good, is altogether different from the question, whether, by the bad will, which is natural to him, he brings upon himself all the evils which he endures. Unjustly and falsely, therefore, do those skillful and ingenious doctors employ this passage to support their doctrine about a free choice of good and evil.

For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it [29] Since men who are blinded by their lusts are little moved by threatenings, the Prophet, in order to arouse them from deep slothfulness, reminds them that this declaration is not uttered by a mortal man, but has proceeded from the *mouth of God*, who is not changeable like men, but adheres constantly to his purpose. [30] He therefore mentions *the mouth of the Lord*, in order to terrify them, that they who in their vices have fallen into a deep slumber may give earnest attention to his threatenings.

21. *How is the faithful city become an harlot*! In order to make the rebuke more forcible, and the crime of the people more shocking, in having thus departed from God and from all uprightness, he cries aloud as if he had seen some monstrous thing; and certainly it was a change fitted to awaken horror, that a nation devoted to God, and chosen to a *royal priesthood*, (Exodus 19:6,) had fallen from lofty piety to the lowest sink of wickedness. More especially he speaks of the *city* of Jerusalem, which was God's sanctuary and royal abode. He complains that the *city* which had formerly been a guardian of justice is a den of robbers; that she who formerly was a chaste and pure virgin hath *become a harlot,* To strike the deeper shame into the degenerate Jews, who had departed widely from their holy fathers, he assumes the air of a person astonished, and asks himself how this could possibly have happened.

The faithful city By the word *faithful* he alludes, in my opinion, to the conjugal fidelity which a wife ought to preserve to her husband. The signification is undoubtedly more extensive; but when I look at the connection of the passage I do not hesitate to say that *faithful* means *chaste*; for immediately afterwards he employs another term in contrast with it, calling her *an harlot.* Whereas she once was a virtuous wife, faithful to the marriage-contract, she has now *become an harlot,* and her base conduct brings not a blush on her countenance. The Scriptures frequently call the Church the wife of God. (Hosea 2:19, 20.) That honorable rank Jerusalem held, so long as she maintained spiritual chastity, and continued in the pure and lawful worship of God; but as soon as she departed from it she *became an harlot.*

This astonishment of the Prophet was undoubtedly joined with the deepest grief; for we ought to look upon it as something monstrous when men revolt from God, and refuse that allegiance which they have promised to render; nor is it possible that right-hearted men, when they behold such a

[29] This paragraph, which our Author had inadvertently inserted in his exposition of the nineteenth verse, is here restored to its proper place. — Ed.

[30] "For Jehovah hath spoken, who fulfills his threatening as well as his promises, and does not rashly recall what he hath spoken." — Rosensmuller.

revolt, can fail to be affected with the most poignant grief. We read that the angels in heaven rejoice at the conversion of one sinner; (Luke 15:7, 10;) and therefore they cannot but mourn over the final ruin of any sinner. How much more then will they bewail the ruin and destruction of a whole state and Church!

Besides, that astonishment conveys also a complaint; as if the Prophet had said, "O Jerusalem, from what a flourishing condition hast thou fallen! Into what distress hast thou plunged thyself! What shame and disgrace hast thou brought upon thee!" When the flourishing state in which she had been, and the respect that had been paid to her in former times, are called to her remembrance, it ought to produce a still deeper impression on her mind; for she who was at one time the respected mother of a family is naturally more careful about her honor and reputation than one who has spent her whole life in base and licentious conduct.

It was full of judgment He shows what fruits were produced by that allegiance to God at a former period. We may take *judgment* as but another name for uprightness; or, if it be thought preferable, we may call it *justice* when men render to every man his own, and *judgment* when the cause of the innocent is defended, and the poor and needy are avenged; for such is the use of the words in Scripture when they are employed together; but as they are not perfectly connected in this passage, I consider *judgment* to denote uprightness; so that the same thing is twice expressed for the purpose of explaining it more fully.

But now murderers He shows in what manner Jerusalem *became an harlot.* It was, that the city, which had formerly been distinguished for the love of justice and equity, was now full of *murders.* The meaning is, as we have formerly said, not that they were assassins or robbers, but that, by fraudulent and dishonest methods, under the pretense of justice, they had gained the property of others. In short, he means that they did not act fairly and justly towards their fellow-men, whatever might be the estimation in which they were held; for sometimes, and indeed very frequently, it happens that very wicked men are held in high esteem.

The condition to which Jerusalem was reduced should lead us to consider how often Satan exercises what may be called unbounded tyranny over the Church of God; for if ever there was a Church, there was one at that time in Jerusalem; and yet Isaiah affirms that it was a den of robbers, or a slaughter-house, where they cut men's throats. But if Satan could freely riot in that Church, let us not wonder that the same thing takes place among us; but let us labor not to suffer ourselves to be corrupted by such wicked examples.

22. *Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water* Isaiah speaks metaphorically, and by two comparisons shows here, that though the outward appearance of affairs was not openly overturned, yet their condition was changed and corrupted, so as to be widely different from what it had formerly been: for he says that *dross* now shines instead of *gold*, and that the *wine*,

though it retains its color, has lost its flavour. “Though thou still make an empty show,” saith the Prophet, “yet nothing *pure* will be found in thee: that *wine* which was wont to be Stare in thee is corrupted; and though its color deceive the eye, its taste shows that it has been *mixed*.”

All this means nothing more than that the Jews should lay aside hypocrisy, and should begin to confess their sins, and no longer flatter themselves after the manner of hypocrites. The comparisons here employed are exceedingly well adapted to this end, for *dross* bears some resemblance to *gold*; and in like manner, the color of *wine mixed with water* resembles that of pure wine; and yet both are very far from having that purity of which they make an outward show. In like manner hypocrites, by their hypocrisy, may be said to assume a false color of *silver*, though they are of no more value than dross, and indeed are the more detestable on this account, that, though they are exceedingly wicked, yet, with not less treachery than baseness, they present to God and to men those hollow pretensions by which they cloak their malice.

23. *Thy princes are rebellious* There is here an elegant allusion or play on words. [31] He does not speak of *princes* in such a manner as if the common people were holy and needed no reproof, but he points out the source of the evil; for as no disease is more injurious than that which spreads from the head into the whole body, so no evil is more destructive in a commonwealth than a wicked and depraved *prince*, who conveys his corruptions into the whole body both by his example and by the liberty which he allows. Hence, too, comes the proverb, ὁποῖα ἡ δέσποινα, τοῖαι καὶ αἱ θεραπαινίδες, *like mistress, like maids*. The meaning, therefore, is as if the Prophet had said that there was no one vice more than another that reigned among the people, but that an unbounded commission of crimes prevailed among the nobles themselves, and that in this manner the whole body was stained with pollution. Something which gives additional force to the statement is implied in the word *princes*; for it is deeply to be lamented when an evil arises from that very quarter in which the remedy for it ought to be expected. He next mentions a particular instance.

Companions of thieves By these words he means that they are so far from restraining theft and false dealing, that, on the contrary, they draw gain from them; and he justly calls those persons *companions of thieves*, who, by receiving part of the booty, grant permission to commit theft. And, indeed, when a judge is corrupted by a bribe, it is impossible but that crimes shall abound and pass unpunished, with the perpetrators of which we must consider him to be in collusion.

Every one loveth a gift He next points out the reason why princes have made themselves *companions of thieves*, and have bound themselves by a wicked conspiracy to lend countenance to crimes. It is avarice. When judges

[31] Our author illustrates it by the alliteration of primi pravi. “The word סוררים (sorerim) is here equivalent,'' says Jarchi, ``to ,סרים (sarim,) that is, persons departing from the right path.'' ``In this word ,סוררים (sorerim,)'' says his annotator Breithaupt, which our Commentator here explains by ,סרים (sarim,) departers, ``there is an allusion to the word ,שרים (princes,) which we here find in the sacred text.'' --- Ed

are devoted to the love of money, justice is utterly destroyed; for if the acceptance of persons be a corruption of judgment, so that no room is left for justice, every man who is under the dominion of covetousness will assuredly regard the person rather than the cause. The consequence is, that he will not be able to perceive what is just and right, but, as one expresses it, will make laws and unmake them.

This reminds us how great a virtue it is in a magistrate to disregard money; for unless he keep his mind, his hands, and his eyes under restraint, he will never be able to judge justly. It is absurd to say, as some men do, that they keep their heart pure and uncorrupted, even though they receive bribes. What the Lord saith must be true, that a gift blindeth the eyes of the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous. (Exodus 23:8.) No man is so upright, no man is so clearsighted and sagacious, that his mind shall resist the enchantment, and his eyes the blinding influence, of gifts. Such judges, therefore, he justly declares to be *companions of thieves*; for, hurried along by a blind desire of money, they overturn all law both of God and man, and leave no room for justice or modesty.

We must likewise observe that the Prophet, in order to convince hypocrites, brings forward their actions which were open and universally known; for otherwise they would not submit. And yet there can be no doubt that there were at that time many who objected, when he thus called them thieves, as even in the present day most men impudently and obstinately exclaim that they are not thieves on account of receiving the rewards and gifts which are offered to them, because their do not prevent them from passing a just judgment. But these replies being frivolous, the Prophet, after having exposed their wicked actions, satisfies himself with the reproof which he has given, and argues with them no longer. And, indeed, nature declares that it is impossible to give just judgment, when judges are so eager for gain and regard; because they cannot but absolutely expose to sale their honesty and reputation.

They judge not the fatherless As the Lord specially recommends to us the *fatherless* and *widows*, because they have been deprived of the protection of men, so we need not wonder if he is displeased when they are abandoned by the judges, who ought to have been their guardians and defenders; for since they have neither foresight, nor industry nor strength if no one comes forward to render assistance they must be exposed without redress to every kind of violence and injustice. Now, when no regard is paid to them, it follows that the sway is held, not by justice, but by covetousness and plunder.

24. *Therefore saith the lord, the LORD of hosts* He first employs the word האדון, (*haadon*) which literally signifies lord, and expresses the relation to a servant. Next is added the word יהוה (*Jehovah*,) which denotes the eternal essence and majesty of God. After having laid open some kinds of crimes, which made it manifest that in that nation everything was corrupted, Isaiah, now wishing to threaten and to hold out to them the judgment of God, not

only represents God as invested with the power and authority of a Judge, but at the same time reminds them that the children of Abraham are his peculiar people, and for this reason he immediately adds, *the mighty One of Israel*. There may also be implied in it a kind of irony, by which he stings the Jews, as if he had said that it was foolishness in them to boast of the name of God, seeing that they were worthless and unprincipled servants, and that it was vain for them to rely on his strength, which would immediately break forth against them. After this preface, he adds —

Ah! I will take consolation on my adversaries [32] By these words he intimates that God will not be pacified until he has satiated himself with inflicting punishment. He employs the word consolation after the manner of men; for as anger is nothing else than the desire of revenge, so revenge gives relief to the mind, and he who has taken vengeance congratulates himself and is satisfied. By this course, which may be regarded as a kind of compensation, the Lord says that he will satisfy himself with inflicting punishment *on his adversaries*

There are various ways, indeed, of expounding this passage; and I shall not undertake the task of examining all the interpretations and refuting those which I do not approve: it will be enough if we ascertain the true meaning. He does not here speak of Chaldeans or Assyrians, as some imagine, but of Jews, to whom, in the character of a herald, he proclaims war in the name of the Lord. This threatening sounded harshly in their ears; for they supposed that they were joined in such a confederacy with God, that he was an adversary to their adversaries. He declares, on the other hand, that he is their enemy because he had so often been provoked by their crimes. In this manner we must shake off the slothfulness of hypocrites, who are continually waging war with God, and yet do not hesitate to allege that they enjoy his protection. We need not wonder, therefore, if the Prophet sternly pronounces them to be *adversaries* of God, who had broken the covenant, and had thus carried on war against him.

And yet, in order to show that he is unwillingly, as it were, constrained to inflict punishment on his people, God utters his threatening with a kind of groan. For as nothing is more agreeable to his nature than to do good, so whenever he is angry with us and treats us harshly, it is certain that our wickedness has compelled him to do so, because we do not allow his goodness to take its free course. More especially he is disposed to treat his own people with gentleness, and when he sees that there is no longer any room for his forbearance, he takes measures, as it were in sorrow, for inflicting punishment.

Some would rather choose perhaps to explain the particle הוי (*hoi*) as of God made this exclamation when aroused by anger. For my own part, I rather consider it, in this passage, to be an expression of grief; because God, being mindful of his covenant, would willingly spare his chosen people, were

[32] In our English version it runs, Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries. — Ed.

it not that pardon was entirely prevented by their obstinacy.

And avenge me of mine enemies In this second clause there is a reduplication, (ἀναδίπλωσις) a figure of speech customary with the Hebrews, who frequently express the same thing twice in one verse. Hence also we learn that the object of the statement is, that God cannot rest until he has taken vengeance on a wicked and treacherous people

25. *And I will turn my hand upon thee* This is an alleviation of the former threatening; for though he still proceeds with what he had begun to state about his severity, he at the same time declares that, amidst those calamities which were to be inflicted, the Church would be preserved. But the principal design was to comfort believers, that they might not suppose the Church to be utterly ruined, though God treated them more roughly than before. The Spirit of God, by the Prophets, continually warns the children of God, who always tremble at his word, not to be overwhelmed and lose heart on account of terrors and threatening; for the more daringly that wicked men practice licentiousness and scoff at all threatening the more do those who are affected by a sincere fear of God tremble at them.

Besides, the *turning of the hands of God* denotes generally a token of his presence, as if he should say, *I will display my hand.* This he is wont to do in two ways, either by chastising the wicked, or by delivering believers from their distresses. Since, therefore, it is evident from the context that God purposes, by applying consolation, to mitigate the severity of punishment, the *turning of the hands* must here be viewed as referring to the restoration of the Church; for although he declared in general terms that all were his enemies, he now modifies or limits that statement by addressing Jerusalem or Zion by name.

When he adds, *I will purge away thy dross*, though he points out the fruit of correction, that believers may not be immoderately grieved or distressed on account of it, yet we learn from this expression that the purification of the Church is God's own work. For this purpose he always lifts up his hand to punish transgressions, that he may bring back wanderers into the road; but rods would be of no avail, if he did not make them useful by touching their hearts inwardly. And, indeed, since he points out here a special favor which he bestows on his elect, it follows from this that repentance is a true and peculiar work of the Holy Spirit; for otherwise the sinner, instead of profiting in the smallest degree, would be more and more hardened by chastisements.

The pure *purging*, so that no *dross* remains, must not, however, be understood as if God ever cleansed his Church entirely in this world from every stain, but must be regarded as spoken after the manner of men; as if he said that the condition of his Church will be such that her holiness will shine like pure silver. These words, therefore, indicate real purity, for the Jews had formerly been too well satisfied with their filthiness. This is a highly appropriate comparison, by which the Prophet declares, that though the Church was at that time polluted by many defilements, still some remnant would be

left, which, after the removal of the pollution, would regain its brightness. In this manner he also connects both clauses; for when he formerly spoke of their crimes, he said that their *silver had become dross.* (Isaiah 1:22.)

26. *And I will restore thy judges as at the first* He now speaks without a figure; and having said that the source and origin of the evils was in the princes, he shows that a divine hand will purify that rank, when the Lord shall be pleased to restore the Church to perfect health. And, indeed, when they who rule are good and holy men, public order is maintained; for when wicked men have power, everything goes to ruin. By *judges and counsellors* are evidently meant any kind of magistrates; and when he promises that they will be such as they were *at the beginning*, he brings to their remembrance the extraordinary goodness of God, of which they had been deprived. God had graciously raised up the throne of David, and in that government was pleased to give a bright resemblance of his own parental love. Though the authority of the family of David had degenerated into the grossest tyranny, yet they continued to boast of a false title; for they still vaunted of the reign of David in the same manner as the papists of the present day plume themselves on a false pretense of the Church. Justly, therefore, are the people reminded of the happiness from which they had fallen by their own fault, that they might not be displeased at a diminution of their numbers, by means of which they would again possess that order which God had established

Then shalt thou be called He describes the fruit of that reformation, of which he has spoken, as extending to the whole body; for, having said that Jerusalem, before she revolted from God, was a *faithful city, full of righteousness*, the Prophet now says, that when she shall have been chastised the same virtues will be illustriously displayed in her. Here, too, is expressed the sum of true repentance; for by *righteousness* is meant uprightness, when every man obtains what belongs to him, and men live with each other without committing injury. The word *faithful* has a still more extensive meaning; for when a city is called *faithful*, it means not only that justice and honesty between man and man are observed, but that the purity of God's worship is maintained and therefore the chastity and purity of the mind are included under that designation.

It must also be observed, however, that from this *faithfulness* springs justice; for when we adhere to truth in our mutual intercourse, justice easily gains the ascendency. And, indeed, when I closely examine the whole passage, I think that the Prophet now employs the word *faithfulness* in a more limited sense than formerly, and connects the two virtues as leading to the same object, so that, while truth goes first as the cause, justice is the effect of it. Isaiah promises not only that she will be *righteous* and *faithful*, but that she will also be distinguished by these commendations; by which he means that the knowledge or reputation of it will be everywhere diffused. We know that hypocrites, too, are adorned with honorable titles; but Isaiah, having introduced God as speaking, takes for granted that the city will actually

be *righteous*, as it is foretold that she shall be. In the meantime, as I have said, he describes the fruit of a true conversion; as if he had said," When Jerusalem shall be brought Jack to true godliness, men will be persuaded that she is renewed."

27. *Zion shall be redeemed with judgment* He confirms the same doctrine; and because the restoration of the Church was hard to be believed, he shows that it does not depend on the will of men, but is founded on the *justice* and *judgment* of God; as if he had said, that God will by no means permit his Church to be altogether destroyed, because he is *righteous*. The design of the Prophet, therefore, is to withdraw the minds of the godly from earthly thoughts, that in looking for the safety of the Church they may depend entirely on God, and not cease to entertain good hopes, although instead of aids they should see nothing but obstructions. It is a great mistake to consider *justice* and *judgment* to refer to the Church, as if Isaiah were speaking about the well-ordered condition of a city; for the plain meaning is what I have stated, that though men yield no assistance, the justice of God is fully sufficient for redeeming his Church. And, indeed, so long as we look at ourselves, what hope are we entitled to cherish? How many things, on the contrary, immediately present themselves that are fitted to weaken our faith! It is only in the justice of God that we shall find solid and lasting ground of confidence.

And they that return to her [33] This second clause points out the manner of their deliverance; namely that the exiles, who had been widely dispersed, will again be gathered together.

28. *And the destruction of the transgressors* Lest hypocrites should imagine that any fruit of these promises belongs to them, and should indulge in vain boasting, he threatens that they shall perish, though God redeem his Church. For hypocrites have always been mingled with the Church, and indeed are connected with it in the closest manner; but they form their estimation of it from outward show. All that God promises they at once apply confidently to themselves. The apostle tears from them this trust, if indeed it deserve the name of trust, which springs from pride and the arrogance of a haughty mind. Here we ought to observe how great wisdom is needed by godly teachers, that, while they terrify the wicked by the judgment of God, they may at the same time support good men, and strengthen them by some consolation, that they may not be cast down and discouraged. On the other hand, when believers are encouraged be the promise of God, and when wicked men falsely apply it to themselves, and puff up their minds with vain confidence, the method and course which we ought to pursue is, that we neither give occasion to wicked men to become proud, nor depress and discourage the minds of the godly; as Isaiah does in this passage. For while he speaks of the redemption of the Church, he at the same time threat-

[33] In the English version it is rendered, her converts; but the marginal reading is, And they that return of her. "That is," says Jarchi, "those who are in her (in the city of Zion) that repent." — Ed.

ens that sinners, that is, wicked men, shall be destroyed, that they may not suppose that these acts of God's kindness belong at all to them.

And yet, while he pronounces destruction against the wicked, by this comparison he exhibits more fully the favor of God towards believers, which is far more distinctly seen, when God allows the reprobate to perish, but preserves his own in safety, as it is said,

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Psalm 91:7.

Besides, he mitigates the grief and anguish which the diminution of the numbers of the Church might produce in godly minds; for he shows that there is no other way of imparting health to the whole body than by removing its corruption.

29. *For* (or, *that is*) *they shall be ashamed* In the Hebrew the particle כי (*ki*) is employed, which properly denotes a cause, but frequently also denotes exposition. Now, since the Prophet does not here state anything new, but only explains the cause of the destruction which awaited the ungodly, to render כי (*ki*) by *that is*, appears to connect it better with the preceding word, כלה, (*kalah,*) *consumed, They shall be consumed, that is, they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired*; as if the Prophet had said that no evil will be more destructive to them than their own superstition. The idols, says he, which you call upon for your protection and safety will rather bring destruction upon you.

The word אלים, (*elim,*) *oaks*, [34] has been sometimes rendered *Gods*; [35] but this meaning is set aside by the context; for immediately afterwards he adds the word groves: *Ye shall be ashamed of the groves which you have chosen.* Now, under the image both of trees and of groves, the Prophet, by a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole, reproves every kind of false worship; for although among the Jews there were many forms of idolatry, the custom here mentioned, of choosing *groves* and *forests* for offering sacrifices, was the most common of all. Whether the word גנות (*gannoth*) in the second clause be translated *groves* or *gardens*, there can be no doubt that it means the altars and sacred buildings in which they performed their idolatrous worship. Although they did not intend openly to revolt from God, they invented new kinds of worship; and, as if one place had been more acceptable to God than another, they devoted it to his service, as we see done by the papists. Next follows a change of the person; for, in order to make the reproof more severe, those wicked men of whom he spoke in the third person are now directly addressed, *Ye shall be ashamed*

Which you have desired By the word *desired* he reproves the mad and burning eagerness with which wicked men follow their superstitions. They

[34] "The word אילים (elim) has, in the singular number, אלה, (elah,) a kind of tree, called, in the German language, ulme." --- Jarchi. For the purpose of proving that by אולמא, Jarchi means the elm, his annotator, Breithaupt, adduces not only the German ulme, but the Italian olmo, the French orme, and the Latin ulmus. --- Ed

[35] Evidently supposing that it is the plural of אל, (el,) God, and overlooking the medial radical Yod, which is sometimes expressed, but oftener left out, in this word. --- Ed

ought to have been earnestly devoted with their whole heart to the service of one Gods but they rush with blind violence to false worship, as if they were driven by brutish lust. In almost every human mind there naturally exists this disease, that they have forsaken the true God, and run mad in following idols; and hence Scripture frequently compares this madness to the loves of harlots, who shake off shame, as well as reason.

For the gardens that ye have chosen That the Prophet describes not only their excessive zeal, but their presumption, in corrupting the worship of God, is evident from this second clause, in which he says that they *chose gardens*, for this term is contrasted with the injunction of the law. Whatever may be the plausible appearances under which unbelievers endeavor to cloak their superstitions, still this saying remains true, that *obedience is better than all sacrifices.* (1 Samuel 15:22.) Accordingly, under the term willworship (ἐθελοθρησκεία) Paul includes (Colossians 2:23) all kinds of false worship which men contrive for themselves without the command of God. On this account God complains that the Jews have despised his word, and have delighted themselves with their own inventions; as if he had said, "It was your duty to obey, but you wished to have an unfettered choice, or rather an unbounded liberty."

This single consideration is sufficient to condemn the inventions of men, that they have it not in their power to choose the manner of worshipping God, because to him alone belongs the right to command. God had at that time enjoined that sacrifices should not be offered to him anywhere else than at Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 12:13); the Jews thought that they pleased him in other places, and that false imagination deceived also the heathen nations. Would that it had gone no farther! But we see how the papists are involved in the same error, and, in short, experience shows that the disease has prevailed extensively in every age.

If it be objected that there was not so much importance in the place, that God ought to have regarded with such strong abhorrence the worship which was everywhere offered to him, — first, we ought to consider the reason why God chose that at that time there should be only one altar, which was, that it might be a bond of holy unity to an uncivilized nation, and that by means of it their religion might continue unchanged. Besides, granting that this spiritual reason were but of temporary force, we must hold by the principle that commandments were given in the smallest matters, that the Jews might be better trained to obedience; for since superstition conceals itself under the pretense of devotion, it is hardly possible but that men will flatter themselves with their own inventions. But since obedience is the mother of true religion, it follows that when men exercise their own fancy, it becomes the source of all superstitions.

It must also be added, that as Isaiah formerly complained of those crimes which were contrary to brotherly love and to the second table of the law, so he now complains of their having transgressed the first table. For since

the whole perfection of righteousness consists in keeping the law, when the Prophets wish to reprove men for their sins, they speak sometimes of the first, and sometimes of the second, table of the law. But we ought always to observe the figurative mode of expression, when under one class they include the whole.

30. *Ye shall certainly be* [36] *as an oak whose leaf fadeth* The Hebrew particle כי (*ki*) may be taken in an affirmative sense, as I have translated it; and the Prophet appears to allude to those groves to which they had improperly restricted the worship of God; for, having mentioned *gardens*, he reproaches them with the confidence which they placed in theme and threatens drought. "You take pleasure," says he, "in your gardens and trees, but you shall be like withered trees that have lost their foliage." God therefore mocks the vain boasting of idolaters, who marvellously flatter themselves with their contrivances, and think that heaven is open to them, when they are employed in their ceremonies. Just as at the present day, when the papists have lighted their lamps and adorned their temples, when they dazzle with gold and precious stones, when they have played on their organs and rung their bells, they imagine that they are the happiest of all men, as if there were now no reason to dread that any evil should come to them from God, who had received from them a hundredfold satisfaction.

31. *And your God* [37] *shall be as tow* The Hebrew word חסן (*chason*) signifies strong: and though it is here applied to God, still it retains its signification, as if he had said, "That god who was your strength shall be turned into stubble."

And the maker of it By the *maker* he means the carver; but as he mentions an idol, we must explain it agreeably to the matter in hand. Some think that he expresses the repentance of idolaters, by telling us that they would acknowledge their folly, and, being covered with shame, would burn their idols. But I consider the meaning to be different; for as a fire is made of dry fuel such as tow, "in like manner," saith the Prophet," gather you and your idols into one heap, as when a pile of wood is built up, that you may be consumed together, so that the idols may be like tow, and the men like fire, and that one conflagration may consume the whole."

And there shall be none to quench them It ought to be observed that the Prophets, when they mention the wrath of God, describe it by outward representations, because it cannot be perceived by the eyes or by any other sense. Thus the wrath of God, by which the ungodly are destroyed, is compared to fire, which consumes all things. It is now evident enough what the Prophet means, namely, that all the ungodly shall be destroyed, whatever may be the nature of their confidence; and not only so, but that their destruction shall be the greater, because they have placed their confidence in false and deceitful things, and that utter destruction will overtake them from that very

[36] For ye shall be. — Eng. Ver.
[37] And the strong. — Eng. Ver.

quarter from which they had vainly looked for deliverance. For the images and idols are excitements of the wrath of God, kindling it into a flame which cannot be quenched.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

Isaiah Chapter 2:1-22

1. The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

1. Verbum quod vidit Isaias, filius Amos super Iuda et Ierusalem.

2. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

2. Et accidet in novissimo dierum, ut statuatur mons domus Iehovae in verticem montium, et erigatur supra omnes colles; et fluent ad eum omnes gentes.

3. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

3. Et venient populi multi, ac dicent, Venite, et ascendemus in montem Iehovae, in domum Dei Iacob. Et instituet nos in viis suis, et ambulabimus in semitis ejus. Quoniam e Zion exibit lex, et verbum Domini e Ierusalem.

4. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

4. Et judicabit inter gentes, arguetque populos multos: et concident gladios suos in ligones, et lanceas suas in falces: nec levabit gens in gentem gladium, nec consuescent ultra praelio.

5. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.

5. Domus Iacob, venite, et ambulabimus in lumine Domini.

6. Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers.

6. Certe deseruisti populum tuum, domum Iacob: eo quod impleti sint Oriente, (vel, antiquitate,) et auguribus, ut Philistaei: atque in filiis alienis acquieverint.

7. Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots:

7. Impletur est terra ejus argento et auro; nec finis thesauris ejus. Equis quoque repleta est terra ejus, nec quadrigis ejus finis.

8. Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:

8. Impleta est etiam terra ejus idolis: et coram opere manuum suorum se incurvarunt, coram eo quod fixerunt digiti ipsorum.

9. And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not.

9. Et inclinatus est homo, et humiliatus est vir: ideo, ne remittas, (vel, non remittes.)

10. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.

10. Ingredere in petram, abscondere in pulvere a conspectu pavoris Domini, et gloria magnificentiae ejus.

11. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

11. Sublimitas oculorum hominis humiliabitur, et incurvabitur altitudo hominum, et exaltabitur Iehova solus in die illa.

12. For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low:

12. Quoniam dies Iehovae exercituum super omnem superbum et excelsum, et super omne elevatum, et humile erit.

13. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,

13. Super omnes, inquam, cedros Libani sublimes et elevatos, super omnes quercus Basan,

14. And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,

14. Et super omnes montes excelsos, et super omnes colles elevatos,

15. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,

15. Et super omnem turrim excelsam, et super omnem murum munitum,

16. And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

16. Super omnes naves Tharsis, et super exquisitas picturas.

17. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness

of men shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

17. Et incurvabitur celsitudo hominis, et humiliabitur altitudo hominum, et exaltabitur Iehova solus in die illa.

18. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.

18. Idola autem in universum abolebit.

19. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

19. Et ingredientur in cavernas petrarum, et in voragines terrae, a praesentia terroris Iehovae et gloria majestatis ejus: cum surrexerit ut concutiat terram.

20. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

20. In die illa projiciet homo idola sua argentea, et idola sua aurea, quae fecerunt ei ad adorandum, in cavernam talparum et vespertilionum;

21. To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

21. Et ingredientur in scissuras petrarum, et cacumina saxorum, a facie pavoris Iehovae et gloria majestatis ejus, cum surrexerit ut concutiat terram.

22. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

22. Cessate igitur ab homine cujus in nare spiritus; qua enim in re (vel, ad quid, vel, quanti) ipse reputatur?

1. *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw* This prophecy is a confirmation of that doctrine which we had a little before, concerning the restoration of the Church. For since it is difficult to cherish the hope of safety, when we are, as it were, in the midst of destruction, while the wrath of God burns and consumes everything far and wide, or while his threatenings strike terror into our minds, at such a period the bare promises are hardly sufficient to support us and to allay our fears. For this reason the Lord determined that to the consolation which had already been proclaimed there should be added this special vision, by way of confirmation, in order to make it more certain and undoubted that, whatever calamities might arise, his Church would never perish. I have no doubt, therefore, but that this vision agrees with what is stated in the 26th and 27th verses of the former chapter.

Hence we learn what was the advantage and design of *visions*; for since doctrine sometimes has not sufficient weight with us, God therefore adds *visions*, that by means of them he may seal his doctrine to us. Since, therefore, this vision is connected with the former promise, we learn from it this useful doctrine, that all visions of every kind which God formerly gave to his Prophets must be joined to the promises in such a manner as to be seals

of them. And thus we perceive more and more the astonishing goodness of God, that, not satisfied with giving us his bare word, he places before our eyes, as it were, representations of the events.

He has added a confirmation, that the restoration of the Church is a matter of very great importance, and necessary to be known. For where is the truth of the Lord, where is faith, if there be no Church? If there be none, it follows that God is a liar, and that everything contained in his word is false. But as God frequently shows, by striking proofs, that he preserves the Church by unknown methods and without the assistance of men, so he now declares by a remarkable prediction that he will do this.

There were two purposes to be served by this prediction. First, since Isaiah, and others who came after him, were unceasingly to proclaim terror, on account of the obstinate wickedness of the people, until the temple should be burnt, and the city destroyed, and the Jews carried into captivity, it was necessary that such severity should be mitigated towards believers by some consolation of hope. Secondly, as they were to languish in captivity, and as their minds were shaken, even after their return, by a succession of varied calamities, and at length were almost overwhelmed with despair by the dreadful desolation and confusion, they might a hundred times have fainted, if they had not been upheld. As to those who had already fallen, they were raised up and confirmed by the promised restoration, to such an extent, at least, that they retained among them the practice of calling on God, which is the only and undoubted remedy for the worst of evils. הדבר, (*haddabar*,) *the word*, is rendered by some interpreters *the thing*, which accords with the general signification of this term; but it is better to view it as denoting a divine purpose. Isaiah says that it was revealed to him by a special vision.

2. *And it shall come to pass in the last of the days* [38] When he mentions the end or completion of days, let us remember that he is speaking of the kingdom of Christ; and we ought also to understand why he gives to the kingdom of Christ this appellation. It was because till that time everything might be said to be in a state of suspense, that the people might not fix their eyes on the present condition of things, which was only a shadow, but on the Redeemer, by whom the reality would be declared. Since Christ came, therefore, if that time be compared with ours, we have actually arrived at *the end of ages*. It was the duty of the fathers who lived at that time to go, as it were, with outstretched arms to Christ; and since the restoration of all things depended on his coming, it is with good reason that they are enjoined to extend their hope to that period. It was indeed always useful for them to know, that under Christ the condition of the Church would be more perfect; more especially because they were held under figures, for the Lord was pleased to arouse them in various wavy for the express purpose of keeping them in suspense.

But there was a peculiar importance attached to this prediction; for, dur-

[38] In the last days. — Eng. Ver.

ing four hundred years or thereby, there were innumerable occasions on which they might have fainted, had they not called to remembrance that fullness of days, in which the Church was to be perfectly restored. During the various storms, therefore, by which the Church was nearly overwhelmed, every believer, when shipwrecked, seized on this word as a plank, that by means of it he might be floated into the harbour. Yet it ought to be observed, that while the fullness of days began at the coming of Christ, it flows on in uninterrupted progress until he appear the second time for our salvation. (Hebrews 9:28.)

That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established This vision might be thought to wear the aspect of absurdity, not only because Zion was a little hill of no extraordinary height, just as if one should compare a handful of earth to huge mountains; but because he had but a little before predicted its destruction. How, then, could it be believed that Mount Zion, after having lost all her greatness, would again shine with such lustre as to draw upon her the eyes *of all the nations*? And yet she is extolled as if she hail been loftier than Olympus." Let the Gentiles," says Isaiah, "boast as much as they please of their lofty mountains; for they shall be nothing in comparison of that hill, though it be low and inconsiderable." According to nature, this certainly was very improbable. What! shall Zion be hung up in the clouds? And therefore there can be no doubt that wicked men scoffed at this prediction; for ungodliness has always been ready to break forth against God.

Now the peculiarity which I have noticed tended to weaken the belief of this prediction; for when Zion, after the destruction of the temple, had fallen into the deepest disgrace, how could she rise again so suddenly? And yet it was not in vain that Isaiah prophesied; for at length this hill was actually raised above all the mountains, because from it was heard the voice of God, and sounded through the whole world, that it might lift us up to heaven; because from it the heavenly majesty of God shone brightly; and lastly, because, being the sanctuary of God, it surpassed the whole world in lofty excellence.

The use of this prophecy deserves our attention. It was, that Isaiah intended to bring consolation, which would support the minds of the people during the captivity; so that, although there should be no temple, and no sacrifices, and though all should be in ruins, still this hope would be cherished in the minds of the godly, and, amidst a condition so desolate and so shockingly ruinous, they would still reason thus: "The mountain of the Lord is indeed forsaken, but there he will yet have his habitation; and greater shall be the glory of this mountain than of all others." To prevent them, therefore, from doubting that such would be the result, the Prophet has here, as it were, sketched a picture in which they might behold the glory of God; for although the mountain was still in existence, yet a disgraceful solitude made it almost an object of detestation, since it had lost its splendor in consequence

of having been forsaken by God. But it was the duty of the pious to look not at those ruins, but at this vision. Moreover, the reason why he speaks in such lofty terms concerning the exaltation of Mount Zion is sufficiently evident from what follows; because thence proceeded the Gospel, in which the image of God shines. Other mountains might excel it in height; but as the glory of God has surpassing excellence, so the mountain in which he is manifested must also be highly distinguished. It was not, therefore, on her own account that he extolled Mount Zion, but in respect of her ornament, the splendor of which would be communicated to the whole world.

3. *And many people shall go* In the former verse he had slightly noticed the reason why Mount Zion would hold so high a rank. It was because all nations would flow to it, as if the rivers were overflowing through the great abundance of waters. He now makes the same statement, and assigns the reason; for it might be asked why various nations flocked to it in crowds from distant lands. He says, therefore, that the desire of serving God was their motive.

The word רבים, (*rabbim*,) *many*, implies a contrast; for it means that there will not be, as formerly, but one nation which devotes itself to the worship of the true God, but that those who formerly were *strangers and foreigners* (Ephesians 2:19) will come into the same agreement with them about religion; as if he had said that the Church, which had formerly been, as it were, shut up in a corner, would now be collected from every quarter. By the word *many* he meant *various*; for unquestionably he did not intend to weaken the force of what he had said a little before about *all nations*. Now, though this was never fulfilled, that the nations of the whole world, each of them leaving their native country, made a journey into Judea; yet, because the doctrine of the gospel, by which God hath gathered to himself a Church indiscriminately out of all nations, proceeded from Mount Zion, he justly says that they will come to it who having, with one consent of faith, embraced the covenant of eternal salvation, have been united into one Church. We must also observe the harmony between the figures of the law and that spiritual worship which began to be introduced at the coming of Christ.

And shall say, Come By these words he first declares that the godly will be filled with such an ardent desire to spread the doctrines of religion, that every one not satisfied with his own calling and his personal knowledge will desire to draw others along with him. And indeed nothing could be more inconsistent with the nature of faith than that deadness which would lead a man to disregard his brethren, and to keep the light of knowledge choked up within his own breast. The greater the eminence above others which any man has received from his calling so much the more diligently ought he to labor to enlighten others.

This points out to us also the ordinary method of collecting a Church, which is, by the outward voice of men; for though God might bring each person to himself by a secret influence, yet he employs the agency of men,

that he may awaken in them an anxiety about the salvation of each other. By this method he likewise strengthens their mutual attachment, and puts to the test their willingness to receive instruction, when every one permits himself to be taught by others.

Next Isaiah shows that those who take upon them the office of teaching and exhorting should not sit down and command others, but should join and walk along with them as companions; as we see that some men are very severe instructors, and eager to urge others forward, who yet do not move a step. But here believers, instead of addressing to their brethren the command, Go up, rather lead the way by their own example. This is the true method, therefore, of profitable teaching, when, by actually performing what we demand, we make it evident that we speak with sincerity and earnestness.

And he will teach us in his ways [39] He shows, first, that God cannot be worshipped aright until we have been enlightened by doctrine; and, secondly, that God is the only teacher of the Church, on whose lips we ought to hang. Hence it follows that nothing is less acceptable to God than certain foolish and erring services which men call devotion and likewise, that though he employs the agency of men in teaching, still he reserves this as his own right, that they must utter nothing but his word. Had this rule been followed by those who called themselves teachers of the Church religion would not have been so shamefully corrupted by a wide and confused diversity of superstitions. Nor is it possible that we shall not be carried away into various errors, where we are tossed about by the opinions of men. Justly therefore, does Isaiah, when he claims for God alone the power and authority to teach the Church, shut the mouths of all mortals; so that the office of teaching is committed to pastors for no other purpose than that God alone may be heard there. Let those who wish to be reckoned ministers of Christ allow themselves to be regulated by this statement, that they may take nothing away from his authority.

The Hebrew words ויורנו מדרכיו (*veyorenu midderachaiv*) may be literally rendered, *he will teach us OF his ways;* which means, "He will show us what his ways are," or, he will set before us his ways for a perfect instruction.

Next he adds obedience, *we will walk in his paths*, by which he points out both the object and the result; for the instruction which is delivered to us from the mouth of the Lord is not mere speculation, but directs the course of our life, and leads us to obey him. But we ought also to observe, that the commandments of God are called ways and *paths*, in order to inform us that they go miserably astray who turn aside from them in the smallest degree. Thus every kind of unlawful liberty is restrained, and all men, from the least even to the greatest, are enjoined to observe this rule of obedience, that they keep themselves within the limits of the word of God.

For out of Zion shalt go forth the law This is an explanation of the former verse, in which he said that Mount Zion will be placed above all mountains;

[39] And he will teach us his ways. — Eng. Ver.

that is, that she will be raised to the highest pitch of honor, when she shall become the fountain of saving doctrine, which shall flow out over the whole world. He calls it *the law*; but we have elsewhere spoken of the derivation and meaning of this word; for תורה (*torah*) means *instruction*, and the most complete of all kinds of instruction is contained in *the law.* He speaks, therefore, after the manner of the prophets; for since the rule of godliness was to be obtained from the law, they were wont, by a figure of speech, (synecdoche,) in which a part is taken for the whole, to include under the word *law* all the instruction which God has given; just as under the word *altar* they include the whole worship of God.

Now, since we know that this prediction was fulfilled, when the preaching of the gospel began at that very place, (for Christ first taught at Jerusalem, and afterwards his doctrine was spread throughout the whole world,) we must not take the word law in a limited sense; for at that time, as to its figures and bondage, it was rather abolished. (Luke 2:46; Mark 16:10; Ezekiel 47:1; Luke 24:47.) Hence we conclude that the term is applied, without limitation, to the word of God. And when the prophets say that waters will spring out of the temple to water the whole world, (Ezekiel 47:1,) they express metaphorically what Isaiah lays down in plain language; namely, that the source of saving doctrine will be from that place; for out of it the apostles and other teachers spread the gospel through the whole world.

We must observe the reason why the Prophet made these statements. It was, that he might fortify the godly against various changes, which otherwise, on manifold occasions, might have crushed their minds; and therefore it was of great importance to provide against offenses, and to fortify the minds of the godly. "Whatever may be the condition of your affairs, and though you should be oppressed by afflictions on all sides, still continue to cherish this assured hope, that *the law will go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*; for this is an infallible decree of God, which no diversity or change of events will make void."

How much the godly needed this consolation may be easily inferred from the course of events which immediately followed; for when Judea had been forsaken, the temple destroyed, the worship of Goal overturned, and the comely order of the Church utterly defaced while tyranny became more and more oppressive, it was natural that their minds should be discouraged, and that all hope should be thrown away. On the other hand, after the return of the Jews from Babylon, when dreadful superstitions gradually obtained prevalence, and the priests, instead of discharging their office in a lawful manner, grasped at wicked tyranny, what else could have occurred to the minds of the goodly than that religion had fallen into neglect, and that the worship of Goal was entirely laid aside, if they had not been supported by this promise? For there can be no doubt that this temptation, which arose out of internal vices, was more injurious than their banishment into Babylon. So long as they were exiles, they had at least prophets, by whose

instruction they were encouraged; but in that state of corruption the good effect of instruction had been lost, and no regard was paid to religion or godliness. But by the aid of this prediction alone the Lord granted to them the support which they needed. For why had *the law*, which God appeared to have consecrated for himself in his own habitation, been thrown down and basely trampled under foot? Who, then, would have thought not only that it would have a place there, but that it would also reign in all foreign places, and in the most distant regions? On the other hand, the Prophet declares not only that *the law* will remain in its place, but that it will travel further; by which he means that it will not be confined within its former boundaries, for it will be proclaimed to the Gentiles without distinction.

And undoubtedly this had very great authority and weight with the Apostles, when they knew that they were appointed to perform those things which are here promised. Otherwise they would never have had courage enough to venture to undertake the office, and, in short, would not have been able to endure the burden, especially when the whole world furiously opposed them. But they knew that he by whom this had been promised, and from whom they had received authority to deliver this message, would easily remove every obstacle. It ought also to be observed that we obtain from it a strong confirmation of our faith, when we learn that the doctrine of the gospel *came forth out of Zion*; because we thence conclude that it is not new, or lately sprung up, but that it is the eternal truth of God, of which a testimony had been given in all ages before it was brought to light.

We also infer that it was necessary that all the ancient ceremonies should be abolished, and that a new form of teaching should be introduced, though the substance of the doctrine continue to be the same; for *the law* formerly proceeded out of Mount Sinai, (Exodus 19:20,) but now it proceeded *out of Zion*, and therefore it assumed a new form. Two things, therefore, must be observed; first, that the doctrine of God is the same, and always agrees with itself; that no one may charge God with changeableness, as if he were inconsistent; and though the law of the Lord be now the same that it ever was, yet it came *out of Zion* with a new garment; secondly, when ceremonies and shadows had been abolished, Christ was revealed, in whom the reality of them is perceived.

4. *And he shall judge among the nations* He means that the doctrine will be like a king's scepter, that God may rule among all nations; for, by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, the Hebrew word שפט, (*shaphat*,) *to judge*, means *to govern* or *to reign.* since, therefore, God had not taken more than one nation to be subject to his reign, the Prophet here shows that the boundaries of his kingdom will be enlarged, that he may rule over various nations. He likewise notices indirectly the difference between the kingdom of David, which was but a shadow, and this other kingdom, which would be far more excellent. At that time God ruled over his chosen people by the hand of David, but after the coming of Christ he began to reign by

himself, that is, in the person of his only-begotten Son, who was truly *God manifested in the flesh*. (1 Timothy 3:16.) The prophets sometimes employ the name of *David* when they are speaking about the kingdom of Christ, and they do so with propriety, that is, with respect to his human nature; for the Redeemer had been promised to spring from that family. (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24.) But here the Prophet extols his divine majesty from which it is evident how much more excellent is the condition of the new Church than that of the ancient Church, since God hath revealed himself as King in his Son. And again he confirms the calling of the Gentiles, because Christ is not sent to the Jews only, that he may reign over them, but that he may hold his sway over the whole world.

And shall rebuke many nations The word יכח (*yakach*) sometimes means to *expostulate*, sometimes *to correct*, and likewise *to prepare*; but the ordinary interpretation is most suitable to this passage, in which the Prophet speaks of the reformation of the Church. For we need correction, that we may learn to submit ourselves to God; because, in consequence of the obstinacy which belongs to our nature, we shall never make progress in the word of God, till we have been subdued by violence. Accordingly, Christ makes the beginning of preaching the gospel to be, *that the world be reproved concerning sin*. (John 16:8.) That the doctrine may not be without profit, Isaiah shows that the stubbornness of our flesh must be subdued; and therefore he attributes to God the office of a *reproving judge*, that he may try our life, and, by condemning our vices, may effect a reformation of our morals. And, indeed, we see how little effect is produced by the gospel unless where that power of the Spirit is exercised which leads men to repentance.

And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares He next mentions the beneficial result which will follow, when Christ shall have brought the Gentiles and the nations under his dominion. Nothing is more desirable than peace; but while all imagine that they desire it, every one disturbs it by the madness of his lusts; for pride, and covetousness, and ambition, lead men to rise up in cruelty against each other. Since, therefore, men are naturally led away by their evil passions to disturb society, Isaiah here promises the correction of this evil; for, as the gospel is the *doctrine of reconciliation*, (2 Corinthians 5:18,) which removes the enmity between us and God, so it brings men into peace and harmony with each other. The meaning amounts to this, that Christ's people will be meek, and, laying aside fierceness, will be devoted to the pursuit of peace.

This has been improperly limited by some commentators to the time when Christ was born; because at that time, after the battle of Actium, the temple of Janus [40] was closed, as appears from the histories. I readily admit that the

[40] The temple of Janus was built by Numa Pompilius, whose wise and peaceful administration contrasts strongly with the bloody and ferocious wars by which many of the succeeding emperors endeavored to make themselves illustrious. It was expressly intended by its founder that this temple should repress the natural fierceness of the people by discouraging warlike operations. For this purpose the opening or shutting of its doors was made to indicate whether the Roman empire was in a condition of war or peace with the surrounding states. When war raged on

universal peace which existed throughout the Roman empire, at the birth of Christ, was a token of that eternal peace which we enjoy in Christ. But the Prophet's meaning was different. He meant that Christ makes such a reconciliation between God and men, that a comfortable state of peace exists among themselves, by putting an end to destructive wars. For if Christ be taken away, not only are we estranged from God, but we incessantly carry on open war with him, which is justly thrown back on our own heads; and the consequence is, that everything in the world is in disorder.

Besides, Isaiah promises that, when the gospel shall be published, it will be an excellent remedy for putting an end to quarrels; and not only so, but that, when resentments have been laid aside, men will be disposed to assist each other. For he does not merely say, *swords shall be broken in pieces, but they shall be turned into mattocks*; by which he shows that there will be so great a change that, instead of annoying one another, and committing various acts of injustice, as they had formerly done, they will henceforth cultivate peace and friendship, and will employ their exertions for the common advantage of all; for *mattocks* and *pruning-hooks* are instruments adapted to agriculture, and are profitable and necessary for the life of man. He therefore shows that, when Christ shall reign, those who formerly were hurried along by the love of doing mischief, will afterwards contend with each other, in every possible way, by acts of kindness.

Neither shall they practice war any more [41] The word למד (*lamad*) signifies either *to be accustomed to*, or *to learn*. But the meaning of the Prophet is plain enough, that they will not train themselves in destructive arts, and will not strive with each other in acts of cruelty and injustice, as they were formerly accustomed to do. Hence we infer that they have made little proficiency in the gospel, whose hearts have not been formed to meekness, and among whom there does not yet reign that brotherly love which leads men to perform kind offices to each other. But this cannot be done before the consciences have been brought into a state of peace with God; for we must begin there, in order that we may also be at peace with men.

Some madmen torture this passage to promote anarchy, (ἀναρχίαν) as if it took away from the Church entirely the right to use the sword, and bring it forward for condemning with great severity every kind of wars. For example,

all sides, all its doors stood open by night and by day; and the shutting of any one of them declared, that in that direction towards which it looked peace had been restored. Livy tells us, that so remarkable an event as the entire shutting up of this temple, which proclaimed that universal peace existed throughout the empire, had occurred but thrice during the long period of seven hundred years; once under the reign of Numa, next, during the consulship of Titus Manlius, and lastly, after the battle of Actium, in which the Emperor Augustus gained a splendid naval victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. (Liv. 1:19.) Historians have fixed the date of the latter event with extraordinary precision; and, while their only object was to pronounce a lofty panegyric on Augustus as the peculiar favourite of heaven, they have unintentionally recorded that the temple of Janus was shut up when the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) was ushered into the world. So striking a coincidence could not fail to attract observation, as belonging to the fullness of the time (Galatians 4:4) at which the Messiah appeared, and as one of the beautiful arrangements of him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. (Isaiah 28:29.) Rarely has chronology proved to be so delightful and instructive. — Ed.

[41] Neither shall they learn war any more. — Eng. Ver.

if a prince defend the people entrusted to him, and protect them against injustice, those people say, "It is unlawful for Christians to use the sword." But it is easy to reply to this; for the Prophet speaks metaphorically about the kingdom of Christ, which leads men, through mutual kindness, to become reconciled to each other. The Scriptures frequently employ a metaphor, in which the thing signified is denoted by a sign; as in that passage,

He who hath not a sword, let him buy one. (Luke 22:36.)

Christ certainly did not intend to induce his followers to fight, but intimated that the time of war was at hand. 0n the other hand, we are told that swords shall cease to exist, or shall be beaten down to serve a different purpose, when hatred and fighting shall be at an end, and when they who formerly were at enmity shall be reconciled to each other.

It may be objected that, in a state of harmony and peace, the sword will no longer be needed. I reply, that peace exists among us just as far as the kingly power of Christ is acknowledged, and that these two things have a mutual relation. Would that Christ reigned entirely in us! for then would peace also have its perfect influence. But since we are still widely distant from the perfection of that peaceful reign, we must always think of making progress; and it is excessive folly not to consider that the kingdom of Christ here is only beginning. Besides, God did not gather a Church — by which is meant an assembly of godly men — so as to be separate from others; but the good are always mixed with the bad; and not only so, but the good have not yet reached the goal, and are widely distant from that perfection which is required from them. The fulfillment of this prophecy, therefore, in its full extent, must not be looked for on earth. It is enough, if we experience the beginning, and if, being reconciled to God through Christ, we cultivate mutual friendship, and abstain from doing harm to any one.

5. *O house of Jacob* He sharply rebukes the Jews by holding out the example of the Gentiles; for since, in consequence of the spread of his kingdom, God would give law to all nations from Mount Zion, so as to ingraft them into the body of his chosen people, nothing could be more strange than that the *house of Jacob* should revolt from him, and that, when strangers were drawing near, the members of the household, who ought to have been foremost, should withdraw. This is, therefore, not only an exceedingly vehement exhortation, but also a heavy and sharp complaint. Accordingly, he addresses them by an honorable name, saying, *O house of Jacob,* come; that he may express more strongly their ingratitude, which appeared in twist that though they were in the Church God's first-born, they utterly renounced that right of inheritance which they held in common with others.

There is, therefore, an implied comparison, as if he had said, "Lo, the Gentiles flow together to Mount Zion, and every one exhorts and urges on his neighbor; they submit to receive instruction from God, and to be reproved by him and why do you, O Israelites, you who are the inheritance of God, why do you draw back? Shall the Gentiles submit to God, and shall you

refuse to acknowledge his authority? Has so great a light been kindled in every part of the world, and shall you not be enlightened by it? Shall so many waters flow, and will you not drink? What madness is this, that when the Gentiles run so eagerly, you sit still in idleness?"

And we will walk in the light of the Lord When he adds *we will walk*, he means that *the light* is placed before their feet, but that they disregard it by shutting their eyes, and even extinguish it as far as lies in their power; and yet its brightness draws to it distant nations.

6. *Surely thou hast forsaken thy people* In these words he now plainly charges the people with having a perverse disposition; and he does this not in direct terms, but, as it were, bursting into astonishment, he suddenly breaks off his discourse, and, turning to God, exclaims, "Why should I waste words on a nation grown desperate, which thou, O Lord, hast justly rejected, because, giving itself up to idolatrous practices, it has treacherously departed from thy word?"

It may also be a prediction of punishment still future which he foresaw by the Spirit; as if he had said, That it was not wonderful if ruin and desolation were about to overtake Mount Zion on account of the great crimes of the nation. His design may have been, that so mournful a spectacle might not be the occasion of despair, and that those who were capable of being cured might be moved by repentance, and turn to God ere this calamity arrived. For while the prophets are heralds of God's judgments, and threaten vengeance against the ungodly, they usually endeavor, at the same time, to bring as many as they can to some kind of repentance. The servants of God ought never to lay aside this disposition, which would lead them to endeavor to do good even to the reprobate, if that were possible. (2 Timothy 2:25.)

This passage ought to yield abundant consolation to godly teachers; for when we think that we are speaking to the deaf, we become faint, and are tempted to give up all exertion, and to say, "What am I about? I am beating the air." Yet the Prophet does not cease to exhort those in whom he perceived no ground of comfortable hope; and while he stands like one astonished at this destruction of the people, he nevertheless addresses those whom he sees going to ruin. At the same time we must observe that, however obstinate the ungodly may be, we must pronounce vengeance against them; and though they refuse and gnaw the bridle, yet, that they may be left without excuse, we must always summon them to the judgment-seat of God.

I consider the כי (*ki*) to mean *surely*; [42] for this signification is more suitable, because he breaks off the exhortation which he had begun, and addresses God. And when he again calls them *the house of Jacob,* this is added for the purpose of imparting greater vehemence, as is usually done in a moving discourse; as if he had said, "This holy nation, which God had chosen, is now forsaken."

Because they are replenished from the East As the Hebrew word קדם (*ka-*

[42] In the English Version it is rendered therefore. — Ed.

dem) sometimes denotes *the east*, and sometimes *antiquity*, it may be interpreted to mean that they were *filled with ancient manners*; because they had again brought into use those superstitions by which the land of Canaan was formerly infected. For we know that the prophets often reproach the nation of Israel with resembling the Canaanites more than they resembled Abraham and the rest of the holy fathers. And, indeed, because they had been brought into the possession of this land, when the ancient inhabitants had been driven out, in order that it might be cleansed from its pollution, and afterwards devoted to holiness, the refusal to change their wicked customs involved a twofold ingratitude. But as the other meaning — *from the East* — has been more generally adopted, I have chosen to retain it; though even in this view the commentators differ, for some consider the letter מ (*mem*) to denote comparison, and מקדם (*mikkedem*) to denote *more than the inhabitants of thee East*, while others adopt the simpler, and, as I think, the more correct view, that they were *filled with the east*, that is, with the vices which they had contracted from that quarter; for wicked imitation is amazingly contagious, and nothing is more natural than that corruptions should glide from one place into another more distant.

And with divinations, like the Philistines This clause explains the former more fully; for under *divinations* he includes, by synecdoche, the impostures of Satan to which heathen nations were addicted. The Prophet therefore means that they now differ in no respect from *the Philistines*, though God had separated them from that people by the privilege of his adoption; and this was sufficient to bring upon them the severest condemnation, that they had forgotten their calling, and polluted themselves with the corrupted and ungodly customs of the Gentiles. Hence it appears that to sin by the example of another contributes nothing to alleviate the guilt.

And have delighted in the children of strangers The last part of the verse is interpreted in various ways; because the phrase, *the children of strangers*, is viewed by some metaphorically, as denoting laws and customs; while others regard them as referring to marriages; because, by marrying indiscriminately women of foreign extraction, they had mingled their seed, so that there were many illegitimate children. Jerome gives a harsher exposition, that they polluted themselves by wicked lusts contrary to nature. For my own part, I have no doubt that by *the children of strangers* are meant foreign nations, and not figuratively the laws themselves. The crime charged against them by the Prophet therefore is, that, by endeavoring to please the Gentiles, they entangled themselves in their vices, and thus preferred not only mortal men, but wicked men, to God. He says that they *delighted*, because the desire or delight of wicked imitation effaced from their hearts the love of God and of sound doctrine.

7. *Their land is filled with silver and gold* We must attend to the order which the Prophet here observes; for he now enumerates the reasons why the Lord rejected his people. In the former verse he began with *divinations*

and the customs of *strangers*; he now comes down to *silver and gold*; and afterwards he will speak of *horses and chariots*. There can be no doubt that, having first condemned idolatry, he reproves them, secondly, for covetousness, and, thirdly, for sinful trust, when men depart from God, and contrive for themselves vain grounds of confidence. It was not a thing in itself to be condemned, that this nation had abundance of gold and silver; but because they burned with insatiable covetousness, and trusted to *horses and chariots*, he justly reproves them.

The Hebrew particle ו (*vau*) is here viewed by some as denoting a contrast, supposing the meaning to be, and yet *their land is filled with silver and gold*. This would show the ingratitude of the people to be the greater, because, though they enjoyed an abundance of all good things, they betook themselves, as if their case had been desperate, to magical arts and to idols, which is much less excusable than if they had fled to them during their adversity; because, though they were fed to the full with an abundance of good things, yet they shook off the yoke of God. In this way he would aggravate the criminality of a nation that fled to idols freely and of their own accord, even though they were luxuriating in their abundance. But I do not receive this interpretation, for I think it too far-fetched. On the contrary, he includes in one continued enumeration the vices with which that nation was chargeable, *covetousness, sinful confidence, and idolatry.* Accordingly, though the opinion of those who explain it as a contrast be a true opinion, it does not harmonize with this passage.

And there is no end of their treasures Isaiah proceeds to illustrate more clearly and forcibly what he has formerly said; for, though it be not in itself sinful or blamable that a person should possess gold or silver, provided that he make a proper use of it, he properly launches out against that wicked desire and mad eagerness to accumulate money, which is most detestable. He says that *there is no end*, because their eagerness is insatiable, and goes beyond the bounds of nature. The same opinion must be formed about *horses and chariots*, for false confidence is here reproved. To prevent this evil, the Lord had forbidden kings to gather together a great multitude of horses or chariots, lest, trusting to them, they should *cause the people to return to Egypt.* (Deuteronomy 17:16.) since, therefore, it is difficult for men to have resources of this kind in abundance without being also lifted up with pride, it was the will of God that his people should not have them at all, or at least should be satisfied with a moderate share.

8. *Their land is also full of idols* He repeats what he had already noticed about idolatry, but enters into it more fully; and, having first mentioned the subject itself, he next speaks of the use of it, which almost always follows. It seldom happens that we do not abuse *idols* when they are set up among us, for it is as when fire has been applied to a pile of wood, which must immediately burn; and wood is not more ready to be set on fire than we are to follow superstition. In the Hebrew language idols are very properly

denominated by the word אלילים, (*elilim*) which the Prophet here employs, for they are empty things, and of no value. [43] And undoubtedly the Holy Spirit intended by this word to reprove the madness of men who imagined that, by relying on such inventions, they approached nearer to God; as the papists of the present day, in order to plead for the usefulness of their idols, boast that they are the books of the unlearned: but we ought rather to believe the testimony of the Holy Spirit; and even the facts themselves plainly show what advantage the unlearned derive from them; for, led away by gross fancies, they imagine to themselves earthly and carnal gods. Hence Jeremiah justly declares not only that *idols* are useless, but that they are teachers of falsehood and lies. (Jeremiah 10:14.)

And they have bowed down [44] *before the work of their own hands* We must also attend to this description, in which the Prophet relates that the people *bowed down before the works of their own hands*; for how stupid was it that men should not only worship wood and stone instead of God, but should honor their own workmanship with the appellation of Deity, which they cannot bestow on themselves! It is truly shocking and monstrous that, as soon as a block of wood which lay neglected has received the finishing-stroke from a mortal man, he presently worships it as if it had been made a God. Although the Prophet addresses the ancient people, the same reasoning applies to the papists, who acknowledge no majesty of God but in the works of their own hands.

Before that which their own fingers have made The repetition is emphatic, and to the *hands* he adds the *fingers*, in order to exhibit more strongly the grossness of the crime. We must also attend to the mode of expression, which denotes adoration by means of outward gesture; not that it is unlawful among men to bend the knee or the head for the sake of paying public respect, but because he who *bows down before* an idol professes to render divine worship. Consequently, the silly talk of papists about that adoration which they call *Dulia* [45] (δουλεία) is a childish evasion; for when the Prophet speaks of religious worship he condemns universally every token of homage. [46]

9. *And the mean man boweth down* Some commentators read these words in immediate connection with what goes before, as if the Prophet were proceeding still farther to show the extent of their criminality. If we adopt this meaning, then *by the mean man and the mighty man* we must understand all the Israelites; as if the Prophet said that no man is pure and free from this stain. Others not improperly are of opinion that he repeats in other words what he had said about punishment, and that in this way he expresses the

[43] "So called," says Buxtorf, "because they are absolutely nothing, agreeably to that saying of the Apostle, an idol is nothing in the world," (1 Corinthians 8:4.) אלל, רפאי (rophee elil) physicians of no value, (Job 13:4,) is an instance of the literal use of the word. --- Ed

[44] They worship. — Eng. Ver.

[45] The popish distinction between an inferior kind of adoration, called and a higher kind of adoration, called , is illustrated and refuted by our Author, in the Institutes, vol. 1, p. 141, and in the Harmony of the Evangelists, vol. 1, p. 221. — Ed

[46] That is, of homage paid to idols. — Ed.

destruction which awaits a people forsaken by God. This will agree best with the scope of the passage, that all, both small and great, will speedily be overtaken by the ruin which lays low a whole nation; because amidst so great wickedness there was no reason to expect deliverance from the vengeance of God.

Besides, in those two expressions, *bow down* and *humble*, there is a rapid allusion to that *bowing down* which he mentioned a little before, as if he had said, "They have *bowed themselves* down before idols, therefore God will *lay them low* under a vast weight of calamities." Yet I have no doubt that he likewise attacks their pride; for it was difficult to believe that a nation so abundantly supplied with wealth would, in a short period, be overwhelmed by calamities.

Therefore forgive them not; or, *thou wilt not forgive them.* This latter clause is explained in two ways, though it does not much affect the real meaning which of the views you adopt; for the design of the Prophet is to show that towards such obstinate men God will not be appeased. If it be taken in the future tense, *thou wilt not forgive them*, the meaning will be more easily brought out; but if it be taken as a prayer, *forgive them not*, it will amount to the same thing; for we know that, when the prophets, inflamed by zeal for God, pour out prayers as under the dictation of the Spirit, they threaten just punishment against the ungodly: and we need not wonder that the Prophets offended by crimes so numerous and so shocking, kindles into such warmth that he consigns his countrymen to destruction; for nothing was more dear to him than the sacred honor of God. But at the same time it must be understood that he makes a tacit reservation of a remnant; because he does not here speak of every individual, but of the body of the people, which was so deeply infected by its vices that there was no hope of cure; otherwise it would have been unreasonable to give exhortations to repentance, and to hold out the hope of pardon to men who were incurable and thoroughly obstinate. The meaning therefore amounts to this, that the restoration of a new Church must not be expected till God has executed his judgments by destroying the temple.

10. *Enter into the rock* As ungodly men, for the most part, lull themselves in excessive indifference about God's threatenings, it is customary with the prophets, when they threaten sinners, with the view of producing terror, to add lively descriptions, as if for the purpose of bringing those matters under the immediate view of men. This is the reason why the Prophet now bids despisers of *God enter into the rocks* and caves, to conceal themselves under ground. And, first, he means that the judgment of God is more to be dreaded than a thousand deaths, and that for the sake of escaping that judgment it were to be wished that they should go down into the grave. But, by addressing men themselves, he gives a more impressive illustration of the weight of the divine vengeance.

From the dread of the LORD, and from the glory of his majesty Al-

though *by the dread of God* he means the scourges by which God would take vengeance on a wicked people, yet it is not without good reason that he immediately adds, his *magnificent glory*; as if he had said, "It is according to the measure of his own glory that God ought to be dreaded by the ungodly, in whose destruction he displays his boundless power." But though the ungodly are not reformed or made to bow down by any punishment, they are forced to tremble when they feel the presence of the wrath of God. In quite a different manner do punishments instruct the elect to fear God; for, in consequence of being subdued by strokes, they learn to bear the yoke. Isaiah therefore declares that the glory of God will be more illustriously displayed when he shall come forth as a righteous judge; for when he conceals himself he is not observed, and they scarcely think of his existence.

Hence let pastors learn how they ought to deal with drowsy consciences, which must be awakened by the judgment of God, that they may regard that judgment with actual *dread.* Though we often sing to the deaf, yet terror pierces even hearts of iron, so that they are without excuse. Frequently, too, it happens that some are healed; and in like manner believers gain advantage from it, when they learn the terrific forms of punishment which await the ungodly and reprobate.

11 *The loftiness of the looks of man* [47] *shall be humbled* Wicked men, relying on the wealth and quietness and prosperity which they at present enjoy, regard the threatenings of the Prophets with haughty disdain, and thus harden their hearts against God, and are even led to indulge in wantonness. 0n this account, Isaiah here determines, as we have already said, to repress their arrogance; as if he had said, "The time will come when this pride of yours, by which you vainly and madly contend against God, shall be brought down." For wicked men, though they pretend to have some religion, are yet so daring that they raze against God himself, and imagine that they are higher than God. On the other hand, by thundering against them, he lays low their haughtiness, that he alone may be exalted.

And this is what we have already said, that when crimes are allowed to pass unpunished, it is a sort of cloud held before our eyes, which hinders us from beholding the glory of the Lord; but when he takes vengeance on men's transgressions, his glory shines forth illustriously. This is also the reason which Solomon assigns why wicked men are hardened against God: it is because they think that bad and good men are equally happy in this world.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil, (Ecclesiastes 8:11;)

for all of them grow more insolent, and are more and more blinded.

But here he shows that, when proud men shall have been brought to their proper level, there will be nothing to prevent God from being acknowledged

[47] The lofty looks of man. — Eng. Ver.

to be what he is. It was indeed highly becoming that the people should, of their own accord, humbly behold the greatness of God, under whose shadow they were defended; and for this purpose the posterity of Abraham was so remarkably distinguished by numerous blessings, that it might be the mirror of the glory and holiness of God. Isaiah now threatens that, because the Jews have risen up against him, God will employ a new method of exalting his glory, that is, by their destruction. When he speaks of *lofty looks* and *loftiness*, he employs an outward gesture to denote the inward pride of the mind; for sinful confidence almost always betrays, by the very looks, a contempt of God and of men. In the same sense does David describe *the man whose eyes are lofty.* (Psalm 101:5.)

12. *For the day of the LORD of hosts will be on every one that is proud and lofty* In this verse he confirms the same thing more fully and from the vehement manner in which he heaps up words, we may easily infer how bold was the wickedness which at that time abounded. But we shall not wonder that he labors so hard to subdue the arrogance of men, if we consider how difficult it is to bend the stubbornness of those who, relying on their wealth, are afraid of nothing, and who suppose that the design of their elevated rank is, that whatever they do shall pass unpunished. For even at the present day we experience how sensitive and passionate those men are who make arrogant claims for themselves, and how obstinately they reject all admonitions. And this is also the reason why the Prophet uses sharp language against theme instead of threatening vengeance, in general terms, against the whole nation.

Yet it is not against the princes alone, whose high rank raised them far above other men, that his invectives are launched; for not only they, but even persons of the lowest rank, often swell with pride; and, as the common proverb runs, "Every man carries within him the heart of a king." In like manner, we find that even the basest persons, if you do but prick them with a pill, vomit out the poison of intolerable arrogance. Since, therefore, this vice was so widely spread, Isaiah includes both the highest and the lowest of the people, declaring that in proportion to the forbearance which God had exercised toward them is the severity of the impending judgment; for, in consequence of their abundance, their hearts had swollen to fierceness.

Moreover, though the letter ל, (*lamed*,) [48] which is the sign of the dative case, be sometimes superfluous, yet in this passage it retains its force; for it would appear that Isaiah appoints a fixed day, as usually happens in judicial trials. Accordingly, I interpret it to mean that God himself hath previously appointed a day on which proud men must be summoned to the judgment-seat of God, to receive a sentence of condemnation.

We may also learn from these words that God avows himself to be the

[48] ליהוה The natural rendering of ``Quoniam dies Iehovae exercituum super omnem superbum et exelsum erit`` appears to be what I have given above, for the day of the Lord of hosts will be on every one that is proud and lofty. But if Jehovae be in the dative, and not in the genitive case, the ambiguity might have been partly removed by some such collocation as the following: --- Quoniam Jehovae exercituum erit dies, which might have meant, For to the Lord of hosts there will be a day, or, the Lord of hosts will have a day; and such an emphatic meaning of the phrase must have been intended by our author. --- Ed

enemy of all the proud. This appointing of a day is therefore to the same effect as if God declared that he cannot endure men wickedly to indulge in pride, and that they who unduly exalt themselves cannot escape being crushed by his hand. And if our minds were sincerely convinced of this, who would not abhor pride, which provokes the anger of God against us? If any person choose rather to interpret (*superbum et elatum*) *proud* and *lofty* as in the neuter gender, meaning *that which is proud and lofty*, we must understand them to refer to the fortresses, bulwarks, and fortifications; but the rules of grammar do not admit of their being applied in any other way than to persons.

13. *Upon all the cedars of Lebanon* The allegory which is here introduced, about the *trees of Lebanon* and *the lofty mountains*, instead of obscuring, sheds light on the subject; for however high may be the wishes or endeavors of a mortal man, yet he will never be able to reach the height of the *mountains* and the *lofty trees, which* it is as easy for God to throw down as for a breath of wind to scatter the fallen leaves. Accordingly, in what may be called a painting, Isaiah shows to proud men how idle and foolish they are in believing that their elevation will be their defense. There is also an implied exaggeration, which must have contributed to heighten the terror. It cannot be supposed that God is actually angry with the mountains and trees, or that, having changed his purpose, he throws down what he has built up; but in the harmless creatures Isaiah holds out to view the judgment of God, in order more fully to convince wicked and unprincipled men that their presumption will not pass unpunished. Thus we see the reason why he mixes up the metaphors of *cedars, oaks*, and *mountains*

15. *And upon every lofty tower* What he adds about *towers* and *walls* is not figurative or metaphorical. We know how men, when they think that they are well defended, congratulate themselves that they no longer need the assistance of God. Accordingly, under the name of *towers and walls* Isaiah mentions the object of false confidence; for if any place seem to be impregnable, there do irreligious men build their nest, that they may look down from it on heaven and earth; for they imagine that they are placed beyond all the uncertainties of fortune. Isaiah therefore threatens that, when it shall please God to humble men, he will throw down all the defenses on which they place a false confidence. And although those things are not in themselves evil, yet because they receive too large a share of our attention, it is with great propriety that Isaiah sharpens his pen against them.

To the same purpose is what he says about *horses* and *chariots*; for, as we are told by Micah, because men have improperly relied on earthly riches, they must be altogether deprived of them, that they may owe this preservation entirely to the hand of God. (Micah 5:10.) A little before, he had reproved them for the abundance of their horses (verse 7); he now addresses them about the judgment of God, and warns them that, as the only possible way of gaining the favor of God, he must take from the Jews all their horsemen,

that they may no longer place sinful reliance on earthly support.

16. *And upon all ships of Tarshish Tarshish* was unquestionably the Hebrew name for Cilicia; and as the Jews had much traffic with that nation, Scripture frequently mentions *the ships of Tarshish*, which are so called, because they sailed on that sea. Navigation cannot, indeed, be condemned on its own account; for, by importing and exporting articles of merchandise, it is of great advantage to mankind. Nor can any fault be found with this mode of intercourse between nations; for it is the will of God that the whole human race should be joined together by, mutual acts of kindness. But as it most frequently happens that abundance leads to pride and cruelty, Isaiah reproves this kind of merchandise, which was the chief source of the wealth of the land. Besides, in that merchandise which is carried on with distant and foreign nations, there is often a large amount of tricks and dishonesty, and no limit set to the desire of gain. First, then, Isaiah means that the Jews will be deprived of riches, that they may learn to submit to God. Secondly, he describes covetousness and unlawful gains by means of a sign, as if one were to express murder by holding out a bloody sword.

And upon elegant pictures This second part of the verse shows still more clearly that the Prophet condemns navigation, which had brought many corruptions into the land. It is too frequent and common that riches are followed by luxury, effeminacy, and a superfluity of pleasures, which we commonly see in wealthy countries and commercial cities; for those who trade by sea in distant countries are not satisfied with the commodities obtained at home, but carry away new luxuries which were formerly unknown. Since, therefore, wealth is usually the mother of superfluity, the Prophet here mentions costly furniture, as if he had said that the Jews, by adorning their houses at great expense, draw down upon themselves the judgment of God; for he employs the word *pictures*, by a well-known figure of speech, to denote rich tapestry, and the productions of Phrygia, and vessels framed with consummate skill

It is certain that the manners of men are corrupted, when they eagerly pursue, in every direction, superfluous enjoyments And we see how destruction was brought on the Roman Empire by delicacies of this nature; for before they traveled into Greece, the greatest moderation prevailed among them; and no sooner had Asia been vanquished than they began to grow soft and effeminate; and when their eyes were dazzled by pictures, furniture, precious stones, and tapestry and their nostrils regaled by ointments and perfumes, all their senses were immediately overpowered, and, by imitating the luxury of the East as a higher form of civilization, they began gradually to indulge in every kind of debauchery.

17. *And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down* The Prophet declares that he had his eye on men, when he described the various kinds of *loftiness*; for God is not displeased saith the steep mountains or tall cedars, which he created, but informs us that the whole evil lies in men, who vainly trust to what is high and lofty. It may be objected, that it frequently happens

that wicked men are not rendered more humble by chastisement, but, on the contrary, become more fierce and obstinate, as is evident from the case of Pharaohs whose hardness of heart no plagues could subdue, (Exodus 8:15, and 9:34;) and consequently that what the Prophet here threatens does not always take place. I reply, he does not describe the effect of chastisement, as if God bent rebellious men to obey hills; but the meaning of this passage is, that, although the hearts of the reprobate be not changed, yet the Lord will not cease to inflict punishment upon them, till their haughtiness and presumption are brought low. For, trusting to their wealth and fortifications, they congratulate themselves, as we have said, on their safety, and do not fear God. But whatever may be the nature of their defenses, the Lord will easily subdue and lay them low, and that not only by one or another chastisement, but by chastisements so numerous and so severe, that they will at length be beaten down and subdued, will cease to rise up against him, and will acknowledge that they gain nothing by their insolence and presumption. The next clause, *and the LORD alone shall be exalted*, has been already explained.

18 *And the idols he will utterly abolish* As he had formerly, in his reproof, joined idolatry with luxury and covetousness, and other views; so he now joins them in the threatening of punishment.

19. *And they shall enter into the holes of the rocks* He had formerly used other words when addressing them in the second person, *Enter into the rock*, (verse 10,) that he might inflict a severer stroke on their minds. But now he declares what they will do, and says that they must *enter*; and hence it is evident that the former statement was not an exhortation, but a severe denunciation of the wrath of God, in order to terrify wicked and obstinate men, who despise all warnings and all threatenings.

From the presence of the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty What he adds about the *terror of God* must be understood to mean that terror which was thrown into them by the Chaldeans and Assyrians, whose hand he called a little before, and now also calls, *the glory of God* for God employed their agency to chastise his people. Although they were wicked and treacherous, yet they promoted the *glory* of God; for even the devil himself contributes in some way to the glory of God, though contrary to his wish. Thus he speaks of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, because in the punishments which the Lord will inflict on the Jews by their agency we may behold his *glory*

The same thing is confirmed by the word *Arise*, which means to go before the judgment-seat. In the phrase which immediately follows, לערץ הארף, (*laarotz haaretz*,) *to shake terribly the earth*, there is an elegant allusion or play on words, which can hardly be conveyed in any other language. [49] He says that the Lord *ariseth*, because he appears to sleep so long as he delays

[49] The "play on words," which turns entirely on the sound of the Hebrew noun and verb, cannot be expressed in a translation. Our author has illustrated it by ad terram terrendam, which again may be fully imitated by this alliteration, "to terrify the terrestrial globe." — Ed.

his judgments. But he *ariseth*, when he comes forth as a judge to inflict punishments on the wicked; so as to make it evident to men that nothing escapes the knowledge, or is hidden from the eyes, of Him who permits no crime to pass unpunished.

20. *In that day a man will cast away his idols* Idolaters are amazingly delighted with their own superstitions and ungodly worship; for although they abound in enormities and crimes, still they betake themselves to this refuge, that they imagine that their worship appeases God. Just as in the present day, if we should represent the crimes and lawless passions of every kind which abound among the papists, they certainly will not be able to deny our statements, but will flatter themselves on this ground, that they have a plausible form of worship, and will believe that this vail covers all their crimes. Accordingly, the Prophet deprives idolaters of this cloak, and threatens that they will no longer be able to conceal their pollution; for the Lord will compel them to throw away their idols, that they may acknowledge that they had no good reason for placing their hope and confidence in them.

In short, they will be ashamed of their foolishness; for in prosperity they think that they enjoy the favor of God, as if he showed that he takes delight in their worship; and they cannot be convinced to the contrary, until God actually make evident how greatly he abhors them. It is only when they are brought into adversity that they begin to acknowledge their wickedness, as Hosea strikingly illustrates by comparing them to whores, who do not acknowledge their wickedness so long as they make gain, and live in splendor, but who, when they are deprived of those enjoyments, and forsaken by their lovers, begin to think of their wretchedness and disgrace, and enter into the way of repentance, of which they had never thought while they enjoyed luxury. (Hosea 2:5.) The same thing almost always happens with idolaters, who are not ashamed of their wickedness, so as to *cast away their idols*, until they have been visited by very sore distress, and made almost to think that they are ruined.

Which they made; that is, which were made for them by the agency of workmen. Nor was this all unnecessary addition; for he means that pretended gods are not entitled to adoration: and what sort of gods can they be that have been made by men, seeing that God exists from himself, and never had a beginning? It is therefore highly foolish, and contrary to reason, that men should worship the work of their own hands. So then by this expression, he aggravates their criminality, that idols, though they are composed of gold or silver, or some other perishable material, and have been manufactured by men, are yet worshipped instead of God; and at the same time he states the reason why they are displeasing to God: it is, because they are worshipped. On what pretense will the papists now excuse their ungodliness? for they cannot deny that they render adoration to images; and wherever such worship is performed, there ungodliness is clearly proved.

Into the holes of the moles and of the bats By *the holes of the moles* he

means any filthy places in which they are disgracefully concealed.

21. *And they shall enter into the clefts of the rocks* This repetition is not superfluous, though Isaiah again employs the same words which he had lately used; for what is so difficult as to impress on the minds of men sincere fear of God? Nor is it only in hypocrites that we perceive this, but in ourselves, if we bestow careful attention; for how many things are presented to us by which our minds ought to be deeply affected, and yet we are scarcely moved! More especially, it was necessary that this judgment of God should be earnestly placed before hypocrites, who took delight in wickedness. But now he points out the severity of God's vengeance by this consideration, that the ungodly choose rather to be swallowed up by the deepest gulfs than to come under the eye of God. This, too, is the passage from which Christ borrowed the threatening which he pronounces on the Jews,

In that day shall they say to the mountains cover us; and to the hills, Hide us. (Luke 23:30.)

22 *Cease therefore from man* These words are clearly connected with what goes before, and have been improperly separated from them by some interpreters. For Isaiah, after having addressed the ungodly in threatenings concerning the judgment of God, exhorts them to refrain from deluding themselves by groundless confidence; as if he had said, "I see that you are blinded and intoxicated by false hope, so that no argument can prevail with you; and this you do, because you claim too much for yourselves. But man is nothing; and you have to do with God, who can reduce the whole world to nothing by a single act of his will."

Whose breath is in his nostrils The former part of the verse is explained in various ways; for some interpret it as referring to Christ, and view the word רוח, (*ruach*,) which we render *breath*, as denoting *violence*, by a comparison which is frequently used in other parts of Scripture; [50] and the nostril as denoting anger, because the outward sign of anger is in the nostrils. They bring out the meaning in this manner: "Beware of provoking the anger of Christ." [51] But if we examine the passage closely, that exposition will be found to be at variance with the meaning of the words.

Others understand it as relating to men in general, but explain it by that saving, *Fear not them who kill the body.* (Matthew 10:28.) But neither can this interpretation be admitted, which does not agree either with the time or the occasion, since there was no reason for dissuading them from the fear of men. But, as I have already said, the context will quickly remove all doubt; for the commencement of the following chapter clearly explains and confirms what is here stated; and he who made this division has improperly separated those things which ought to have been joined together. For the Prophet is about to add, "The Lord will take from you those things which so highly

[50] In 1 Kings 19:11 רוח (ruach) signifies wind, which the accompanying epithets show to have been strong and violent. --- Ed

[51] Instead of rendering, Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, they would render, Cease from the man who is terrible in his wrath. — Ed.

elevate your minds, and put you in such high spirits. Your confidence is foolish and groundless. "Such is the connection of what he now says, "Cease therefore from man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

But first we must see what is meant by *breath in the nostril*. It denotes human weakness, or, that the life of man is like a *breath*, which immediately vanishes away. And as David says,

"If the Lord take away the breath, man returns to the dust."
(Psalm 104:29.)

Again:

"His breath will go out, and he will return to his earth."
(Psalm 146:4.)

And again:

"They are flesh, a breath that passeth away and cometh not again." (Psalm 78:39.)

Since, therefore, nothing is more weak or frail than our life, what means that confidence, as if our strength were deeply rooted? We ought therefore to *cease from man*; that is, we ought to lay aside groundless confidence; because man has his *breath in his nostril*, for when his breath goes out, he is immediately dissolved like water. We speak here of the *breath* of life, for nothing is more frail.

Besides, when we are forbidden to place confidence in men, let us begin with ourselves; that is, let us not in any respect trust to our own wisdom or industry. Secondly, let us not depend on the aid of man, or on any creature; but let us place our whole confidence in the Lord. *Cursed.* says Jeremiah, *is he who trusteth in man*, and who placeth his strength and his aid in flesh, that is, in outward resources. (Jeremiah 17:5.)

For wherein is he to be accounted of? This is the true method of repressing haughtiness. Nothing is left to men on which they ought to congratulate themselves; for the meaning is as if the Prophet had said that the whole glory of the flesh is of no value. It ought also to be observed that this is spoken comparatively, in order to inform us, that if there be in us anything excellent, it is not our own, but is held by us at the will of another. We know that God has adorned the human race with gifts which ought not to be despised. We know, also, that some excel others; but as the greater part of men neglect God, and flatter themselves beyond measure; and as irreligious men go so far as to think that they are more than gods, Isaiah wisely separates men from God, which the Holy Spirit also does in many other parts of Scripture: for when we look at them in themselves, we perceive more fully the frail, and fading, and transitory nature of their condition. Accordingly, as soon as men begin to make the smallest claim for themselves, they ought to have an opportunity of perceiving their vanity, that they may acknowledge themselves to be nothing. This single expression throws down the pompous applauses of free-will and merits, by which papists extol themselves in opposition to the grace of God. That intoxicated self-love, in which irreligious men indulge,

is also shaken off. Lastly, we are brought back to God, the Author of every blessing, that we may not suppose that anything excellent is to be found but in hilly for he has not received what is due to hilly until the world has been stripped of all wisdom, and strength, and righteousness, and, in a word, of all praise.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

Isaiah Chapter 3:1-26

1. For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,

1. Quoniam ecce Dominator Iehova exercituum, Ierosolymae et Judae vigorem et vim adimet, omnem vigorem panis, omnem vigorem aquae,

2. The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient,

2. Fortem, et virum bellicosum, judicem et prophetam, et divinum et senem,

3. The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.

3. Ducem quinquagenarium, et conspicuum, senatorem, eximium quemque inter artifices et disertum, (vel, intelligentem arcani sermonis.)

4. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

4. Et constituam pueros illis principes, et parvuli dominabuntur eis.

5. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

5. Violenter aget populus qisque in alium, vir in proximum suum; insolescet adolescens contra senem, contemptus adversus honoratum.

6. When a man shall take hold of his brother, of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand:

6. Cum apprehenderit quisque fratrem suum e familia patris sui, Vesti-

mentum, dicens, est tibi: Princeps noster eris: ruina haec in manu tua:

7. In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.

7. Is jurabit in illa die, dicens, Non ero curator; nam domi meae neque panis est, neque vestimentum; itaque ne me principem populi constituatis.

8. For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

8. Certe corruit Ierusalem, et Iuda cecidit; quoniam lingua eorum et studia contra Iehovam, ad exacerbandos oculos gloriae ejus.

9. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not: woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

9. Probatio vultus eorum respondet in ipsis: (vel adversus iposos:) peccatum suum, sicut Sodoma, praedicaverunt, neque dissimularunt. Vae animae ipsorum, quia accersiverunt sibi malum.

10. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

10. Dicite justo, bene erit, quia fructus manuum suarum comedent.

11. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

11. Vae impio, male erit; quoniam secundum opera manuum suarum rependetur ei.

12. As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

12. Populi mei exactores sunt parvuli, et mulieres illi dominuntur. Populo mi, qui te gubernant seducunt, et viam semitarum tuarum depravant.

13. The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.

13. Stat ad disceptandum Iehova, et praesto est ad judicandos populos.

14. The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

14. Iehova in judicium veniet cum senibus populi sui, et cum principibus ejus; et vos perdidistis vineam, estque rapina pauperis in domibus vestris.

15. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of hosts.

15. Quid vobis quod contunditis populum meum, et facies pauperum commolitis? dicit Dominus Iehova exercituum.

16. Moreover, the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:

16. Dicit quoque Iehova, Quoniam superbiunt filiae Sion, et porrecto collo incedunt, oculisque vacantibus, et ambulando plaudendoque ambulant, tinnitumque pedibus suis excitant:

17. Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts.

17. Ideo decalvabit Dominus verticem filiarum Sion, et Dominus pudenda earum nudabit.

18. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,

18. In die illa auferet Dominus ornamentum crepitaculorum, et reticula, et lunulas,

19. The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

19. Olfactoria, armillas, et mitras,

20. The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,

20. Tiaras, crurum ornatus, vittas, bullas, et inaures,

21. The rings, and nose-jewels,

21. Annulos et monilia narium,

22. The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins,

22. Mutatorias vestes, palliola, pepla, et acus,

23. The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails.

23. Specula, et sindones, calyptras et theristra.

24. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well-set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

24. Et erit pro suavi aromate putredo, et pro cinctura laceratio, et pro cincinnus calvitium; pro balteo cinctura sacci, adustio pro venustate.

25. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

25. Viri tui in gladio cadent, et robur tuum in bello.

26. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she, being desolate, shall sit upon the ground

26. Moerebunt ac lugebunt portae ejus; et ipsa desolata humi jacebit.

1. *For, behold.* We stated, a little before, that this is the same subject which the Prophet began to treat towards the close of the former chapter; for he warns the Jews that their wealth, however great it may be, will be of no avail to prevent the wrath of God, which, when it has once been kindled, will burn up all their defenses. Hence it follows that they are chargeable with excessive madness, when, in order to drive away their alarm, they heap up their forces, strength, and warlike accoutrements, consultations, armor, abundant supply of provisions, and other resources.

The demonstrative particle הנה, (*hinneth,*) "behold," is employed not only to denote certainty, but to express the shortness of time, as if Isaiah caused wicked men to be eye-witnesses of the event; for it frequently happens that

they who do not venture openly to ridicule the judgments of God pass them by, as if they did not at all relate to them, or were still at a great distance. "What is that to us?" say they; "Or, if they shall ever happen, why should we be miserable before the time? Will it not be time enough to think of those calamities when they actually befall us?" Since, therefore, wicked men, in order to set at naught the judgments of God, dig for themselves lurking-places of this description, on this account the Prophet presses them more closely and earnestly, that they may not imagine that the hand of God is distant, or vainly expect that it will be relaxed.

The Lord Jehovah of hosts will take away from Jerusalem. This is also the reason why he calls God the *Lord* and *Jehovah of Hosts*, that the majesty of God may terrify their drowsy and sluggish minds; for God has no need of titles, but our ignorance and stupidity must be aroused by perceiving his glory. First, the Prophet threatens that the Jews will have the whole produce of the harvest taken from them, so that they will perish through famine. Immediately afterwards he speaks in the same manner about military guards, and all that relates to the good order of the state. Hence we may infer that the Jews boasted of the prosperity which they at that time enjoyed, so as to entertain a foolish belief that they were protected against every danger. But Isaiah threatens that not only the whole country, but Jerusalem herself, which was the invincible fortress of the nation, will be exposed to God's chastisements; as if he had said, "The wrath of God will not only fall on every part of the body, but will pierce the very heart."

The power and the strength. [52] As to the words משען ומשענה, (*mashgnen umashgnenah*) which differ only in this respect, that one is in the masculine, and the other in the feminine genders, I have no doubt that the Prophet intended by this change to express more fully the certainty that supports of every kind would be broken; and therefore I have translated them the *power* and the *strength* [53] I do not agree with those interpreters who view it as referring to the persons of men, for it more appropriately denotes all supports, whatever may be their nature.

Still it is doubtful whether the Prophet limits it to food, or extends it to all other kinds of support, which he mentions immediately afterwards. But it is natural to suppose that by משען ומשענה, (*mashgnen umashgnenah*) is included generally everything that is necessary to sustain the order of the city or of the people; and next that, for the sake of explanation, he enumerates some particulars. The first clause therefore means, "God will take away every

[52] "Heb, 'the support masculine and the support feminine,' that is, every kind of support, whether great or small, strong or weak. Al kenitz, wal kanitzan; the wild beast, male and female: proverbially applied both to fishing and hunting; that is, I seized the prey, great or little, good or bad. From hence, as Schultens observes, is explained Isaiah 3:1, literally, the male and female stay; that is, the strong and weak, the great and small." Chappelow, quoted by Lowth.

[53] Calvin has imitated the Hebrew phrase by the rendering vigorem et vim; employing two words, of which one is in the masculine and the other in the feminine gender, and both begin with the same letter, while each of them denotes strength. Our English version has imitated the alliteration by stay and the staff — Ed.

help and assistance by which you think that you are upheld, so that nothing whatever may be left to support you."

Next, he adds, what will be their want and nakedness; and he begins, as we have said, with food and nourishment, which hold the first rank in sustaining the life of men. Now there are two ways in which God takes away the *strength* of bread and water; either when he deprives us of victuals, or when he takes from them the power of nourishing us; for unless God impart to our food a hidden power, the greatest abundance of it that we may possess will do us no good. (Leviticus 26:26.) Hence in another passage God is said to *break the staff of bread* (Ezekiel 4:16,) when *the bakers deliver the bread by weight*, and yet it does not yield satisfaction. And this comparison ought to be carefully observed, in order to inform us that, even though the belly be will filled, we shall always be hungry, there being nothing but the secret blessing of God that can feed or support us.

Though the hunger which the Prophet threatens in this passage may be understood to mean that the fields will be unproductive, or, that God will take away from the Jews every kind of food, yet, since the Prophets are generally accustomed to borrow their forms of expression from the law, this interpretation will apply very well. For he might simply have said, "I will take away the bread and wine;" but he expresses something more secret when he speaks of the *support of bread and water;* as if he had said that, though the people be not reduced to famine, yet God will make them, even while they are rioting in gluttony, to pine with hunger; for when the blessing of God is withdrawn, all its usefulness will vanish away. We may sum it up in this manner, that the people will have no food to strengthen them; either because they will not have bread and water, or, if they have, will derive no advantage from them.

2. *The strong man, and the man of war* He mentions other ends which contribute to the safety and good order either of nations or of cities. Of these he threatens that the Jews will be wholly deprived, so that they will neither have wisdom or bravery at battle, nor military forces abroad. He is not careful to attend to order, but is satisfied with giving a short abridgement, and mixes one subject with another. He begins with *men of war,* into whose hands was committed the defense of the country. God sometimes takes them away by death, and sometimes by making them soft and effeminate. The latter is more frequent, so that posterity degenerates from the bravery of ancestors, and those who were formerly courageous become, in process of time, cowardly and unfit for war. But we see also that the former sometimes happens, in consequence of which the boldest men suddenly lose heart.

The judge and the prophet. We know that, in the Hebrew language, the word *judge* stands for every kind of governors; and it is certain that by *prophets* are meant every kind of teachers. Accordingly, he threatens that the civil government will be set aside, and that instruction will be at an end, and that thus the Jews will be destroyed; and, indeed magistrates and

teachers hold the same place in the commonwealth that the two eyes do in the human body.

Aged diviners and old men [54] I consider the same rank as before to be denoted by *old men*, who are more fit for governing, because age brings along with it prudence, wisdom, and gravity. As to the word *diviner*, though it is used in a bad sense in Scripture, yet here it appears to be used in a good sense, when Isaiah enumerates those things which contribute to preserve the good order of a city and of a kingdoms. The term might, therefore, be applied to a soothsayer, who divines or penetrates into dark matters, not by omens or superstitious arts, but by extraordinary acuteness and skill. But as God forbade them to consult magicians, soothsayers, and *diviners*, (Deuteronomy 18:20,) and as Balaam himself declares that *there is no divination against Israel*, (Numbers 23:23,) I do not quarrel with those who would prefer to use the word *diviner* as denoting magical *divinations*; nor will there be any absurdity in enumerating among the punishments of the nation, that it would be deprived also of those aids which were sinful and criminal; for along with the altar and sacrifices Hosea mentions teraphim. [55] (Hosea 3:4.)

The captain of fifty. He employs this term agreeably to the custom which then prevailed; for as the Romans had *centurions*, or *captains of hundreds*, so the Jews had *captains*, or *rulers of fifties*, which the Greeks call πεντηκοντάρχους, but as that custom did not exist among the Latins, so the name was unknown among them. By *persons of venerable aspect* [56] he means those whose reputation for bravery gave then influence among the people.

The senator. [57] The word יועץ (*yognetz*,) for which I have put *senator*, may be applied to men in private life who are eminent for prudence; but as it is strictly applicable to *counsellors*, who discharge a public office, I resolved not to depart from the common opinion.

The sinful artificer. Because the mechanical arts are not less advantageous for upholding the prosperity of a nation, and for the support of animal life, Isaiah likewise mentions that, through the want of them, the destruction of the Jews is at hand.

And the eloquent. [58] he word which is placed last in the enumeration has been variously explained by commentators. Literally it means, "skilled in muttering, or in a subdued tone of speech. "Now since the heathen oracles give out their replies by whisperings or in *mutterings*, some think that

[54] And the prudent and the ancient. — Eng. Ver

[55] "The Prophet," says Calvin, "seems to speak here of idols, for he afterwards adds teraphim; and teraphim were no doubt images, (Genesis 31:19, 30) which the superstitious used while worshipping their fictitious gods, as we read in many places. The King of Babylon is said to have consulted the teraphim; and it is said that Rachel stole the teraphim, and shortly after Laban calls the teraphim his gods." Com. on the Twelve Minor Prophets, vol 1, p. 130.

[56] The honourable man. — Eng. Ver

[57] The counsellor. — Eng. Ver.

[58] In a marginal reading of the text our author renders this phrase by skilled in mysterious discourse. "The powerful in persuasion." — Lowth. "The expert dealer in charms." — Bishop Stock. " is to whisper or mutter certain words, by which jugglers pretended to charm noxious creatures, and to deprive them of their power of hurting." — Parkhurst.

the word denotes *enchantments*. A better exposition is given by those who interpret לחש (*lahash*) to mean *secret designs*; but as a style which is both mysterious and weighty may be not inappropriately denoted by this word, I had no hesitation in rendering it by the word *eloquent*. Yet if it be thought preferable to view it as denoting wise and cautious men, who, though not qualified for public speaking, give private advices of what may profitably be done, I have no objection.

We must attend to this comprehensive description of a well-regulated state. For Isaiah has placed first corn and other things necessary for bodily support; secondly, military forces; thirdly, skill in governing a nation and the various parts of civil government; fourthly, the prophetical office; and fifthly, the mechanical arts. With these ornaments does God adorn the nations which he intends to render safe and sound; and, on the other hand, he takes them from those nations which he intends utterly to destroy. Let us, therefore, know that everything which we find to be profitable for the support of life flows from the undeserved goodness of God. Hence also there follows another instruction, namely, that we ought to beware lest, by our ingratitude, we deprive ourselves of those excellent gifts of God.

4. *And I will appoint children to be their princes* [59] That the vengeance of God may be more manifest, he now describes how sad and wretched will be the change, when competent and faithful rulers shall be taken from among them and God shall put cowardly and worthless persons in their room. By *children* are meant not only those who are so by age, but also by mind and conduct, such as delicate and effeminate persons, who are destitute of courage and cannot wield the sword entrusted to them. He does not here carry out the contrast, clause by clause; for he thought it enough to point out one way in which a commonwealth is speedily ruined; that is, when its rulers are weak and foolish men like *children*, who have no gravity or wisdom. But it must be laid down as a principle, that no man is qualified for governing a commonwealth unless he have been appointed to it by God, and be endued with uncommon excellence. Plato, too, understood this matter well: for though, being a heathen, he had no true knowledge of this kind, yet his quick sagacity enabled him to perceive that no man is fit and qualified for public government which has not been prepared for it by God in an extraordinary measure; for public government proceeds from God alone, and in like manner every part of it must be upheld by him. Besides, they whom the Lord does not govern have nothing left for them but to be *children*, or rather to be twice children, that is, destitute of all skill and of all wisdom.

Now the Lord executes this vengeance in two ways; because it frequently happens, that when we appear to have those who are grave and skillful in business, no sooner do they come to action than they stumble like blind men, and have no more wisdom than children; for the Lord deprives them of that remarkable ability which they had formerly received from him, and

[59] And I will give children to be their princes. — Eng. Ver.

stuns them, as if he had struck them with a thunderbolt. But sometimes the Lord proceeds more gently, and gradually removes men of extraordinary ability, who were fit for ruling, and commits the reins of government to those who were unable to govern a family, or even a single child liken these things happen, it is very certain that destruction is not far off.

Besides, it deserves our notice, as I lately mentioned, that a well-regulated commonwealth is a singular gift of God, when the various orders of judges and senators, soldiers, captains, artificers, and teachers, aid each other by mutual intercourse, and join in promoting the general safety of the whole people. For when the Prophet threatens, and pronounces it to be a very severe punishment, that these things shall be taken away, he plainly shows that those eminent and uncommon gifts of God are necessary for the safety of nations. Accordingly, he here commends the office of magistrates, and captains, and soldiers, and likewise the office of teachers. This deserves our notice in opposition to fanatics, who endeavor to banish from the world the power of using the sword, together with all civil government and order. But the Prophet declares that these things are not taken away or removed unless when God is angry. It follows, therefore, that they who oppose, and, as far as lies in their power, set aside or destroy such benefits, are wicked men and enemies of the public safety.

He likewise commends instruction, without which a commonwealth cannot stand; for, as Solomon says,

where prophecy is not, the nation must be ruined. (Proverbs 29:18.)

At the same time, he commends the mechanical arts, agriculture, manual occupations of every description, architecture, and such like, which we cannot dispense with; for all artisans of every kind, who contribute what is useful to men, are the servants of God, and have the same end in view with those who were formerly mentioned, namely, the preservation of mankind

The same thing must be said about war; for, although lawful, war ought to be nothing else than an attempt to obtain peace; yet sometimes an engagement is unavoidable, that they who have the power of the sword may use it, and defend themselves and their followers by arms. War, therefore, is not in itself to be condemned; for it is the means of preserving the commonwealth. But neither must eloquence be despised; for it is often needed, both in public and in private life, that something may be clearly and fully explained and demonstrated to be true. This is also reckoned among the gifts and important blessings of God, when a state abounds in wise and eloquent men,

who can contend with the adversaries in the gate.
(Psalm 127:5.)

This passage may be thus summed up, "When God takes away those gifts, and alters the condition of a people, in whatever way this takes place, either by changing the form of government, or by taking away the rulers, the anger of God ought to be acknowledged;" for, as Hosea says,

He Taketh Away Kings In His Wrath,
And Appointeth Them In His Indignation. (Hosea 13:11.)

Let us not, therefore, ascribe these changes to chance or other causes.

5. *The people will oppress every man his neighbor* He describes the utmost confusion, which was about to overtake the Jews, when order was destroyed or relaxed; and this will happen to all nations, as soon as government is removed or falls to the ground. We know how great is the wantonness of the human mind, when every man is hurried along by ambition and, in short, how furious the lawless passions are when they are laid under no restraint. There is no reason, therefore, to wonder if, when the judgment-seats have been laid low, every man insults his neighbor, cruelty abounds, and licentiousness rages without control. If we considered this wisely, we would set a higher value on the kindness of God, when he preserves us in any tolerable condition, and does not allow us to be lamentably ruined. Hence it is evident that they who direct or apply their minds to sap the foundations of civil government are the open enemies of mankind, or rather, they are in no respect different from wild beasts.

But this confusion described by the Prophet is most disgraceful, that a child shall dare to insult an old man, that the dregs of a low and despised multitude shall rise up against nobles and men of high reputation; for it is the most preposterous of all things that modesty shall be thrown away, so that they who were worthy of veneration shall be treated with contempt. And yet this spectacle, so shameful and revolting, must unavoidably be exhibited when civil government has been overthrown. As to my rendering of the verb נגש (*niggash*) in an active sense, *to oppress*, I was forced to adopt it, for otherwise the meaning of the passage would have been imperfect.

6. *When every man shall take hold of his brother* As this verse is closely connected with the former, and proceeds without interruption as far as the phrase *he shall swear,* the particle כי (*ki*) is evidently taken for an adverb of time. For Isaiah, intending to express the extreme wretchedness of the people, says that there will be no man who will undertake to govern them, though he were requested to do so. To such an extent unquestionably does ambition prevail among men, that many are always eager to contend for power, and endeavor to obtain it even at the hazard of their lives. In every age the whole world has been convulsed by the desire of obtaining kingly power; and there is not a villain so inconsiderable as not to contain men who willingly undertake to become rulers; and all this proves that man is an animal desirous of honor. Hence it follows that everything is in a deplorable condition, when that dignity is not only despised but obstinately rejected; for the mournful calamity has reached its lowest depth, when that which men naturally desire with the greatest ardor is universally disclaimed.

Isaiah mentions other circumstances of an aggravating nature, tending to show that the Jews will rather lay aside every feeling of humanity and compassion than undertake the office of rulers. If one shall refuse to rule

foreign nations, it will not perhaps be thought so wonderful; but when the preservation of brethren is in question, it is excessively unkind to decline the honorable office. It is therefore a proof that matters are utterly desperate, when the office of ruler is disdainfully rejected by that man to whom his kinsmen appeal, by entreating his support and throwing themselves on his protection. Now, since princes are commonly selected on account of their wealth, or, at least, kingly power is not usually bestowed on any who have not a moderate share of riches, lest poverty should lay them open to contempt and reproach, or drive them to unworthy means of gain, he likewise adds this circumstance, that though they are able to bear the burden, still they will not accept of it; as if he had said, "Not only the common people, but also the nobles and the wealthy, decline the task of government."

The phrase *take hold* is likewise emphatic, for it means to "lay hands" on a person; as if Isaiah had said that those who shall wish to obtain a prince will not employ flatteries and entreaties, but will proceed with disorder and violence to seize on some person, and endeavor to compel him to occupy the throne.

Let this ruin be under thy hand. This last circumstance is not less weighty. The meaning is, "At least if you have any compassion or humanity, do not fail to aid us in our extreme wretchedness." For when a multitude of men, like a scattered flock, bewailing with tears their ruinous condition, implore the protection of a shepherd, he who will not stretch out a helping hand must have a heart as hard as iron. Some translate it as if, by a figure of speech, (hypallage,) one word had been put for another, *Let thy hand be under this ruin*; that is, for the sake of upholding it.

7. *In that day shall he swear.* The word *swear* expresses an absolute and vehement refusal; for frequently he who at first excuses himself, or declares that he will not do it, at length yields to entreaty; but he who, in refusing, employs an oath, shuts out all hope, because he gives them to understand that his purpose is firm and decided. Perhaps, too, the phrase *in that day*, means "*immediately*, without any delay, and without long consultation;" but as it may also be viewed demonstratively, (δεικτικῶς,) as pointing out more fully the time of the calamity, I do not express a strong opinion. The general meaning is obvious, that their ruinous condition will be past remedy.

As to the word חבש, (*chobesh*,) though commentators differ in their interpretation of it, yet I cheerfully concur with those who think that the metaphor is here borrowed from surgeons; [60] for nothing can more fully meet the case. It is as if one, to whom application had been made to heal a sick man, should declare that he has no skill in the art of healing, or that the disease is too inveterate to admit of being cured.

[60] (chabash)חבש literally signifies to bind I will not be a binder; that is, ``I will not be one who binds up your wounds.'' Jarchi renders it, ``I will not be a binder, that is, I will not be one of those who bind up.'' His annotator, Breithaupt, explains it thus: ``that is, who employ any remedy, or apply a plaster, teaching in the school or synagogue what should be done, and what should be avoided.'' This accords with the rendering, healer, as in the English version, which is supported by that of Lowth, ``I will not be a healer of thy breaches.'' --- Ed

The next copulative ו, (*vau*,) means for; as if he had said, "And undoubtedly I have not ability to do so." [61] His meaning therefore is, that the state of affairs will be so desperate, that no man, even when matters are at the worst, will venture to take measures for their defense.

8. *For Jerusalem is ruined.* Lest it should be thought that God is excessively cruel, when he punishes his people with such severity, the Prophet here explains briefly the reason of the calamity; as if he had said that the destruction of that ungodly people is righteous, because in so many ways they have persisted in provoking God. And thus he cuts off all ground of complaint; for we know with what insolent fury the world breaks out, when it is chastised with more than ordinary severity. He says that they were ready, both by words and by actions, to commit every kind of crimes. In speaking of their destruction, he employs such language as if it had already taken place; though the past may be taken for the future, as in many other passages.

To provoke the eyes of his glory. This mode of expression aggravates the crime, as denotes that they had intentionally resolved to insult God; for those things which are done before our eyes, if they are displeasing to us, are the more offensive. It is true that wicked men mock God, as if they were able to deceive him; but as nothing, however it may be concealed, escapes his view, Isaiah brings it as a reproach against them, that they openly and shamelessly, in his very presence, indulged in the commission of crimes. The word *glory* also deserves our attention; for it is a proof of extraordinary madness, if we have no feeling of reverence, when the majesty of God is presented to our view. If God had so illustriously displayed his *glory* before the nation of Israel, that they ought justly to have been humbled, if they had any remains of shame or of modesty. Whatever, then, may be the murmurings of wicked men against God, or their complaints of his severity, the cause of all the calamities which they endure will be found to be in their own hands.

9. *The proof of their countenance will answer in them,* or, *will answer against them* [62] As the Prophet had to do with impudent and brazen-faced hypocrites, who impudently boasted that they were good men; so he says that their countenance testifies what kind of persons they are, and that it will not be necessary to bring witnesses from a distance, in order to prove their wickedness; for *to answer* means "to bear testimony," or "to confess." Although, therefore, they disguise their face and countenance, so that they frequently deceive others, yet God compels them to show and prove what they are; so that, in spite of themselves they carry, as it were, in their forehead a mark of their deceit and hypocrisy.

Some explain it, that their crimes are so manifest that they cannot avoid seeing, as in a mirror, the baseness which they desire to conceal But the former meaning is confirmed by what immediately follows, that they *declared*

[61] (ובביתי,ubebethi) and in my house; that is, for in my house is neither bread nor clothing. --- Ed

[62] See p. 122.

their sin in the same manner as the inhabitants of Sodom. By these words he intimates that they devoted themselves to iniquity in such a manner, that they boasted of their transgressions without any shame; as if it had been honorable and praiseworthy in them to trample on every distinction between right and wrong, and not to indulge in every kind of wickedness. On this account he compares them to the inhabitants of *Sodom*, (Genesis 18:20; 19:5,) who were so much blinded by their lusts, that they rushed, with brutish stupidity, to everything base. So, then, this is *the answer of the countenance*, which he mentioned a little before, that they carry about with them plain tokens of impiety, which are abundantly sufficient to prove their guilt.

Woe unto their soul! Here he declares what was formerly mentioned, that the whole cause of their calamities is to be found in themselves; for by their sins and iniquities they provoked the Lord; and consequently that they have no means of evasion, that it is useless to contrive idle pretenses, because the evil itself dwells in their bones; as if he had said, "God cannot be accused, as if he punished you unjustly. Acknowledge that it has been done by yourselves; give glory to a righteous judge and lay the whole blame on yourselves."

10. *Say, it shall be well with the righteous* Before quoting the opinions of others, I shall point out the true meaning As punishments so severe commonly present to pious minds an exceedingly sharp temptation, and especially since hardly any public calamities occur which do not involve good men along with the bad; so the Prophet — at least, in my opinion — reminds them of the providence of God, which never confounds anything, but even, when there is apparent confusion, never ceases to distinguish between good and bad men.

But there are various ways in which this passage is explained; for some render it, *"Say to the righteous man, because he is good, therefore he shall eat the fruit of his hands."* From that interpretation this meaning is obtained: "I wish and command the godly to be of good cheer; for with whatever severity I may punish the crimes of the nation, still it shall be well with the godly." But a more suitable meaning is this: *Say*; that is, hold it to be a settled point; for in Scripture *to say* often means *to think*, and *to be convinced*; as David writes, I said, I will take heed to thy ways, (Psalm 39:1,) and in a thousand instances of the same kind; so that he does not bid them tell the righteous man, but he bids every man be fully convinced, that happy will be the condition of the righteous man, though he may only appear to be unhappy.

Besides, I consider טוב, (*tob*,) to mean a happy and prosperous condition; as in the former verse he employed the word רעה, (*ragnah*) with which טוב is now contrasted; and thus I do not think that רעה, (*ragnah*,) means wickedness, but a miserable condition. Now since it literally runs, *Say to the righteous man*, כי טוב: (ki tob,) *that it shall be well* either the particle כי, (*ki*,) has an affirmative sense, as in many other passages, or it appears to be

superfluous, though the probability is, that it is intended for confirmation. *Surely it shall be well with the righteous man*; that is, let every ground of doubt be removed, and let us be fully convinced, that the condition of the righteous man will be most excellent and prosperous. It is difficult to believe this, and therefore it is added, *he shall eat the fruit of his doings*; that is, he shall not be defrauded of the reward of his good conduct. Others consider to say as meaning *to exhort*, and render the two words, כי טוב (*ki tob*,) *that he will do well*; but I reject it as a forced interpretation.

11. *Woe unto the wicked!* It shall be ill with him. He brings forward this clause as a contrast to the former one; from which it may be easily inferred what was the design of the Prophet, namely, to comfort the godly, and to terrify the wicked by the judgment of God. For when an uncommonly severe calamity occurs, which attacks all without discrimination, we doubt whether it be by the providence of God, or, on the contrary, by blind chance, that the world is governed. On this account godly men fear and dread that the same destruction which overtakes the wicked will ruin them also. Others think that it is of no importance whether a man be good or bad, when they see both classes visited by pestilence, war, famine and other calamities. And hence arises the wicked thought, that there is no difference between the rewards of the good and of the bad; and in the midst of these gloomy thoughts carnal appetites lead many to despair.

Accordingly, the Prophet shows that the judgment of God is right, that men may continue to fear God, and may be aware that those who, in the expectation of escape of punishment, provoke God, will not pass unpunished. He likewise exhorts them to ascribe to God the praise of justice; as if he had said, "Think not that blind chance rules in the world, or that God punishes with blind violence, and without any regard to justice, but hold it as a principle fully settled in your minds, that *it shall be well with the righteous man*; for God will repay him what he hath promised, and will not disappoint him of his hope. On the other hand, believe that the condition of the wicked man will be most wretched, for he brings on himself the evil which must at length fall on his head."

By these words the Prophet, at the same time, charges the people with stupidity in not perceiving the judgment of God; for they suffered the punishments of their crimes, and yet hardened themselves under them, as if they had been altogether devoid of feeling. Now there cannot befall us anything worse than that we should be hardened against chastisements, and not perceive that God chastiseth us. When we labor under such stupidity, our case is almost hopeless.

12. *The oppressors of any people are children* [63] Here also is reproved the madness and sottishness of the people, because they shut their eyes at noon-day. There is nothing which men are more reluctant to allow than to have a yoke laid on them; nor do they willingly submit to be governed

[63] As for my people, children are their oppressors. — Eng. Ver

by nobles. Feeble and cowardly, therefore, must be the minds of those who obey delicate and effeminate men, and permit themselves to be oppressed by them; nor can it be doubted that God has struck with a spirit of cowardice those who offer their shoulders, like asses, to bear burdens. The power of a tyrant must indeed be endured, even by men of courage; but the reproach which Isaiah brings against the Jews is, that while they obstinately shake off the yoke of God, they are ready to yield abject submission to men, and to perform any services, however shameful or degrading.

For the Jews could not complain that they were compelled by violence, when of their own accord they obeyed those whose authority they would gladly have declined. Hence it is evident that they were struck by the hand of God, and were shaken with terror, so that they had no strength either of body or of mind.

This is also the vengeance which God had formerly threatened by Moses; for the general doctrine of Moses, as we have already said, is continually alluded to by the prophets. [64] or how was it possible that men who had the power of resistance should of their own accord undergo a slavery from which they would willingly have escaped, had not God deprived them of understanding and forethought that he might in this manner take vengeance on their crimes? Whenever, therefore, anything of this kind shall befall us; let us not imagine that it came by chance. On the contrary, whenever it shall happen that we are governed by men who are of no estimation, and which are more insignificant than children, let us acknowledge the wrath of the Lord, if we do not choose that the Prophet shall charge us with the grossest stupidity.

They who govern thee [65] He continues to teach the same doctrine, that when God lets loose the reins against the wicked, so as to disturb everything, he shows that he is highly offended at the Jews; for if they had enjoyed his favor, there was reason to hope that his government would be most holy and blessed. At the same time it is probable that the common herd of men were so foolishly devoted to their rulers, that they revered as oracles both their injunctions and their conduct; and hence arose all the corruption that everywhere prevailed. Since, therefore, the contagion was spreading farther without being perceived by the people, Isaiah cries aloud that they ought to guard against the governors themselves, who corrupt and destroy the people.

Others explain it, *they who bless thee*; but as the participle which he employs may be taken from ישר, (*yashar*,) which signifies *to rule*, I shall rather adopt that interpretation, for it is more agreeable to the context. [66]

[64] Our author appears to have particularly in his eye, Leviticus 26:36, And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. — Ed.

[65] They which lead thee. — (Eng. Ver.) The marginal reading is, they which call thee blessed. — Ed.

[66] The reading of the Septuagint is, , they who bless you. Undoubtedly מאשרים comes from ,אשר and not from ,ישר which in the corresponding participle gives .מישרים From the Kal of ,אשר to go, the Pihel, taking a Hiphil meaning, denotes to cause to go, or to lead. Not improbably our Author meant that the one verb borrows one of its meanings

I do acknowledge that the false prophets flattered the people, but I see no reason why their flatteries should be mentioned here. But it applies very well to the rulers and heads, that they were the cause of the destruction; for as princes are raised to their office for the sake of the public safety, so no plague is more destructive than when they are bad men, and rule according to their own caprice. He says, therefore, that they who rule are the causes of the evils, and that they corrupt everything, since it was their duty to correct other men, and to point out the way by their own example.

13. *Jehovah standeth up to plead* So long as wickedness rages without control, and the Lord sends no relief from on high, we think that he is idle and has forgotten his duty. More especially, when the nobles themselves are spared, he appears to grant them liberty to commit sin, as if they were most sacred persons that must not be touched. Accordingly, after having complained of the princes, he adds that the Lord will do what his authority demands, and will not permit such flagrant crimes to pass unpunished. For there is hardly any conduct more offensive, or more fitted to disturb our minds, than when the worst examples of every sort are publicly exhibited by magistrates, while no man utters a syllable against them, but almost all give their approbation. We then ask, Where is God, whose glory, a great part of which, consisting in authority, is taken away, ought to have been illustriously displayed by men of that rank? Isaiah meets this difficulty by saying, "Though the nation is wicked, yet because the princes themselves are very greatly corrupted, and even pollute the whole nation by their vices, God sits as judge in heaven, and will at length call them to account, and assign to every one his reward." Although he does not exempt the multitude from guilt, yet that the sources of the evils may be known, he particularly attacks the rulers, and threatens them with the punishment which they deserved.

14. *The Lord will enter into judgement with the ancients of his people.* Formerly he had erected for God a throne from which he might plead. Now he says that *he will enter into judgment.* How? *with the ancients.* There might have been a slight allusion to lawful assemblies, in which older men sit as God's deputies; but I assent to the opinion more commonly entertained, that God contends against the *ancients* of his people. This passage, therefore, corresponds to the saying of David,

God will stand in the assembly of the gods (Psalm 82:1; [67])

that is, though it may now be thought that princes do everything with impunity, and though there be no one to restrain their caprice and their lawless passions, yet one day they will feel that God is above them, and will render an account to him of all their actions

These reproofs, undoubtedly, the judges of that time were very unwilling to hear. They have no wish, and do not think that it is right, that any one should treat them with such sharpness and severity; for they wish that

from the other; but this would need proof. --- Ed

[67] Like some other quotations of our Author, this is made from memory, and is not quite accurate. — Ed.

everything should be at their disposal, that their will should be held as a law, and that they should be allowed to do whatever they choose; that all men ought to flatter and applaud them, and to approve of their very worst actions. They think that no man is a judge of their actions, and do not yield subjection to God himself. Since, therefore, they are so unbridled that they neither endure any advices nor any threatening the Prophet summons them to the judgment seat of God.

And with their princes They are honorably described, by way of acknowledgment, as the chosen *princes* of the people. This also deserves attention; for they thought that, on account of their rank, they enjoyed a kind of privilege which set them free from the restraints of law, and that though heathen kings and princes might give an account of their actions, they, on the contrary, were sacred persons. They thought, therefore, that they were beyond the reach of all reproof, and ought not to be addressed, like heathen men, by threats and terrors. On this account Isaiah expressly declares, that the Lord will not only call to account every kind of princes, but especially the proud hypocrites to whose care he had committed his people.

And you have destroyed the vineyard [68] The metaphor of a vine is very common, where a nation, and especially the nation of Israel, is the subject. (Psalm 80:8; Jeremiah 2:21.) And by this word the Prophet now shows their crime to be double, because they paid no more regard to the people whom God had loved with extraordinary affection that if they had ruled over a heathen nation. The pronoun *you* is likewise emphatic; for he addresses the vine-dressers themselves, who, instead of devoting themselves, as they ought to have done, to the cultivation of the vine, devoured it like wild beasts. Accordingly, he represents this to be a great aggravation of their cruelty; for how treacherous was it to *destroy* what they ought to have preserved and protected? By this comparison the Lord shows how great care he takes of his own people, and how warmly he loves them; not only because the Church is called his vine and inheritance, but by declaring that he will not endure the treachery and wickedness of those who have ruled over it tyrannically.

The spoil of the poor is in your houses. He adds one circumstance, by which the other parts of their life might be known, that they had in their houses the *prey and spoil of the poor.* Now the palace of princes ought to resemble a sanctuary: for they occupy the dwelling place of God, which ought to be sacred to all. It is, therefore, the grossest sacrilege to turn a sanctuary into a den of thieves. He represents still more strongly their criminality by adding *of the poor*; for it is the most wicked of all acts of cruelty to plunder a poor and needy man, who cannot defend himself, and who ought rather to have been protected.

[68] Ye have consumed my vineyard. — Lowth Ye have eaten bare my vineyard. — Stock ϒ ; And why did you burn up my vineyard? — Sept. " (bagnar,) in its usual acceptation of burning, does not agree with the sense of a passage, which represents people making a profit of what they consume. Understand it, therefore, of clearing away the productions of the soil, as cattle do when they eat down the grass." — Rosenmuller

15. *What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces?* He mentions also other particulars, from which it is evident that they ruled in a haughty, cruel and oppressive manner. It was not necessary that the Prophet should describe minutely everything deserving reproof in the princes; for from these few circumstances it is evident with what injustice and cruelty and tyranny they ruled. But to whom shall the poor betake themselves but to the magistrate, who ought to be the father of his country and the protector of the wretched? On this account he employs a vehement interrogation, *What?* as if he had said, "What effrontery is this! What cruelty and barbarity, to abuse the mean condition of the poor, so as to have no compassion on them!" By two comparisons he describes their cruel oppression mingled with pride.

Saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts. That the reproof may have all the weight that it ought to have, he brings forward God as speaking; for there is an implied contrast that these things should not be viewed as coming from the mouth of men, but that the accusation proceeds from God himself, and that he pursues those who are guilty of such injustice, and will at length take vengeance on them. Because those who have been exalted to any kind of honor conduct themselves so haughtily as to disdain every direction and advice, he therefore meets their pride by bringing forward the majesty of God, that they may not venture to despise his earnest and severe threatenings. Yet let us remember that this passage ought not to be understood as if the Prophet were speaking only about the mercy of God; for after having threatened vengeance indiscriminately on all, he particularly mentions those who are their heads, in order to show that no man can escape the arm of God: and here he employs what is called the argument from the greater to the less." How would the Lord spare the lowest of the people, when he punishes even the princes themselves, because they have *destroyed the vineyard?"*

16. *Because the daughters of Zion are haughty.* Next follows another threatening against the ambition, luxury, and pride of women. On these points the Prophet has not followed an exact order, but reproves sometimes one vice and sometimes another, as the subject appears to require, and afterwards sums up what he has said in a few words, as he did in the seventh verse of the first chapter. He therefore pronounces censure on gorgeous robes and superfluous ornaments, which were undoubted proofs of vanity and ostentation. Wherever dress and splendor are carried to excess, there is evidence of ambition, and many vices are usually connected with it; for whence comes luxury in men and women but from pride?

And walk with stretched forth neck. First, then, he justly declares pride to be the source of the evil, and points it out by the sign, that is, by their gait; that the women *walk with stretched-forth neck* For as it is a sign of modesty to have a down-cast look, (as even heathen writers have declared,) so to have excessively holy looks is a sign of insolence; and when a woman lifts up her head it can betoken nothing but pride. The Prophet certainly acts wisely in beginning at the very fountain; for if he had begun by mentioning signs, such

as dress, gait, and matters of that sort, it might have been easy to reply that still the mind was pure and upright; and that if their dress was somewhat too elegant and splendid, that was not a sufficient reason for approaching them with such bitter language, and summoning them to the judgement seat of God. Accordingly, in order to meet their unfounded accusations, he lays open the inward disease, which is manifested in the whole of their outward dress.

And wandering eyes. [69] What he adds about *wandering eyes* denotes shameless lust, which for the most part is expressed by the *eyes*; for unchaste eyes are the heralds of an unchaste heart; but the *eyes* of chaste women are sedate, and not wandering or unsteady.

And make a tinkling with their feet This is a part of the indecent gesture by which wantonness is discovered. But it is not easy to say whether the women wore on their sandals some tinkling ornaments which made a noise as they walked, or whether they imitated the dancing women by a measured step; for the form of dresses since that time has been greatly changed. Yet I readily adopt the interpretation that they made a noise in walking, for this is very plainly expressed by the word employed.

17. *Therefore will the Lord make bald* [70] *the crown of the head* Here the particle ו, (vau,) which signifies *and*, is put for *therefore*; for he threatens that, since neither gentle advices nor any words can reform them, the Lord will deal with them in a very different manner, and will not only employ sharp and severe language, but will advance in dreadful array, with an armed band, to take vengeance. Accordingly, as they had manifested their obstinacy from *head to foot*, so he declares that the Lord will exhibit the marks of his vengeance in every part of their body. He therefore begins with the head, where ornament is chiefly bestowed, and afterwards takes notice of the other parts.

It is worthy of notice that the Prophet had good reason for reproving, with so great earnestness and vehemence, the luxury of women; for while they are chargeable with many vices, they are most of all inflamed with mad eagerness to have fine clothes. Covetous as they naturally are, still they spare no expense for dressing in a showy manner, and even use spare diet, and deprive themselves of what nature requires, that their clothes may be more costly and elegant. So grievously are they corrupted by this vice, that it goes beyond every other.

History tells us what vast crowds the women brought together on account of the Oppian Law [71] which some wished to maintain, and others to repeal;

[69] Wanton eyes. Heb. Deceiving with their eyes. — Eng. Ver. "Leering with their eyes — Nictitantes oculis: from סקר, Chald., oculis vagari. This is Abarbanel's interpretation, approved of by Parkhurst and Rosenmuller. Bishop Lowth derives משקרות from שקר, to falsify, and translates it, falsely setting of their eyes with paint, according to the eastern fashion of tinting the eyelids, on the inside, black with stibium, called by the natives al-cahol. But the object of the poet in this place is to describe, not ornaments, but affected motions of the body." --- Bishop Stock

[70] Smite with a scab. — Eng. Ver.

[71] "The Oppian Law," so called from the tribune, Caius Oppius, who proposed it, was enacted during the disastrous wars with Hannibal, about 213 years before the Christian era. It was to this effect, "That no woman should wear on her person more than half an ounce of gold, or

and that transaction was not conducted with any gravity or moderation in consequence of the crowds of women. But we need not go far to find examples; for they are innumerable in almost every nation, and it is a vice which has been very common in every age. As we are dexterous and sharp-sighted in contriving apologies for defending our luxury and extravagance, the Prophet, on that account, has pointed his finger at the source of all the evils, namely, that mad ambition by which men are hurried along to obtain public notice, and to arrive at eminence above others; for, in order that they may be better known, they wish to outshine their neighbors by the elegance of their dress, that they may draw the eyes of others upon them.

Having pointed to the source of the evil, the Prophet descends to many particulars for the purpose of bringing to public view the fooleries of women, and enumerates a long catalogue of them, to show that, in gathering them together, nothing can exceed the curiosity which dwells in woman. Indeed there is no end to those contrivances; and it was not without reason that the ancients called the collection of a woman's ornaments *a world*; [72] for if they were collected into one heap, they would be almost as numerous as the parts of the world. On this account the Prophet appears to search the women's chests, and to bring into public view the gaudy trifles which they have treasured up in them, that their extravagant delight and boasting of these things may render their idleness and folly more evident to all. There is no superfluity, therefore, in this enumeration, though spread out in many words, by which their lawless desires are proved to be insatiable.

As to the particulars, I shall not stay to explain them, especially as the best Hebrew scholars have doubts about some of them, and cannot distinguish with certainty the forms of those ornaments. It is enough if we understand the general import and design of the Prophet; namely, that he heaps up and enumerates these trifles in order that the prodigious variety of them may disclose their luxury and ambition, so as to leave them without any excuse. It would be the height of impudence to allege that the contrivances made by the childish vanity of women, beyond what nature requires, are necessary for protecting the body. How many things are here enumerated which are not demanded by nature or necessity or propriety! What is the

use garments of variegated colors, or ride in a carriage in any city or town, or within a mile's distance of one, unless when she was going to observe the public festivals." This law, though extorted by the hard necessities of the state, was all along regarded by many persons as harsh and tyrannical, and, after producing extraordinary commotions, was overwhelmed by the tide of public opinion. Livy informs us (34:1) that "ladies, not restrained either by modesty or by the authority of their husbands," and neglecting the privacy which belonged to the customs of that age, assembled in a tumultuous manner, and publicly solicited the votes of the consuls and praetors, and other persons in office, for the repeal of the law. Ultimately their chief opponent was Cato, who spoke with all his ability and eloquence, but with a sternness peculiar to his character, and increased by the nature of the question under discussion. He was overmatched by the tact and resources of Valerius, who brought to his aid a considerable amount of historical information, placed the popular arguments in an advantageous light, and succeeded in obtaining an almost unanimous repeal of the law, when it had been twenty years in force. Our Author immediately afterwards refers to the arguments employed on that occasion. — Ed

[72] In the speech already mentioned, Valerius wittily alludes to this antiquated use of the Latin word mundus (a world.) "Our ancestors," he says, "gave to it the appellation of a woman's world." Hunc mundum muliebrem appellarunt majores nostra — Ed.

use of chains, bracelets, earrings and other things of the same sort? Hence it is plain enough that a superfluous collection of such ornaments admits of no excuse; that it gives evidence of excessive luxury which ought to be suppressed or restrained; and that frequently they are unchaste contrivances for weakening the mind and exciting lust. We need not wonder, therefore, that the Prophet speaks so sharply, and threatens severe punishments, against this vice.

24. *Instead of a sweet smell there shall be stink.* It is evident that the country here described abounds in aromatic herbs; and there is no reason to doubt that in pleasant smells, as well as in other matters, they were luxurious. We see that those nations which are farthest removed from the east are not prevented either by distance or by expense from indulging in that kind of luxury. What may be expected to happen in those places where they are abundant? That they will excite lust and promote luxury is beyond all doubt He means, therefore, that ointments and *sweet smells* were abused by them in a variety of ways; for the sinful desires of men are ingenious in their contrivances, and can never be satisfied.

Instead of a girdle a rent. Others have rendered it *a falling off*; because the Lord will ungird them. He intends to contrast things which are exceedingly opposite to each other; that as the women formerly were most carefully girt and adorned when they walked, they shall henceforth be torn and naked. He likewise contrasts *baldness* with *curls*; because they arranged their hair not in a modest but an extravagant fashion. Again, *a belt* is contrasted with *sackcloth.* Whether it was a belt, or some other kind of binding, it is certain that the Prophet meant *a girdle*, which was held in high estimation. Again, *burning* is contrasted with *beauty*; because fashionable ladies hardly venture to expose themselves to the sun's rays, for fear of being sunburned; and he tells us that this will happen to them. In short, both men and women are instructed to make a sober use of the gifts of Goal, both in food and in clothing, and in the whole conduct of life. For the Lord cannot endure extravagance, and absolutely must inflict severe punishment on account of it; for it cannot be restrained by a lighter chastisement.

25. *Thy men shall fall by the sword.* He directs his discourse to Jerusalem and to the whole kingdom of Judah; for, after having demonstrated that the whole body is infected with a plague, and that no part of it is free from disease, and after leaving not even spared the women, he returns to the general doctrine. It would be improper that more than one husband should be assigned to one woman. Besides, what immediately follows applies exclusively to this nation. He particularly describes the punishment, that God will bring down by wars the whole strength of the people.

26. *Her gates shall mourn and lament.* Hence arises the *mourning of the gates*, which, he threatens, will take place when they have met with their calamities; for he means, that where there were great crowds and multitudes, nothing but a dismal solitude will be found. We know that at that time

public meetings were held at *the gates*; and, therefore, as the gates sometimes rejoice at the multitude of citizens, so they are said *to mourn* on account of their frightful desolation. And yet I do not deny that he compares Jerusalem to a woman who is sad, and who bewails her widowhood; for it was customary with mourners *to sit on the ground*, as that nation was in the habit of using ceremonies and outward signs to a greater degree than would be consistent with our customs. But the sum of the matter is that the city will have lost her inhabitants.

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

Isaiah Chapter 4:1-6

1. And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

1. Apprehendent itaque in die illa septenae mulieres viros singulos, dicentes, Pane nostro vescemur, vestimentis nostris induemur, tantum invocetur nomen tuum super nos, (vel, censeamur tuo nomine,) tollasque probrum nostrum.

2. In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

2. In die illa erit germen Iehovae in pulchritudinem et gloriam; et fructus terrae in praestantiam et decorem; nempe in liberatis Israelis.

3. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

3. Et eveniet ut qui reliquus fuerit in Sion, et residuus manserit in Ierusalem, sanctus vocetur, omnesque Ierosolymis inter vivos (vel, ad vitam,) asscripti erunt;

4. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

4. Cum scilicet Dominus eluerit sordes filiarum Sion, et sanguines Ierusalem expiaverit e medio ejus, et in Spiritu judicii, et in Spiritu incendii (vel, ardoris.)

5. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and

upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

5. Et creabit Iehova super totam habitationem montis Sion, et super omnem coetum ejus, nubem et obscuritatem interdiu; noctu vero splendorem ignis flammantis; quia super omnem gloriam erit protectio.

6. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

6. Eritque obumbratio per diem in umbram ab aestu, in refugium et latibulum a nimbo et imbre.

1. *In that day shall seven women take hold of one man* He pursues the same subject, and unquestionably this discourse is immediately connected with what goes before. This verse certainly ought not to have been separated from the preceding. By this circumstance he describes more fully the nature of that desolation and calamity which he had formerly threatened against the Jews; for hypocrites; unless the threatening be conceived in strong terms, either disregard or palliate warnings, so that God's severity never produces its proper effect upon them. From the effect, therefore, he describes the appalling nature of the approaching calamity, that they may not indulge the hope of making an easy escape. As if he had said, "Do not imagine that it will be of moderate extent, lessening your numbers in a small degree; for utter destruction awaits you, so that hardly *one man* will be found for *seven women*."

The phrase *take hold of* conveys the same meaning. It is, no doubt, inconsistent with the modesty of the sex that a woman should, of her own accord, offer herself to a man. But the Prophet says, that not only will they do this, but that *seven women* will, as it were, lay hands on a man, and keep hold of him; so small will be the number of men. The greatness of the calamity is likewise denoted by what immediately follows: *we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel*; for as it is a duty which belongs to a husband to support his wife and family, the women ask a husband for themselves on unreasonable conditions, when they release him from all concern about supplying them with food. Very great must, therefore, be the scarcity of men, when a great number of women, laying aside modesty, are not only constrained to solicit one man, but do not even shrink from the agreement to procure their own victuals, and request nothing more from a husband than to receive them within the bond of marriage.

Let thy name be called on us. It may be rendered, *Let us be called by thy name*; for when a woman passes into the family of her husband, she is *called by his name*, and loses her own, because the husband is her head. (1 Corinthians 11:3.) Hence the vail is a token of subjection, and Abimelech said to Sarah,

Thy husband Abraham shall be a covering to thy head. (Genesis 20:16.)

But if she remain unmarried, she is concealed under the name of her family.

That this is the true meaning of that mode of expression is sufficiently evident from what Jacob says when blessing his grandchildren,

Let my name, and the name of my fathers,
Abraham and Isaac, be called on them; (Genesis 48:16;)

that is, "Let them be reckoned as our descendants, and let them be partakers of the covenant, and never excluded from it, as were Esau and Ishmael." In the same manner also do heathen writers speak; as, in Lucan, Marcia, wishing to return to Cato, says: "Grant me only the bare name of marriage; let permission be given that it may be inscribed on my tomb, Marcia the wife of Cato." [73]

And take away our reproach. Their reason for saying so is, that women are sometimes treated with disdain, when they do not obtain husbands, not only because they appear to be despised as unworthy, but because among the ancient people offspring was reckoned an important blessing, and therefore the Prophet says that they will be desirous to wipe away this reproach, and will employ every argument for that purpose. Lastly, he declares that the calamity will be so great, that almost all the men will be carried off.

2. *In that day shall the branch of the Lord be for beauty and glory.* [74] This consolation is seasonably added; for the announcement of a dreadful calamity might have alarmed the godly, and led them to doubt as to the stability of God's covenant being maintained amidst the destruction of the people. For there is a wide difference between the two statements, that the people will be *like the sand of the sea*, (Genesis 22:17; Isaiah 10:22,) and yet that they would be cut down by such a frightful massacre, that in the remnant there would be found no dignity, no magnificence, and hardly any name. Isaiah, therefore, according to the custom generally followed by himself and by the prophets, provides against this alarm, and, by adding a consolation, assuages their excessive terror, that believers may still rest assured that the Church will be safe, and may strengthen their hearts by good hope. As he spoke of the restoration of the Church in the second chapter, so he now promises that a new Church will arise, as a *bud* or *shoot* springs up in a field which was formerly uncultivated.

This passage is usually expounded as referring to Christ; and the opinion, plausible in itself, derives additional probability from the words of the prophet Zechariah:

Behold the man whose name shall be The Branch.
(Zechariah 6:12.)

It is still further strengthened by the consideration, that the Prophet does not barely name this *Branch*, but mentions it with a title expressive of respect, as if he had intended to honor the Divinity of Christ. When he afterwards adds *the fruits of the earth*, they consider this as referring to

[73] Da tantum nomen inane Connubii: liceat tumulo scripsisse, Catonis Marcia. Luc. Phars. 2:342.

[74] In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious. — Eng. Ver. The marginal reading is, beauty and glory. — Ed.

his human nature. But after a careful examination of the whole, I do not hesitate to regard the *Branch of God* and *the fruit of the earth* as denoting an unusual and abundant supply of grace, which will relieve the hungry; for he speaks as if the earth, barren and exhausted after the desolation, would hold out no promise of future produce, in order that the sudden fertility might render the kindness of God the more desirable; as if the parched and barren fields would yield unexpected herbage.

This metaphor is frequently employed in Scripture, that the gifts of God *spring up* in the world.

Truth shall spring out of the earth, and
righteousness shall look down from heaven. (Psalm 85:11.)

In like manner the Prophet afterwards says:

Let the earth open and bring forth salvation. (Isaiah 45:8.)

These words unquestionably denote a rich supply both of spiritual and of earthly blessings. That such is the meaning of the passage now under consideration is evident from the context; for Isaiah immediately afterwards adds, that it will be *for honor and lustre to the delivered of Israel*, [75] that is, to the number left, whom the Lord will rescue from destruction.

The word פליטת (*pheletath*) is commonly translated *escape*, but here, as in many other passages, it is a collective noun, denoting *those who have escaped*. He declares that the elect will enjoy that happy fertility which he had promised, and therefore (verse 3) that those who shall be left will be *holy*. The meaning of the Prophet is, that the glory of God will be illustriously displayed when a new Church shall arise; as if he would create a people for himself out of nothing, and to enrich it with every kind of blessings.

They who limit it to the person of Christ expose themselves to the ridicule of the Jews, as if it were in consequence of scarcity that they tortured passages of Scripture for their own convenience. But there are other passages of Scripture from which it may be more clearly proved that Christ is true God and true man, so that there is no need of ingenious glosses. Yet I acknowledge that the Prophet speaks here about the kingdom of Christ, on which the restoration of the Church is founded. But it ought to be observed, that the consolation is not addressed indiscriminately to all, but only to the remnant, which has been marvellously rescued from the jaws of death.

Besides, as it might be deemed a cold consolation if he had only said that a small number would be saved, he discourses about the *magnificent glory and dazzling brightness*, to lead believers to hope that this diminution will do no harm; because the excellence of the Church does not consist in multitude but in purity when God bestows splendid and glorious communications of the Spirit of God on his elect. Hence we ought to draw a very useful doctrine, that though believers be exceedingly few, when they are like *brands plucked out of the fire*, (Zechariah 3:2,) yet that God will glorify himself amongst

[75] Excellent and comely [Heb. beauty and glory] for them that are escaped of Israel, [Heb. for the escaping of Israel.] — Eng. Ver.

them, and will display in the midst of them a proof of his unspeakable greatness not less illustrious than amidst a large number.

3. *And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion.* He follows out the same statement, that when the pollution of the people shall have been washed away, what remains will be pure and *holy.* The explanation given by some, that they who shall be found written in the book of life will *be called holy*, appears to me to be too limited. These two clauses ought rather to be read separately, that *all who shall be left in Zion will be holy,* and that *they who shall be left in Jerusalem will be written in the book of life.* And this repetition is very frequent and customary among the Hebrews, when the prophets set forth under various titles the same gift of God. Thus, when it is said,

There shall be salvation in Jerusalem,
and forgiveness of sins in Zion, (Joel 2:32,)

both must be viewed as referring to the same subject; but the grace of God is more fully extolled when the cause of salvation is declared to consist in a free pardon. [76]

In this passage the argument is of the same kind; for he says that, *when the filth shall have been washed away*, the Church will be clean, and that all who shall have a place in her will truly be the elect of God. Now, it is certain that this does not apply universally to the external Church, into which many have been admitted under the designation of believers who have nothing that corresponds to their profession, and who even exceed the small number of good people, as the chaff exceeds the wheat in the barn. And although the captivity in Babylon had been employed by God, as a sieve, to remove a large portion of chaff, yet we know that the Church was still very far from being as pure as she ought to have been. But as at that time there was displayed, in some measure, a resemblance of that purity which will be truly and perfectly manifested after that

the lambs shall have been separated from the kids,
(Matthew 25:32,)

when Isaiah speaks of those beginnings, he includes, as his custom is, a period extending to the end, when God will bring to perfection that which he then began.

It is the same thing which we see every day going forward; for although chastisements and punishments do not entirely remove all spots from the Church, yet when spots have been washed out, she recovers a part of her purity. Thus she suffers no loss by the strokes inflicted on her; because, while she is diminished, she is at the same time comforted by casting out many hypocrites; just as it is only by casting out the offensive or corrupt matter

[76] There is a mistake here. In the verse quoted the prophet Joel does not speak of the forgiveness of sins; but our Author probably had his eye on the concluding clause, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call, as resembling a part of this verse, and he that shall be left in Jerusalem, and on this ground adduced it as a parallel passage, but was not successful in pointing out where the parallelism lies. — Ed.

that a diseased body can be restored to health.

Hence we obtain a most useful consolation; for we are wont always to desire a multitude, and to estimate by it the prosperity of the Church. On the contrary, we should rather desire to be few in number, and that in all of us the glory of God may shine brightly. But because our own glory leads us in another direction, the consequence is, that we regard more a great number of men than the excellence of a few.

We ought also to learn what is the true glory of a Church; for she is truly prosperous when the saints have a place in her; though they be few and despised in the world, yet they render her condition prosperous and desirable. But as it will never happen in the world that the saints alone will hold a place in the Church, we ought patiently to endure a mixture, and, in the meantime, we ought to reckon it a most valuable blessing when she makes a near approach to the cleanness which ought to be found in her.

And they shall all be written among the living [or, to life] in Jerusalem. We have already said that by those who are written in the book of life are meant the elect of God; as if he had said that the profane multitude, which have only a name on the earth, will be cut off. The Prophet alludes to a mode of expression which often occurs in the Scriptures, as when Moses desires that he should be *blotted out of the book* of life, (Exodus 32:32,) rather than that the whole nation should be destroyed. Christ also says to the Apostles,

Rejoice because your names are written in heaven,
(Luke 10:20;)

and Ezekiel says, *They shall not be written in the catalogue of my people.* [77] Now, although God has no other book than his eternal counsel, in which he has predestinated us to salvation by adopting us for his children, yet this comparison is exceedingly suitable to our weakness, because in no other way could our mind conceive that God's flock is known to him, so that none of the elect can ever be deprived of eternal life. Since, therefore, God has the names of his people in some manner written down, the decree of adoption, by which their eternal blessedness is secured, is called *the book of life.* The reprobate, though for a time they appear to be on a level with the sons of God, are excluded from this catalogue, as we see that they are cut off when he collects and separates his own people. This matter will not be fully completed before the last day; but as the children of God, by continually persevering, when the reprobate fall off, have their election made sure, it is no small consolation amidst their afflictions, when the temptations by which they are assailed do not cause them to fall from their steadfastness.

4. *When the* Lord *shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion.* He still follows out the same statement; for in consequence of its being generally believed that those calamities by which the Church is diminished inflict upon her grievous injury, the Prophet more zealously inculcates the

[77] He appears to refer to Ezekiel 13:9, where his version is, And they shall not be written in the writing, that is, in the catalogue, of my people. — Ed.

opposite opinion. And now, for the purpose of refuting that error, he argues, on the contrary, that by this method God washes away the filth, and removes the corruptions, of his Church.

The blood of Jerusalem. By *blood* I understand not only murders or other atrocious crimes, but defilements and stains of every description. This metaphor is a reduplication, (ἀναδίπλωσις,) by which he repeats the same thing twice; for, having formerly spoken of pollution in general, he now particularly mentions *blood* as one kind of ceremonial uncleanness. In short, he shows the fruits which spring from God's chastisements. By them our spots are washed away. When abounding iniquity is not punished, we become corrupted along with others; and therefore it is necessary that God should earnestly warn us, and, like a physician, apply physic, and the lancet, and sometimes proceed to *burning*

By the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. Here *judgment* stands for *uprightness* from its effect; that is, when they who had deeply fallen are restored to their former condition. He adds, *the spirit of burning*, by which the filth must be *burned* and consumed. In this expression there are two things to be observed; first, that the purification of the Church is accomplished by the Spirit; and secondly, that from the effects which he produces the Spirit receives the name, sometimes of *judgment* and sometimes of *burning*; as if he had said, The *judgment* of the *Spirit*, The *burning* of the *Spirit*. Whenever, therefore, expressions of this sort occur in Scripture, "The Lord will do these things by the Spirit of truth, of power, of righteousness," we may change the expression thus, "by the truth, by the power, by the righteousness, of the Spirit." In this manner doth the Spirit of God work in us, from whom is both the beginning and the end of our salvation. From these terms, therefore, we ought to learn what are the chief effects which he produces. By his Spirit the Lord purifies our affections that he may renew and sanctify us. The word *judgment* explains what is of chief importance in the restoration of the Church; that is, when those things which were confused or decayed are restored to good order. *Burning* points out the plan and method by which the Lord restores the Church to her purity.

5. *And Jehovah will create on every dwelling-place of Mount Zion.* As if he had said that "there will not be a corner of Mount Zion on which the grace of God does not shine." *Dwelling-place* and *assembly* I understand to mean the same thing; for *assembly* does not here denote a *congregation*, but the place where men assemble. With the design to express a full blessing, he alludes to what Moses relates, when the Lord delivered the people from Egyptian bondage, and sent

pillars of cloud by day and pillars of fire by night.
(Exodus 13:21.)

It was customary with the prophets, in describing any remarkable blessing, to remind them of that deliverance from Egypt as an extraordinary work of God; for on that occasion God made a remarkable display of the boundless

treasures of his grace in establishing his Church, and left out no proof of his kindness, in order to make known the happiness of that nation. But what chiefly deserved to be commemorated was, that by the covering of *a cloud* by day he protected them from excessive heat, and that by night *a pillar of fire* went before them, to prevent them from wandering or going astray.

It amounts to this, that when God shall bring back the Church from the captivity in Babylon, the deliverance will be of a kind not less striking and magnificent than when, at an early period, the nation went out of Egypt. Not that during their journey from Babylon to Judea they would be accompanied, as in the wilderness, by a *cloud* and a *pillar of fire*, but that he would display his grace and kindness by other methods not less remarkable. Just as if we were to say at the present day, "God will enlighten us by his Spirit of *fire*; He will give *cloven tongues*, (Acts 2:3,) to spread his Gospel throughout the whole world." Such expressions ought not to be understood literally, as if the Spirit would be sent down from heaven under that visible sign; but by reminding them of the miracle, it would lead believers to expect that the same power of God, which the Apostles formerly experienced, will now be displayed in restoring the Church. Add to this, that the Prophet, by this mode of expression, points out an uninterrupted continuance of blessing; as if he had said, "Not only will God for a moment stretch out his hand for your deliverance, but as he always accompanied your fathers in the wilderness, so likewise he will deliver and protect you to the end."

For on all the glory shall be a defense. This is connected with what he formerly said, that the *bud* or *branch* which should afterwards spring up would be *for glory.* It is as if he had said, "on all who shall bear the proof and marks of their deliverance." Perhaps also he alludes to the passage in which it is related that the destroying angel passed over the houses which were marked without doing them any injury, (Exodus 12:23;) for as *the sprinkling of blood* at that time protected and saved them, so Isaiah promises that believers, when God has marked them, will be safe. This must be carefully observed; for we are reminded that we shall not become partakers of the grace of God in any other way than by bearing his image, and by his glory shining in us.

6. *And a covering in the day-time shall be a shadow from the heat.* Though the Prophet confirms what we have already noticed, that God will be our perpetual guide till he has brought us to the end of our journey, yet we are reminded that believers will always be exposed to numerous calamities. Scorching heat, and piercing cold, and still heavier distresses, press on them severely; when they escape from one danger, they meet with another. But the highest consolation is that against every inconvenience the *shadow* of the Lord will of itself be sufficient; for it will cover them in such a manner that nothing can injure or do them any harm. Although, therefore, various calamities and afflictions surround us on every side, still the Lord promises that he will assist us; as it is said in the Psalm,

The sun shall not scorch thee by day, nor the moon by night; for the Lord will preserve thee from all evil. (Psalm 121:6, 7.)

Nothing more is necessary than that we follow our calling, and perform our duty faithfully. It belongs equally to the condition of the good and of the bad that they suffer many inconveniencies; but bad men have no refuge, no place of concealment in which they may hide themselves, and they must be utterly overwhelmed. But blessed is the condition of the godly; for although they endure heat and cold, still they have a safe refuge in God. But that glory of which we formerly spoke must shine in us; otherwise we shall have no share in these things; and if we carry about with us God's mark, whenever we shall be assailed by a tempest, let us rest assured that he will be our protection.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5.

Isaiah Chapter 5:1-30

1. Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

1. Cantabo, agedum, pro dilecto meo, canticum dilecti mei ad vineam suam. Vinea fuit dilecto meo in cornu filio olei.

2. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

2. Eam sepiverat, et elapidaverat, et plantaverat, ut vineam electam; turrim aedificaverat in medio ejus, et torcular in ea construxerat. Itaque speravit ut produceret uvas, et producit labruscas.

3. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

3. Nunc igitur, habitator Ierusalem, et vir Iuda, judicate inter me et vineam meam.

4. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

4. Quid faciendum fuit amplius vineae meae, quod non fecerim ei? Quomodo expectavi ut proferret uvas, et tamen produxit labruscas?

5. And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

5. Et nunc ostendam, agendum, vobis, quid ego facturus sim vineae meae. Auferam sepem ejus, ut sit in depastionem: interrumpam maceriem ejus, ut

sit in conculcationem.

6. And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

6. Faciam ut sit deserta: non putabitur neque fodietur; et ascendet sentis et spina. Quinetiam nubibus praecipiam, ne super eam pluant.

7. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

7. Sane vinea Iehovae exercituum domus Israel est; et vir Iuda palmes ejus delectabilis. Inde expectavit judicium, et ecce oppressio; justitiam, et ecce clamor.

8. Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

8. Vae qui conjungunt domum ad domum, agrum ad agrum copulant, donec non sit locus; ut collocemini scilicet vos soli in medio terrae.

9. In mine ears said the Lord of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant.

9. Hoc in auribus Iehovae exercituum, Si non domus multae in solitudinem redigantur, magnae et pulchrae absque habitatore.

10. Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.

10. Quinetiam decem jugera vineae facient batum unum, et semen cori reddet ephi.

11. Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!

11. Vae qui mane surgunt ad sectandam ebrietatem, et qui tempus ad noctem extrahunt, dum vinum accendit eos.

12. And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.

12. Et est cythara, lyra, tympanum, tibia, et vinum, in conviviis eorum; opus autem Iehovae non respiciunt; nec opus manuum ejus considerant.

13. Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge; and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

13. Propterea in captivitatem abiit populus meus; quia non fuit praeditus scientia; et gloria ejus, viri famis, et multitudo ejus aruit siti.

14. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

14. Propterea dilatavit infernus animam suam, et os suum distendit absque modo descenditque gloria ejus; et multitudo ejus, et opulentia ejus, et qui laetatus est in ea.

15. And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:

15. Et incurvabitur homo, et humiliabitur vir; oculi inquam sublimium humiliabuntur.

16. But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God, that is holy, shall be sanctified in righteousness.

16. Exaltabitur autem Iehova exercituum in judicio, et Deus qui sanctus est sanctificabitur in justitia.

17. Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

17. Et pascentur agni secundum rationem suam; et desolata pinguium advenae comedent.

18. Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope:

18. Vae trahentibus iniquitatem in funibus vanitatis, et tanquam vinculis plaustri peccatum.

19. That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!

19. Qui dicunt, Acceleret, festinet opus ejus, et videamus; appropinquet ac veniat consilium Sancti Israel, ut sciamus.

20. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

20. Vae qui dicunt malo bonum, et bono malum; qui faciunt lucem ex tenebris, et tenebras ex luce; qui vertunt amarum in dulce, et dulce in amarum.

21. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

21. Vae sapientibus in oculis suis, et qui coram seipsis sunt prudentes.

22. Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink;

22. Vae qui fortes sunt ab libandum vinum, et viris fortibus ad miscendam potionem:

23. Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

23. Qui justificant impium propter munus; justitiam autem justi tollunt ab eo.

24. Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

24. Propterea sicut devorat stipulam lingua ignis, et palea a flamma dissolvitur; sic radix eorum quasi putredo erit, et germen eorum quasi pulvis vanescet. Quoniam abjecerunt legem Iehovae exercituum, et eloquium Sancti

Israel aversati sunt.

25. Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

25. Idcirca exarsit furor Iehovae in populum suum; et extendens super eum manum suam percussit eum; et contremuerunt montes, fuitque cadaver eorum mutilum projectum in medio viarum; et in omnibus istis non est aversus furor ejus; sed adhuc manus ejus est extenta.

26. And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly.

26. Et levabit signum ad gentes e longinquo; sibilabit Genti ab extremo terrae; et ecce velox et levis veniet.

27. None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:

27. Non erit lassus, neque impingens inter ipsos; nullus dormitabit neque dormiet; non solvetur ulli cingulum lumborum, neque rumpetur corrigia calceamentorum ejus.

28. Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind.

28. Sagittae ipsorum acutae erunt, et omnes arcus extenti. Ungulae equorum quasi silex; et rotae ipsorum quasi turbo reputabuntur.

29. Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it.

29. Rugitus ejus sicut leonis; fremet instar leunculorum. Frendet atque apprehendet praedam. Spolia corradet, et nemo eripiet.

30. And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow; and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

30. Fremet super eum in die illo, quasi fremitus maris; tum aspiciet ad terram, et ecce tenebrae tribulationis; et lux obtenebrata erit in coelis.

1. *Now will I sing to my beloved.* The subject of this chapter is different from that of the former. It was the design of the Prophet to describe the condition of the people of Israel, as it then was, in order that all might perceive their faults, and might thus be led by shame and self-loathing to sincere repentance. Here, as in a mirror, the people might behold the misery of their condition. But for this, they would have flattered themselves too much in their crimes, and would not have patiently listened to any instructions. It was therefore necessary to present a striking and lively picture of their wickedness; and in order that it might have the greater weight, he made use

of this preface; for great and memorable events were usually described in verse, that they might be repeated by every one, and that a lasting record of them might be preserved. In like manner, we see that Moses wrote a song, and many other compositions, (Exodus 15:1; Deuteronomy 32:1,) in order that all the events might be proclaimed in this manner, both in public and in private. The instruction becomes more widely diffused than if it had been delivered in plainer language. For the same reason Isaiah composed this song, that he might present to the people a clearer view of their wickedness; and, undoubtedly, he handled this subject with magnificent and harmonious language, for the highest skill is commonly exercised in the composition of poems.

To my beloved. There can be no doubt that he means God; as if he had said that he would compose a poem in behalf of God, that he might expostulate with the people about their ingratitude; for it gave additional weight to his language to represent God as speaking. But a question arises, Why does Isaiah call God his friend? Some reply that he was a kinsman of Christ, and I acknowledge that he was a descendant of David; but this appears to be a forced interpretation. A more natural and appropriate one would be, to adopt the statement of John, that the Church is committed to *the friends of the bridegroom*, (John 3:29,) and to reckon prophets as belonging to that class. To them, unquestionably, this designation applies; for the ancient people were placed under their charge, that they might be kept under their leader. We need not wonder, therefore, that they were jealous and were greatly offended when the people bestowed their attachment on any other. Isaiah therefore assumes the character of the bridegroom, and, being deeply anxious about the bride entrusted to him, complains that she has broken conjugal fidelity, and deplores her treachery and ingratitude.

Hence we learn that not only Paul, but all those prophets and teachers who faithfully served God, were jealous of God's spouse. (2 Corinthians 11:2.) And all the servants of God ought to be greatly moved and aroused by this appellation; for what does a man reckon more valuable than his wife? A well-disposed husband will value her more highly than all his treasures, and will more readily commit to any person the charge of his wealth than of his wife. He to whom one will entrust his dearly-beloved wife must be reckoned very faithful. Now to pastors and ministers the Lord commits his Church as his beloved wife. How great will be our wickedness if we betray her by sloth and negligence! Whosoever does not labor earnestly to preserve her can on no pretense be excused.

A song of my beloved. By using the word דודי, *dodi*, he changes the first syllable, but the meaning is the same as in the former clause. Though some render it *uncle*, and others *cousin*, I rather agree with those who consider it to contain an allusion; for greater liberties are allowed to poets than to other writers. By his arrangement of those words, and by his allusions to them, he intended that the sound and rhythm should aid the memory, and

impress the minds, of his readers.

My beloved had a vineyard. The metaphor of *a vineyard* is frequently employed by the prophets, and it would be impossible to find a more appropriate comparison. (Psalm 80:8; Jeremiah 2:21.) There are two ways in which it points out how highly the Lord values his Church; for no possession is dearer to a man than *a vineyard*, and there is none that demands more constant and persevering toil. Not only, therefore, does the Lord declare that we are his beloved inheritance, but at the same time points out his care and anxiety about us.

In this *song* the Prophet mentions, first, the benefits which the Lord had bestowed on the Jewish people; secondly, he explains how great was the ingratitude of the people; thirdly, the punishment which must follow; fourthly, he enumerates the vices of the people; for men never acknowledge their vices till they are compelled to do so.

On a hill. He begins by saying that God had placed his people in a favorable situation, as when a person plants a vine on a pleasant and fertile hill. By the word *horn* or *hill* I understand a lofty place rising above a plain, or what we commonly call *a rising-ground*, (*un coustau.*) It is supposed by some to refer to the situation of Jerusalem, but I consider this to be unnatural and forced. It rather belongs to the construction of the Prophet's allegory; and as God was pleased to take this people under his care and protection, he compares this favor *to the planting of a vineyard;* for it is better to plant vines on hills and lofty places than on a plain. In like manner the poet says, *The vine loves the open hills; the yews prefer the north wind and the cold* [78] The Prophet, therefore, having alluded to the ordinary method of planting the vine, next follows out the comparison, that this place occupied no ordinary situation. When he calls it *the son of oil* or *of fatness*, [79] he means a rich and exceedingly fertile spot. This is limited by some commentators to the fertility of Judea, but that does not accord with my views, for the Prophet intended to describe metaphorically the prosperous condition of the people.

2. *And he fenced it.* The incessant care and watchfulness of God in dressing his vine are asserted by the Prophet, as if he had said, that God has neglected nothing that could be expected from the best and most careful householder. And yet we do not choose to attempt, as some commentators have done, an ingenious exposition of every clause, such as, that the Church is *fenced* by the protection of the Holy Spirit, so that it is safe against the attacks of the devil; that the *wine-press* is doctrine; and that by *the stones* are meant the annoyances of errors. The design of the Prophet, as I have mentioned, was more obvious, namely, that by incessant care and large expenditure God has performed the part of an excellent husbandman. Yet it was the duty of the Jews to consider how numerous and diversified were the blessings which God had conferred on them; and at the present day, when

[78] Denique apertos Bacchus amat colles: Aquilonem et frigora taxi. Virg, Georg. II. 112.
[79] In a very fruitful hill. — Eng. Ver.

the Church is represented under the metaphor of *a vineyard*, we ought to view those figures as denoting God's blessings, by which he makes known not only his love toward us, but likewise his solicitude about our salvation.

In the verb *planted* the order appears to be reversed, for one ought to begin with *planting* rather than with the *fence*; but my explanation is, that after having *planted*, he did everything else that was necessary. Justly, therefore, does he charge them with ingratitude and treachery, when the fruits that ought to have followed such laborious cultivation were not brought forth. There is reason to fear that the Lord will bring the same accusation against us; for the greater the benefits which we have received from God, the more disgraceful will be our ingratitude if we abuse them. It is not without a good reason, or to enable them to make any idle display, that the Lord blesses his people; it is, that they may yield *grapes*, that is, the best fruit. If he be disappointed of his expectation, the punishment which the Prophet here describes will follow. The mention of his benefits ought, therefore, to produce a powerful impression on our minds, and to excite us to gratitude.

Besides, the word *vineyard*, and a *vineyard* so carefully cultivated, suggests an implied contrast; for so much the more highly ought we to value the acts of God's kindness, when they are not of an ordinary description, but tokens of his peculiar regard. Other blessings are indiscriminately bestowed, such as, that he

maketh the sun to shine on the evil as well as on the good, (Matthew 5:45,)

and supplies them with what is necessary for food and clothing. But how much more highly ought we to esteem that covenant of grace into which he has entered with us, by which he makes the light of the Gospel to shine on us; for his own people are its peculiar objects! That care and diligence, therefore, which the Lord continually manifests in cultivating our minds deserves our most earnest consideration.

Therefore he hoped that it would bring forth grapes [80] He now complains that the nation which had enjoyed such high advantages had basely and shamefully degenerated; and he accuses them of undervaluing the kindness of God, for he says that, instead of *pleasant grapes*, they yielded only *wild* and bitter fruits. It is undoubtedly true that God, to whose eyes *all things are naked and opened*, (Hebrew 4:13,) is not deceived by his expectation like a mortal man. In the Song of Moses he plainly declares that he well knew from the beginning what would be the wickedness of his people.

My beloved, says he, when she fares well and becomes fat,
will kick. (Deuteronomy 32:15.)

It is therefore not more possible that God should be mistaken in his expectations, than that he should repent. Isaiah does not here enter into subtle reasonings about the expectations which God had formed, but describes the manner in which the people ought to have acted, that they might not lose the

[80] And he looked that it should bring forth grapes. — Eng. Ver.

benefit of such excellent advantages. Thus God commands that the Gospel be proclaimed *for the obedience of faith*, (Romans 16:26,) not that he expects all to be obedient, but because, by the mere hearing of it, unbelievers are rendered inexcusable. Moreover, there is nothing that ought to excite us more powerfully to lead a devout and holy life, than to find that those duties which we perform towards God are compared by the Holy Spirit to fruits of exquisite flavour.

3. *Now, therefore, O inhabitant of Jerusalem!* Those persons with whom he contends are made judges in their own cause, as is usually done in cases so plain and undoubted that the opposite party has no means of evasion. It is, therefore, a proof of the strongest confidence in his cause, when he bids the guilty persons themselves declare if this be not the true state of the fact; for immediately afterwards we shall find him declaring that the accusation is decided against those persons to whom he now commits the decision.

4. *What more ought to have been done to my vineyard?* He first inquires what could have been expected from the best husbandman or householder, *which he has not done to his vineyard*? Hence he concludes that they had no excuse for having basely withheld from him the fruit of his toil.

How did I expect that it would yield grapes? In this clause he appears to expostulate with himself for having expected any good or pleasant fruit from so wicked a people; just as, when the result does not answer to our expectation, we complain of ourselves, and are angry at having ill-bestowed our labor on ungrateful persons whose wickedness ought to have restrained us from doing what we did, and acknowledge that we are justly deceived, because we were too simple and easily imposed on. But a more natural interpretation will be this: "Since I discharged every part of my duty, and did more than any one could have expected in dressing my *vineyard*, how comes it that it yields me so poor a return, and that, instead of the fruit which was expected, it yields what is absolutely bitter?"

If it be objected that God had the remedy in his hands, if he had turned the hearts of the people, this is an idle evasion as applied to those men; for their conscience holds them fast, so that they cannot escape by laying the blame on another. Though God do not pierce the hearts of men by the power of his Spirit, so as to render them obedient to him, yet they will have no right to complain that this was wanting; for every pretense of ignorance is fully and abundantly taken away by the outward call. Besides, God does not speak here of his power, but declares that he was not under any obligation to do more than he did.

5. *And now come, I will show you what I will do to my vineyard.* Having held the Jews to be condemned, as it were, by their own mouth, he next adds that he will take vengeance for their contempt of his grace, so that they will not escape from being punished. The reproof would not have been sufficiently powerful to affect their minds, if he had not also threatened punishment; and therefore he now declares that the heinous offense, of having

wickedly imposed on him, will not escape vengeance. Now the punishment to be inflicted on them amounts to this, that they will be deprived of the gifts which they had abused, when God shall not only withdraw his care of them, but shall give them up to be plundered by their enemies. At the same time he shows how wretched their condition will be, when God shall have ceased to bestow on them his multiplied favors.

Hence it follows that it must have been owing entirely to the extraordinary goodness of God, that the *vineyard* remained safe and uninjured till that time. He goes so far as to point out the various supports by which it was upheld, and the vast resources which God possesses for destroying it both within and without; for when his protection has been removed, they must become a prey to all that pass by, whether men or beasts. "When the fence has been removed," says he, "the cattle will tread on it and lay it bare, robbers will ransack and plunder it, and thus it will become a wilderness."

6. *I will lay it waste.* God will not take pains to dig and prune it, and consequently it will become barren for want of dressing; *briars and thorns* will spring up to choke its branches; and, what is more, by withholding rain, God will dry up its roots. Hence it is evident how manifold are the weapons with which God is supplied for punishing our ingratitude, when he sees that we despise his kindness. Isaiah is still, no doubt, proceeding with his metaphor, and, in order to obtain more eager attention, adorns his style by figures of speech. But we ought simply to conclude, that as God continually bestows on us innumerable benefits, so we ought to be earnestly on our guard lest, by withdrawing first one and then another, he punish us for despising them.

So far as relates to the government of the Church, the more numerous the kinds of assistance which she needs, the more numerous are the punishments to which she will be liable, if she wickedly corrupt what was appointed by God for her salvation. Nor ought we to wonder, if at the present day so many distresses threaten ruin and desolation; for whatever calamity befalls us, whether it be that there is a deficiency of instruction, or that the wicked abound, or that foxes and wolves creep into the Church, all this must be ascribed to our ingratitude, because we have not yielded such fruit as we ought, and have been indolent and sluggish. Whenever, therefore, we are justly deprived of those great favors which he freely bestowed on us, let us acknowledge the anger of the Lord.

7. *Truly the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel.* Hitherto he spoke figuratively; now he shows what is the design of this *song.* Formerly he had threatened judgment against the Jews; now he shows that they are not only guilty, but are also held to be convicted persons; for they could not be ignorant of the benefits which they had received from God.

Thou broughtest a vine from Egypt, says the Psalmist, and, having driven out the nations, plantedst it. (Psalm 80:8.)

Their ingratitude was plain and manifest.

Isaiah does not illustrate every part of the metaphor; nor was it necessary; for it was enough to point out what was its object. The whole nation was *the vineyard*; the individual men were *the plants*. Thus he accuses the whole body of the nation, and then every individual; so that no man could escape the universal condemnation, as if no part of the expostulation had been addressed to himself. Why the nation is called *a vineyard* is plain enough; for the Lord chose it, and admitted it to the covenant of grace and of eternal salvation, and bestowed on it innumerable blessings. The *planting* is the commencement, and the dressing of it follows. That nation was adopted, and in various respects was the object of Divine care; for the adoption would have been of no avail, if the Lord had not continually adorned and enriched it by his blessings.

The same doctrine ought to be inculcated on us at the present day. Christ affirms that he is *the vine*, (John 15:1,) and that, having been ingrafted into this *vine*, we are placed under the care of the Father; for God is pleased to perform towards us the office of a husbandman, and continually bestows those favors which he reproachfully asserts that he had granted to his ancient people. We need not wonder, therefore, if he is greatly enraged when he bestows his labor uselessly and to no purpose. Hence that threatening,

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he will cut off,
and cast into the fire. (John 15:2,6.) [81]

He looked for judgment. He begins without a metaphor to relate how wickedly the Jews had degenerated, among whom equity and justice was despised, and every kind of injustice and violence abounded. The words contain an elegant play of language, (paronomasia,) for those which have nearly the same sound have an opposite meaning. משפט (*mishpat*) denotes *judgment*; משפח (*mishpach*) denotes *conspiracy* or *oppression*; צדקה (*tzedakah*) denotes *righteousness*; צעקה (*tzeakah*) denotes the *cry* and *complaint* of those who are oppressed by violence and injustice; sounds which are not wont to be heard where every man receives what is his own. He mentions two things which the Lord chiefly demands from his people as the genuine fruits of the fear of God; for although piety comes first in order, yet there is no inconsistency in taking the description of it from the duties of the second table. They are justly charged with having despised God, on the ground of having acted cruelly towards men; for where cruelty reigns, religion is extinguished.

Let us now understand that the same things are addressed to us; for as that nation was *planted*, so were we. We should call to remembrance what Paul says, that we were like *wild olive-plants*, but that they were the true and natural olive-tree. (Romans 11:24. [82]) since we who were strangers

[81] In our Author's quotation the 2d and 6th verses are inaccurately blended. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he will take away. (John 15:2.) If a man abide not in me, he shall be cast out, and wither as a branch; and men shall gather it, and cast it into the fire, and it shall be burned. (John 15:6.) We follow the Author's version. — Ed.

[82] In the original text the reference reads: (Rom. xi. 25.) which I assume was a typographical

have been ingrafted into the true olive-tree, the Lord has cultivated and adorned us with unceasing care. But what kind of fruits do we bring forth? Assuredly they are not only useless, but even bitter. So much the greater is the ingratitude for which we ought to be condemned, for the blessings which he has bestowed and heaped on us are far more abundant. And justly does this expostulation apply to us, for violence and injustice abound everywhere. But since the general doctrine did not strike their minds so powerfully, the Prophet described chiefly these two kinds of wickedness; that he might point out with the finger, as it were, how far that nation was from the fruit which a good *vineyard* ought to have yielded.

8. *Woe to them that join house to house and field to field.* He now reproves their insatiable avarice and covetousness, from which the acts of cheating, injustice, and violence are wont to arise. For it cannot be condemned as a thing in itself wrong, if a man *add field to field and house to house*; but he looked at the disposition of mind, which cannot at all be satisfied, when it is once inflamed by the desire of gain. Accordingly, he describes the feelings of those who never have enough, and whom no wealth can satisfy. So great is the keenness of covetous men that they desire to have everything possessed by themselves alone, and reckon everything that is obtained by others to be something which they want, and which has been taken from them. Hence the beautiful observation of Chrysostom, that "covetous men, if they could, would willingly take the sun from the poor," for they envy their brethren the common elements, and would gladly swallow them up; not that they might enjoy them, but because such is the madness to which their greed carries them. All the while they do not consider that they need the assistance of others, and that a man left alone can do nothing: all their care is to scrape together as much as they can, and thus they swallow up everything by their covetousness.

He therefore accuses covetous and ambitious men of such folly that they would wish to have other men removed from the earth, that they might possess it alone; and consequently they set no limit to their desire of gain. For what madness is it to wish to have those driven away from the earth whom God has placed in it along with us, and to whom, as well as to ourselves, he has assigned it as their abode! Certainly nothing more ruinous could happen to them than to obtain their wish. Were they alone, they could not plough, or reap, or perform other offices indispensable to their subsistence, or supply themselves with the necessaries of life. For God has linked men so closely together, that they need the assistance and labor of each other; and none but a madman would disdain other men as hurtful or useless to him. Ambitious men cannot enjoy their renown but amidst a multitude. How blind are they, therefore, when they wish to drive and chase away others, that they may reign alone!

As to the size of *houses*, the same remark which we formerly made about

error. — fj.

fields will apply; for he points out the ambition of those who are desirous to inhabit spacious and magnificent *houses*. If a man who has a large family makes use of a large *house*, he cannot be blamed for it; but when men, swollen with ambition, make superfluous additions to their houses, only that they may live in greater luxury, and when one person alone occupies a building which might serve for the habitation of many families, this undoubtedly is empty ambition, and ought justly to be blamed. Such persons act as if they had a right to drive out other men, and to be the only persons that enjoyed a house or a roof, and as if other men ought to live in the open air, or must go somewhere else to find an abode.

9. *This is in the ears of Jehovah of hosts.* Here something must be supplied; for he means that the Lord sits as judge, and as taking cognizance of those things. When covetous men seize and heap up their wealth, they are blinded by their desire of gain, and do not understand that they will one day render an account. Never, certainly, were men so utterly stupid as not to ascribe some judgment to God; but they flatter themselves so far as to imagine that God does not observe them. In general, therefore, they acknowledge the judgment of God: when they come to particular cases, they take liberties, and suppose that they are not bound to proceed to that extent.

If many houses be not laid desolate. Having warned them that none of these things escape the eyes of God, lest they should imagine that it is a knowledge which does not lead to action, he immediately adds, that vengeance is close at hand. He likewise makes use of an oath; for the expression *If not* is a form of swearing that frequently occurs in the Scriptures. [83] In order to strike them with greater terror he breaks off the sentence with studied abruptness. [84] He might indeed have brought out this threatening with full expression, but the incomplete form is better fitted to keep the hearer in doubt and suspense, and is therefore more alarming. Besides, by this instance of reserve the Lord intended to train us to modesty, that we may not be too free in the use of oaths.

But what does he threaten? *Many houses will be laid desolate.* This is a just punishment, by which the Lord chastises the covetousness and ambition of men, who did not consider their own meanness, that they might be satisfied with a moderate portion. In a similar manner the poet ridicules the mad ambition of Alexander the Great, who having learned from the philosophy of Anacharsis that there were many worlds, sighed to think, that after having worn himself out by so many toils, he had not yet made himself master of one world. “One globe does not satisfy the Macedonian youth. He writhes in misery on account of the narrow limits of the world, as if he were confined to the rocks of Gyaros, or to the puny Seriphos. But when he shall enter

[83] The following is a striking instance: To whom I sware in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest; that is, they shall not enter into my rest. (Psalm 95:11.), — Ed.

[84] The classical reader may be reminded of a fine instance of , by which the effect of a speech is prodigiously heightened: Quos ego — sed motos praestat componere fluctus. — Virg. AEn. 1:135.

the city framed by potters, he will be content with a tomb. Death alone acknowledges how small are the dimensions of the bodies of men." [85]

Instances of the same kind occur every day, yet we do not observe them; for the Lord exhibits to us, as in a mirror, the absurd vanity of men, who spend a vast amount of money in building palaces that are afterwards to become the receptacles of owls and bats and other animals. These things are plainly before our eyes, and yet we do not apply our mind to the consideration of them. So sudden and various are the changes that happen, so many houses are laid desolate, so many cities are overthrown and destroyed, and, in short, there are so many other evident proofs of the judgment of God; and yet men cannot be persuaded to lay aside this mad ambition. The Lord threatens by the Prophet Amos:

"You have built houses of hewn stones,
but you shall not dwell in them." (Amos 5:11.)

And again,

"He will smite the great house with breaches,
and the little house with clefts." (Amos 6:11.)

These things happen daily, and yet the lawless passions of men are not abated.

10. *Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath.* He foretells that the same thing will befall their fields and vineyards; that covetous men will not obtain the desired returns, because their greed is insatiable; that, like certain animals which, by their breath, scorch the branches, and wither the corn, those men destroy the fruits of the earth by their extortion. The fields will be so barren as scarcely to yield a tenth part of the seed: the vineyards will yield very little wine.

A bath, as Josephus tells us, is a measure of liquids, and contains seventy-two sextaries; a very small measure, certainly, for ten acres, especially on a fertile soil. The *cor* (κόρος) or *homer*, is a measure of dry substances, and, according to the same author, contains thirty-one *medimni* [86] An *ephah* is the tenth part of it, and therefore evidently contains a little more than three *medimni* [87]

Now, when the soil is productive, it yields not only tenfold, but thirtyfold, and in all cases goes beyond the quantity of seed, and gives back far more abundantly than it received. When the case is otherwise, it undoubtedly proceeds from the curse of God punishing the extortion of men. And yet

[85] A medimnus, or Greek bushel, is reckoned to contain six Roman bushels, a Roman bushel (modius) being about an English peck. — Ed.

[86] "For the actual size of these measures," says Dr. Kitto, "we must refer to Josephus, of whom Theodoret (in Exod. 29.) says: , — 'follow in these things Josephus, who well understood the measures of the nation.' (Comp. Antiq. 8:3, 8.) To the homer or cor Josephus ascribes (Antic. 15:9, 2) twelve Attic medimni, where the reading should be metretae. Bath and Ephah are the same. Josephus (Antiq. 8:2, 9) determines each at seventy-two xestae, and makes them equal to an Attic metretes. The Attic metretes, which corresponded with the Hebrew bath and ephah, contains 739,800 Parisian grains of rain-water, which would fill a space of about 1985 Parisian cubic inches." — Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature, Art. Weights and Measures

[87] And their honourable men are famished. — Eng. Ver.

men blame the niggardliness of the soil, as if the fault lay there, but all in vain; for we would not want abundant increase, if God did not curse the soil on account of men's covetousness. When they are so eagerly employed in gathering and heaping up, what else are they doing than swallowing up the goodness of God by their greed? If this is not seen in all, because they want the power, still they do not want the disposition. Never was the world so much inflamed by this covetousness, and we need not wonder if God visit it with punishment.

11. *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning to follow strong drink* The Prophet does not aim at an enumeration of all the vices which then prevailed, but only points out some particular kinds of them, to which they were peculiarly addicted. After having handled the general doctrine, he found it necessary to come to particular vices; and the enumeration of those was more urgently needed, for there would have been no end of going through them all one by one. Having reproved covetousness, he now attacks drunkenness, which undoubtedly was also a prevailing vice; for the kinds of vices which he selects are not those which were found in one person or another, but those which universally prevailed; and indeed the vices are of such a kind as infect the whole body by their contagion.

To *rise early* means to be earnestly employed in doing anything; as when Solomon says,

Woe to the nation whose princes eat in the morning,
(Ecclesiastes 10:16;)

that is, whose chief care is to fill their belly and enjoy delicacies. This is contrary to the order of nature; for *man*, as David says,

"riseth that he may go to his work, and may be engaged in business till the evening." (Psalms 104:23.)

Now, if he lay aside his labors, and rise to partake of luxuries, and to follow drunkenness, this is monstrous. He adds —

And who continue till night. The meaning is, that from the dawn of the morning to the twilight of the evening they continue their drunken carousals, and are never weary of drinking. Abundance and luxury are closely joined together; for when men enjoy abundance, they become luxurious, and abuse it by intemperance.

12. *And the harp.* He adds the instruments of pleasures by which men addicted to intemperance provoke their appetite. These might be different from ours, but they belonged to music. Now, Isaiah does not blame music, for it is a science which ought not to be despised; but he describes a nation swimming in every kind of luxury, and too much disposed to indulge in pleasures. This is sufficiently evident from what follows.

And they regard not the work of the Lord As if he had said, "They are as constant in luxurious indulgence, and as much devoted to it, as if this had been the purpose for which they were born and reared; and they do not *consider* why the Lord supplies them with what is necessary." Men were not

born to eat and drink, and wallow in luxury, but to obey God, to worship him devoutly, to acknowledge his goodness, and to endeavor to do what is pleasing in his sight. But when they give themselves up to luxury, when they dance, and sing, and have no other object in view than to spend their life in the highest mirth, they are worse than beasts: for they do not *consider* for what end God created them, in what manner he governs this world by his providence, and to what end all the actions of our life ought to be directed.

Having stated this meaning, which appears to me to be natural, I consider nothing more to be necessary; for I cannot adopt the ingenious expositions of some authors, such as, when they explain the *work* of God to mean *the law*; nor did I intend to state every opinion which others have maintained. It is enough to know that all who are addicted to gormandizing are here subjected by the Prophet to the reproach of voluntarily becoming like brute beasts, when they do not direct their minds to God, who is the author of life.

13. *Therefore my people are gone into captivity.* I do not approve of the interpretation given by some commentators, that in consequence of the teachers having failed to perform their duty, the people, through ignorance and error, fell into many vices, which at length became the cause of their destruction. On the contrary, he charges them with gross and voluntary ignorance, as if he had said that, by their madness, they brought down destruction on themselves. The meaning therefore is, that the people perished because they despised instruction; whereas they might have been preserved if they had listened to good counsels: and therefore he expressly says, *My people*; that is, the nation which enjoyed the extraordinary privilege of being separated from the rest of the nations, that by relying on the guidance and direction of God, they might have a fixed rule of life. Thus it is said,

"What nation is so eminent and so distinguished as to have gods nigh to it, as thy God draws near to thee this day? This shall therefore be your knowledge and understanding above all nations, to hear your God." (Deuteronomy 4:6, 7.)

This baseness heightens the criminality of the people, that they shut their eyes in the midst of so much light. It was therefore a very severe accusation, that a people which God had undertaken to govern possessed *no knowledge*: for the law might have given them abundant direction for the whole conduct of life; it was a light shining before them amidst the general darkness of the world; and therefore it was monstrous that the nation should refuse to follow that path which had been pointed out to them, and, on the contrary, should shut their eyes, and rush forward to destruction.

Have gone into captivity. Some consider the word *captivity* to be used here in a metaphorical sense; but this is a forced interpretation; for the Prophet here describes the punishments which God had in part inflicted, and in part intended to inflict, so as to make it evident that the people were wretched through their own fault, as if they wished to draw down upon themselves the

curses of God. When this discourse was delivered, some tribes of Israel had already been banished, and the destruction of both kingdoms was at hand. The Prophet accordingly speaks as if all had already been led *into captivity*

And their glory are men famished [88] *and their multitude are dried up with thirst.* He now adds another punishment, namely, that they are wasted with hunger and famine, and not only common men, but some persons of the highest rank, in whom the vengeance of God is more clearly seen; for it was shocking to see wealthy men and nobles, on whom the respectability of the whole nation rested, wandering about and famished. And yet the severity of God's vengeance did not exceed proper bounds; for we must always take into account that ignorance was the cause; that is, the Jews were rebellious, and obstinately rejected the light of heavenly doctrine; yea, shut their ears against God when he was willing to perform the part of a master in instructing them. Hence we draw a useful doctrine; namely, that the source of all our calamities is, that we do not allow ourselves to be taught by the word of God, and this is what the Prophet chiefly intended that we should observe.

It may be asked, Is ignorance the cause of all calamities? Many persons appear to sin not so much through ignorance as through obstinacy; for they see what is right, but refuse to follow it, and the consequence is that they sin willingly, and not merely through inadvertency. I answer, ignorance is sometimes the *near*, and sometimes the *remote* cause; or, to use the common expressions, the one is *immediate, and the other is mediate.* It is the *near* cause, when men deceive themselves under any pretense, and intentionally blind their understanding. Again, it is the *remoter* cause, when men reject the principles from which they ought to frame the rule of their life; for it was their duty to look to God, and to attend to his will. When they disregard his will, they are indeed rebellious and obstinate; but they are ignorant because they refuse to learn, and on this rock they split: and yet ignorance does not excuse them, for of their own accord they bring it on themselves when they reject such a Teacher. So then it is a true statement, that the reason why the people endure such a variety of afflictions is, that they are ignorant of God, and will not allow themselves to be taught by him.

14. *Therefore hell hath enlarged his soul* [89] In this verse the Prophet intended to heighten the alarm of men who were at their ease, and not yet sufficiently affected by the threatenings which had been held out to them. Though it was shocking to behold *captivity*, and also famine, yet the slowness and insensibility of the people was so great that they did not give earnest heed to these tokens of God's anger. Accordingly the Prophet threatens something still more dreadful, that hell has opened his belly to swallow them all up.

I said a little ago, that what is here stated in the past tense refers partly to the future. Nor is it without good reason that the Prophet speaks of

[88] Therefore hell hath enlarged herself. — Eng. Ver.
[89] See p. 116 of this volume.

the events as plain and manifest; for he intended to bring them immediately before the people, that they might behold with their eyes what they could not be persuaded to believe. Again, when he compares *hell* or *the grave* to an insatiable beast, by the *soul* he means the belly into which the food is thrown. The general meaning is, that the grave is like a wide and vast gulf, which, at the command of God, yawns to devour men who are condemned to die. This personification carries greater emphasis than if he had said that all are condemned to the grave.

And her glory hath descended, and her multitude. He joins together the nobles and men of low rank, that none may flatter themselves with the hope of escape: as if he had said, "*Death* will carry you away, and all that you possess, your delicacies, wealth, pleasures, and everything else in which you place your confidence." It is therefore a confirmation of the former statement, and we ought always to attend to the particle לכן (*laken,*) *therefore*; for the people ascribed their calamities to fortune, or in some other way hardened themselves against the Lord's chastisements. On this account Isaiah says that these things do not happen by chance. Besides, men are wont to argue with God, and are so daring and presumptuous that they do not hesitate to call him to account. In order, therefore, to restrain that pride, he shows that the punishments with which they are visited are just, and that it is owing entirely to their own folly that they are miserable in every respect.

15. *And the mighty man shall be bowed down.* This may be called the summing up, for it points out the end and result of those chastisements, that all may be cast down, and that the Lord alone may be exalted. We have formerly met with a similar statement, (Isaiah 2:11,17,) and on that occasion we explained what was the Prophet's meaning; [90] which is, that he shows the design of the chastisements which God inflicts on us. Adversity is so hateful to us, that we can perceive nothing good in it. When he speaks of punishments, we detest and abhor them, because we do not perceive the justice of God. But the prophets remind us of another consideration, that so long as men go on in their sins regardlessly, the justice of God is in some degree smothered, and never shines so brightly as when he punishes our sins. This fruit is indeed very great, and ought to be preferred to the salvation of all men; for the glory of God, which shines in his righteousness, ought to be more highly esteemed than all things else.

There is, therefore, no reason why we should so greatly dread the chastisements which God inflicts upon us, but we ought to embrace with reverence what the prophets declare concerning them. In this way, however, the Prophet has severely chastised arrogant hypocrites. who become the more insolent when they are not punished; as if he had said, "Do you imagine that, when God has endured you so long, you will at last be able to tread him under your feet? Assuredly he will arise, and will be exalted in your

[90] Sibilabit ad eam. In the version prefixed to the Commentary on this chapter, our Author has likewise observed here the singular number, sibilabit genti, he will hiss to the nation. Bishop Stock, following Bishop Lowth, renders ושקר לו, (veshakar lo,) he will hiss to every one of them. --- Ed

destruction."

As the Prophet has employed, first, the word אדם (*adam*) and next איש (*ish*), it is supposed that this denotes both the noble and the mean; as if he had said, "Not only will the common people perish, but likewise those who are eminent for riches, honor, and high rank." I cheerfully adopt this opinion; for איש (*ish*) is derived from *strength* and אדם (*adam*) from *earth*. But if any one prefer a more simple interpretation, I leave it to his judgment. However this may be, the Prophet includes all men, both the highest and the lowest.

16. *But Jehovah of hosts shall be exalted in judgment.* He expresses the manner, or, as it is commonly called, the formal cause, of the excellence of which he has spoken; as if he had said, "The God of hosts, whom ungodly men insolently tread under their feet, will be raised on high, when he shall show himself to be the judge of the world." In this manner he ridicules the foolish confidence with which the ungodly vaunted; for if judgment and righteousness must at length come forth, it follows that they shall be cast down, since the only way in which those men rise is by overturning the order of nature. And it ought to be carefully observed, that it is not more possible for wicked men to continue in prosperity than for God to permit his glory to be set aside. Though *judgment* is not at all different from *righteousness*, still the repetition is not superfluous.

And God, who is holy, shall be sanctified in righteousness. The language becomes more vehement, that wicked men may not, by a false imagination, assure themselves of uninterrupted happiness, which they cannot have, unless by setting aside the *holiness* of God. But since God *is holy* by nature, he must be *sanctified*. Hence it follows that destruction hangs over the wicked, that their obstinacy and rebellion may be subdued, for God cannot deny himself.

17. *And the lambs shall feed after their manner.* Some render it *according to their measure*, or, *in proportion to their capacity*, but it means *in the usual manner*. There are various ways of explaining this verse; but we ought first of all to observe that the Prophet intended to bring consolation to the godly, who trembled at hearing the dreadful judgments of God; for the more powerfully a man is under the influence of religion, the more does he feel the presence of the hand of God, and the more is he impressed by the apprehension of his judgment. In short, fear and reverence for God cause us to be deeply moved by everything that is presented to us in his name.

Accordingly, after having heard such dreadful threatenings, they must have fainted, if this consolation had not been added as a seasoning, to give them a taste of the mercy of God. It is customary with the prophets always to pay attention to the godly, and to support their minds. "Although, therefore," says Isaiah, "it may seem as if God were about to destroy the whole nation, still he will show himself to be a faithful shepherd to his *lambs*, and will *feed* them in his usual manner."

This is one object; but it was also the intention of the Prophet to repress

the haughtiness of the nobles, who oppressed with unjust tyranny the godly and poor, and yet boasted that they were the Church of God. He reminds them, therefore, that it is an idle and false boasting, when they assume the designation of God's flock; for they are *goats*, not *lambs*. Not only will God have it in his power to feed his flock, when the *goats* have been cut off, but it will never fare well with the *lambs* till they have been separated from the *goats*.

And the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat. There is a still greater diversity here among commentators; but I consider the true meaning to be, that the children of God, banished and treated as foreigners for a time, will regain their lost rights, and will then obtain those places which have been laid *waste*, or reduced to desolation by *the fat ones*, that is, by the proud and cruel men who had seized their property. For he calls the children of God *strangers* who would be exiles for a time, and by *waste places*, or *forsaken places*, he means those possessions which they had relinquished, and which others had seized. He refers to a custom well known and exceedingly common, which is, that if any one possess fields or houses, he keeps his hand, as it were, stretched over them, so that no one will venture to touch a clod; but if he forsake them they are seized. The people, therefore, had forsaken the possessions from which they had been expelled, so far as to despair of being ever able to regain them; so that they might justly be called *forsaken places*, with respect to themselves, and *forsaken places of the fat ones*, because they had been possessed by the mighty and powerful. We may, indeed, view the expression more simply as denoting *forsaken fat places*, but it is more probable that by *the fat ones* are meant tyrants.

18. *Wo unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity!* After having inserted a short consolation for the purpose of allaying the bitterness of punishments as regards the godly, he returns to threatenings, and proceeds to launch those thunderbolts of words which are fitted to awaken some degree of alarm. By *cords* he means nothing else than the allurements by which men suffer themselves to be deceived, and harden their heart in crimes; for either they ridicule the judgment of God, or they contrive vain excuses, and allege the plea of necessity. Any concealment, therefore, which they employ, he calls *cords*; for whenever men are prompted to sin by the lust of the flesh, they at first pause, and feel that something within restrains them, which would certainly keep them back, if they did not rush forward with opposing violence, and break through all opposition. When any man is tempted to do what is sinful, his conscience secretly asks him, What are you doing? And sin never advances so freely as not to feel this check; for God intended in this manner to provide for the good of mankind, lest all should break out into unbridled licentiousness.

How comes it, then, that men are so obstinate in doing what is sinful? Assuredly they permit themselves to be deceived by allurements, and stupify their minds, that they may despise the judgment of God, and may thus have

some freedom to commit sin. They flatter themselves by imagining that what is sin is not sin, or by some excuse or idle pretense they lessen its enormity. These, then, are *cords*, wicked *ropes*, by which they *draw iniquity.* Hence it is evident that the Lord has good reason for threatening them; for they sin, not only of their own accord, but perversely and obstinately, and, in short, they bind themselves to sin, so that they are without excuse.

19. *Who say, Let him make speed.* He specifies one class of sins, by means of which he shows that they *draw sins as by ropes.* When men not only lay aside all thought of the Divine judgment, but despise and treat as fabulous all that is said about it, nothing can be worse than this. He intended to say that the utmost contempt is manifested when men, to whom the judgment of God has been declared, say that it would give them joy to see it, and treat it with ridicule as a silly alarm; which is denoted by these words full of contempt and of wicked confidence: *Let him come, let him make speed.*

Work, is here put, by way of eminence, (κατ ἐξοχὴν,) for *judgment*; for God appears to be doing nothing when he does not punish the crimes of the ungodly; but when he rises up to execute *judgment*, and inflicts punishment, his *work* is then seen, and becomes visible (as is commonly said) by action; because from the very fact we learn that the world is governed by his authority and power. *Work*, therefore, is taken specially for *judgment*; because by means of it we see that God is by no means unemployed, but performs his office. Now, ungodly men speak of him with reproach and contempt, and at this very day we have abundant instances of such wickedness and rebellion; and the same war which was formerly waged by the prophets is that which we also are called to maintain.

The ungodly think that God does nothing, and cares not about the affairs of men; as Epicurus thought that God's highest happiness consisted in his being free from all occupation. Though they imagine that there is some God, yet they do not at all acknowledge his *judgment*; and in the meantime they bid themselves be of good cheer, and resolve that they will not wear themselves out by such thoughts. "Let these prophets and ministers cry, and bawl, and hold out terrors and threatenings; we will wait without any concern for what they tell us, and in the meantime we will enjoy our mirth." In this way the Prophet relates the speeches of the ungodly, by which they expressed ridicule and contempt of the word. Not only do they say, *Let his work come, but, Let him hasten, Let him make speed;* for when he delays, they conclude that everything which God does not execute as soon as he has spoken it is idle talk. Thus Peter represents the ungodly as saying,

"*Since the world was created*, the course of nature has been uniform; and, therefore, after so many ages, it is idle to
expect a day of judgment." (2 Peter 3:4.)

In the meantime, they purposely, as it were, provoke God to exert his power immediately, if he has any.

Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come. To *work*

is added *counsel*, as if they had said, "Why does God deliberate so long, or say what he intends to do? Let him rather show that what he has decreed is accomplished." It is a great aggravation of their crime, that they wickedly dared to set aside the doctrine which was well known to them. They were more wicked than the heathen Gentiles in this respect, that they despised the doctrine by which he had adopted them to be his peculiar people.

That we may see it. These are proofs of infidelity; for ungodly men will not acknowledge God, unless they have immediate evidence of his presence, and they refuse to believe his words. Now, if the Holy Spirit, by means of this mark, holds up ungodly men to detestation, we ought to testify our faith and piety by the opposite sign, that is, by relying on the word of God, though the effect does not immediately appear; for it is the peculiar excellence of faith to hold us dependent on the mouth of God. True, we next derive confirmation from works, but we must not begin at them; for this is the distinction between the elect and the reprobate, that the elect simply rely on the word, but do not disregard works, while ungodly men scorn and disdain the word, though God speak a hundred times; and yet they continually and eagerly call upon him for works. And when the judgment of God is declared, they say, "Where is it?" They cannot endure the mention of it, unless it be immediately made known by action. When men are so immoderate, it follows that they have no faith, but rather obstinate rebelliousness, Which more and more withdraws and estranges man from God.

20. *Wo to them that call evil good.* Though some limit this statement to judges, yet if it be carefully examined, we shall easily learn from the whole context that it is general; for, having a little before reproved those who cannot listen to any warnings, he now proceeds with the same reproof. It is evident that men of this sort have always some excuse to plead, and some way of imposing on themselves; and, therefore, there is no end to their reproachful language, when their crimes are brought to light. But here he particularly reproves the insolence of those who endeavor to overthrow all distinction between *good* and *evil*

The preposition ל (*lamed*), prefixed to the words *good* and *evil*, is equivalent to *Of*; and therefore the meaning is, *They who say of evil, It is good, and of good, It is evil*; that is, they who by vain hypocrisy conceal, excuse, and disguise wicked actions, as if they would change the nature of everything by their sophistical arguments, but who, on the contrary deface good actions by their calumnies. These things are almost always joined together, for every one in whom the fear of God dwells is restrained both by conscience and by modesty from venturing to apologize for his sins, or to condemn what is good and right; but they who have not this fear do not hesitate with the same impudence to commend what is bad and to condemn what is good; which is a proof of desperate wickedness.

This statement may be applied to various cases; for if a *wo* is here pronounced even on private individuals, when they *say of evil that it is good,*

and of good that it is evil, how much more on those who have been raised to any elevated rank, and discharge a public office, whose duty it is to defend what is right and honorable! But he addresses a general reproof to all who flatter themselves in what is evil, and who, through the hatred which they bear to virtue, condemn what is done aright; and not only so, but who, by the subterfuges which they employ for the sake of concealing their own enormities, harden themselves in wickedness. Such persons, the Prophet tells us, act as if they would change *light into darkness, and sweet into bitter*; by which he means that their folly is monstrous, for it would tend to confound and destroy all the principles of nature.

21. *Wo to them that are wise in their own eyes!* Here he proceeds to rebuke those on whom no instruction can produce a good effect, and who do not allow any wise counsels or godly warnings to gain admission. In short, he pronounces a curse on obstinate scorners, who set up either the lusts of the flesh or a preposterous confidence in their wisdom, in opposition to God's instruction and warnings. And not only does he rebuke those who are puffed up with a false conviction of their wisdom, and are ashamed to learn from others, but he likewise pronounces a general condemnation on all who, through prejudices in their own favor, refuse to hear God speaking, and to listen to his holy warnings.

This fault has been too common in all ages, and we see it in very many persons at the present day, who, though they would shrink from openly rejecting the doctrine of godliness, are yet so far from being truly obedient and teachable, that they haughtily reject everything that does not please them. They acknowledge that they need some bridle, but, on the other hand, are so much blinded by their presumption, that, when God points out the way, they immediately rebel; and not only so, but break out into violent indignation at the censure passed on their proceedings. Nay, where is the man who renounces his own judgment, and is ready to learn only from the mouth of God? But nothing is more destructive than this deceitful show of wisdom; for the beginning of piety is willingness to be taught, when we have renounced our own judgment and follow wherever God calls.

Nor is this false belief condemned solely on the ground of its rendering men disobedient to God, and thus being the cause of their ruin, but also on the ground of being in itself what God cannot endure. We must become fools if we desire to be God's disciples. But it is also certain that mad rebellion reigns wherever there is not found that modesty and humility which leads a man willingly to yield subjection, *In their own eyes* means what we say in French, *a leur semblant*, that is, *in their own conceit*

22. *Wo to them that are mighty to drink wine!* Isaiah now censures another vice, namely, drunkenness and excess in eating, of which he had spoken before; so that probably this chapter is collected from various sermons, and the leading topics only are briefly touched; for when the Prophet saw no repentance, he was forced to repeat and frequently inculcate the

same instructions. He therefore returns to the same reproofs which he had previously noticed; for he again discourses about drunkenness, luxury, covetousness, and other corruptions. Hence we ought to conclude, that when warnings produce no good effect, we ought to employ greater earnestness in addressing the obstinate and disobedient, and that we must not be afraid of giving offense by our eagerness, but must frequently repeat the reproofs, until they either yield or manifest incurable malice.

By calling them *strong or powerful to drink*, he wittily accuses them of wasting their strength in bacchanalian warfare. It is disgraceful and beastly ambition, when a man of vigorous health makes a display of his strength by drinking largely. Employing a figure of speech (*synecdoche*) which is frequent in the Prophets, and indeed in the whole of Scripture, he takes a part for the whole; as if he had said, "Wo to gluttony; Wo to intemperance." But he purposely mentioned that which was disgraceful in the highest degree, in order to render that vice generally hated and abhorred; for, as we have said, nothing is more base or disgraceful than for a man to make trial of his strength in swallowing food or in guzzling wine, and thus struggling with himself so as to cram down as much as his belly can hold. Such men keep by no rule of life, and do not know why God gives them nourishment; for we eat and drink to support the body, and not to destroy it. We live that we may yield worship and obedience to God, and that we may render assistance to our neighbors. When men act so as not to maintain their strength, but to destroy it by trying how much food and wine they can bear, most certainly they are worse than beasts.

23. *Who justify the wicked for a reward.* He censures a corruption which at that time abounded in judgment-seats, and points out the reason why there is no room for justice in these places, namely, that they are under the influence of *gifts*. For covetousness *blindeth the eyes of the wise, and perverteth* all regard to what is good and just, even among those who would otherwise be disposed to follow what is right. (Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19.)

It may be objected that there are other methods, and that it is not by *gifts* only that judgments are perverted; for favor, hatred, friendship, and other sinful passions, often blind the understanding. This is undoubtedly true; but the Prophet had in his eye what happens for the most part, (ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ,) and at the same time did not intend to spare those vices which he did not express by name. Following this example, godly teachers ought to be wise and careful in observing and correcting the vices which most extensively abound among the people, and most of all to oppose everything which appears to be sanctioned by wicked custom.

Now this corruption which is mentioned is that which most frequently of all is to be found in judgment-seats; and, therefore, it ought to be most carefully avoided by those judges who wish to form an upright judgment. Nor ought we to listen to what is affirmed by many, that *gifts* are not bestowed

on them for that purpose, or that, after having accepted them, they are as free as ever to give a just decision; for where *gifts* are allowed, the regard to what is just and right must be corrupted, and it is impossible for your mind not to be favourably disposed towards him from whom you received them. In short, we should hear the Lord, who declares that the understanding of the wisest man is corrupted, and the disposition of the most upright man is perverted, unless we choose to be thought wiser than God.

24. *Therefore as the flame of fire devoureth the stubble.* Lest it should be thought that he has so frequently cried out without good reason, he again shows what grievous and dreadful punishment awaits the nation, and threatens utter destruction to the stubborn, because they did not permit themselves to be brought back to the right path, but obstinately resisted instruction. He employs metaphors exceedingly well adapted to express his meaning, and better fitted to affect their hearts than if he had spoken plainly and without a figure. He begins with a comparison, but immediately slides into a metaphor, attributing a *root* and *branch* to the nation as to a tree. Under those two words he includes all the strength, either hidden or visible, that belongs to the nation, and says that the whole will be destroyed; for when the root, which alone gives strength and nourishment to the tree, becomes rotten, it is all over with the tree; and in like manner he threatens that it is all over with the nation, and that its whole strength is wasted and consumed.

Because they have rejected the law of Jehovah of hosts. He does not now enumerate, as formerly, the particular kinds of crime by which they had provoked the wrath of God, but assigns a general cause, namely, contempt of the law of God; for this, as all men know, is the source of everything bad. And it is no small aggravation of their crime that, when the will of God had been made known to them in his law, it was not through ignorance or mistake, but through inveterate malice, that they shook of the yoke of God, and abandoned themselves to every kind of licentiousness; which was nothing else than to reject so kind a Father, and to give themselves up to be the slaves of the devil. Besides, he accuses them of open revolt; as if he had said that it was not in one or a few instances that they were rebellious, but that they might be regarded as treacherous apostates, and had altogether forsaken God.

And loathed the word of the Holy One of Israel. He complains that they not only despised the word of God, but — what is far more shocking — turned away from it, or threw it away in wicked disdain. But if contempt for *the law of God* is the source, head, and accumulation of all that is evil, there is nothing against which we ought more carefully to guard than that Satan should take away our reverence for it; and if there are any faults to which we are liable, we ought, at least, to allow a remedy to be applied to them, if we do not choose, by wickedly rejecting it, to draw down upon ourselves everlasting destruction.

25. *Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled.* In this verse the Prophet relates the former punishments which the Jews had already endured, and shows that they are not near an end; but that, on the contrary, heavier judgments await them, if they do not return to the right path. I readily acknowledge that the past tense is frequently employed instead of the future, but the meaning which I have stated will best agree with the context; for there are two things quite distinct from each other, which he lays down, on account of the resolute obstinacy of the people. First, how God perceives their crimes. Secondly, since there are no signs of repentance, he has other scourges within his reach for chastising the people. Thirdly, he describes what those scourges are, and forewarns them that the Assyrians will come at the bidding of the Lord, as soon as he shall express it by merely *hissing* to them, (verse. 26.)

Such is the connection of what the Prophet states; and hence it ought to be observed that the great body of men, as soon as they have escaped any calamity, forget their chastisements, and no longer regard them as the judgments of God; and that, though experience be the instructor of fools, still they grow hardened by strokes. This insensibility Isaiah sharply rebukes; as if he had said, "Have you so quickly forgotten the calamities under which you lately groaned? Whence came the distressful casting out of dead bodies, but because God had raised his arm against you? And if God has discharged the office of a judge, why do not those recent chastisements induce you to fear him, and to refrain from drawing down a succession of chastisements by new crimes?"

Accordingly, he repeats the term עַל-כֵּן, (*gnal ken,*) *therefore*; as if he had said that those distresses are not accidental, but are manifest tokens of God's vengeance; and so he expressly says that God *was angry with his people*; for if the Jews had not fallen from their own rank, their condition would have been happier than that of any other nation. When God's chosen people, therefore, are treated by him with so much sharpness and severity, it is beyond all doubt that he has been provoked by heinous crimes. At the same time he refutes the false boasting by which the Jews were wont to vaunt and exalt themselves, as if they ought to be exempt from chastisements on the ground of their being God's peculiar people.

And the mountains trembled. By this comparison the dreadful nature of those punishments to which they were insensible is described in such a manner as to prove more clearly the stupidity of the people. They were more stupid than inanimate objects, if they did not perceive the wrath of God, and the dreadful vengeance which had been inflicted on the kingdom of Israel.

For all these things. He threatens heavier chastisements in future, as we have already said; for although wicked men acknowledge that the Lord has punished them, still they think that they have no right to expect anything more than one or two chastisements. As if therefore nothing worse could

befall them, and as if God's power to punish them had been exhausted, they wrap themselves up in blind indifference. This is the reason why he exclaims that the wrath of God is not yet appeased, and that, although it has inflicted on them many calamities, still it has within its stores many weapons from which they have reason to dread innumerable wounds.

The copulative ו (*vau*) may be taken as a disjunctive, so as to mean, *but, on the contrary, his hand is stretched out still.* He refers to what he had formerly said, that *the hand of God is stretched out.* He tells them that it is not yet drawn back, and that it may yet pursue them, and inflict plagues of the same kind, or even of greater severity. We ought diligently to meditate on these statements, in order to shake off that drowsiness to which the greater part of men are frequently liable, even after having received chastisements.

26. *And he will lift up an ensign to the nations.* In this and the following verses he describes the nature of the punishment which the Lord would inflict on his people; namely, that they were about to suffer from the Assyrians a similar, or even a heavier calamity, than that which their brethren the Israelites had lately endured. Many distresses had indeed been suffered by themselves from the Assyrians, though the kingdom of Judah was not yet overturned. Besides, what had befallen the kingdom of Israel might be viewed as a mirror in which they could behold God's wrath and righteous chastisement.

And yet this prediction, though it was accompanied by clear proofs, must undoubtedly have appeared to be incredible; for at that time they enjoyed repose, and the slightest truce of any kind easily laid them asleep. He says, therefore, that this calamity will come to them from distant nations, from whom nothing of this kind was expected; and he sounds an alarm as if the enemy were already at hand. It is not for the sake of soothing their fear that he uses those words, *from afar,* and *from the end of the earth*; but, on the contrary, he speaks in this manner for the express purpose of informing them that they ought not to judge of the anger of God from what meets the eye, for we are wont to judge of dangers from the outward appearance of things. Now, if the enemies are not so near, or if other circumstances hinder them from giving us immediate annoyance, we give ourselves no concern. Thus the people were lulled into a profound sleep, as if there were no danger to be dreaded. But Isaiah says that this will not hinder the Lord from *erecting a banner*, and instantly commissioning the Assyrians to slaughter them. The expression is metaphorical; for when a banner is displayed it is customary for soldiers, at the bidding of their general, to advance in hostile array and rush into the battle.

He will hiss to it. [91] Though a change of number frequently occurs in Scripture, yet it is on solid grounds that the Prophet, by changing the

[91] "The metaphor is taken from the practice of those that keep bees, who draw them out of their hives into the fields, and lead them back again, , by a hiss or a whistle;" Cyril on the place: and to the same purpose Theodoret, ibid. In Isaiah 7:18, the metaphor is more apparent by being carried further, where the hostile armies are expressed by the fly and the bee: —

number, makes many nations to be but one nation. The meaning is, that when it shall please God to assemble various nations, and form them into one body, it will not be a confused multitude, but will resemble a body which has a visible head that rules and guides. He chose to employ the word *hiss* rather than a word of weightier import, such as *sound a trumpet*, or anything of that sort; in order to show that God does not need to sound a trumpet in order to call the enemies to battle, and that he has no difficulty in inflicting punishment when the time for taking vengeance is fully at hand, for by a mere nod he can accomplish the whole. [92]

And lo, it will come speedy and swift. This confirms still more what I have already observed, that we ought not to judge of the anger of the Lord from the present appearance of things; for although everything appears to give assurances of peace, yet suddenly war will break out from a quarter from which we do not expect it. Even though we think that we are defended on all sides by friends, yet God will stir up enemies from the farthest corners of the earth, who will break through every obstruction, and overtake us with ease, as if the way were plain and smooth. This ought to be carefully observed, that we may not suffer ourselves to be blinded by vain presumption and foolish confidence.

We ought also to observe that wars are not kindled accidentally, or by an arrangement of men, but by the command of God, as if he assembled the soldiers by the sound of a trumpet. Whether, therefore, we are afflicted by battle, or by famine, or by pestilence, let us know that all this comes from the hand of God, for all things obey him and follow his direction. And yet it was not the intention of the Chaldeans to obey God, for they were hurried on by their eagerness to obtain wealth and power, while he has quite another object in view: but God employs their agency for executing his judgments. Hence arises a remarkable and illustrious display of the power of God, which is not limited by the will of men, or dependent on their decisions, but leads them, though contrary to their wish, or without their knowledge, to obey him. And yet it is no excuse for the ungodly that they are drawn contrary to the disposition of their mind, and do not willingly serve God, for they aim at nothing else than fraud, cruelty, and violence; and by their cruelty God punishes the transgressions and crimes of his people.

27. *None shall be weary, nor stumble among them.* The meaning is, that everything will be prepared and arranged in such a manner that there shall be no delay or obstruction to their march; as if a prince, having recruited the ranks of his soldiers, immediately gave orders that the roads should be cleared, provisions obtained, and everything necessary provided. He there-

[92] More than three hundred years have elapsed since Calvin wrote these words, and Englishmen of the present day do not carry bows and arrows into the field of battle. On the whole subject of war the opinions of Englishmen are underdoing an important revolution. Many of them entertain a confident hope that ere long the bullet as well as the arrow, the cannon as well as the bow, will be laid aside; that the revolting spectacle of human beings drawn up in companies, for the purpose of wholesale murder, will disappear from the earth; and that men will beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. — Ed.

fore shows that they will be fleet and swift, and that there will be nothing to hinder their rapid march.

None shall slumber nor sleep. He expresses their vast activity by saying that they will not be drowsy. In these words, *they shall not slumber nor sleep*, the natural order is inverted, He ought rather to have said, *They shall not sleep nor slumber*; for it is a smaller matter to *slumber* than to *sleep*. But that phrase ought to be explained in this manner: *They shall not slumber nor even sleep*; that is, they will be so far from *sleeping*, that they will not even *slumber*. You have an instance of this in these words:

Lo, he that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
(Psalm 121:4.)

It is a Hebrew phrase, with which neither the Greek nor the Latin idiom agrees.

28. *Their arrows will be sharp.* He means that they will be provided with necessary weapons. The custom alluded to is that which existed among the Assyrians and other eastern nations, who frequently made use of bows and arrows in battle, as Englishmen of the present day enter into the battlefield with a loaded quiver. [93] Under this class he includes every kind of weapons of war. But as the way was long, and the journey difficult, the Jew might think that many things would occur to interrupt the march of the enemy. He therefore says, that *the hoofs of the horses will be like flint*; by which he means that they will suffer no molestation, and will at length arrive in Judea without weariness. For a similar reason he compares *their wheels to a whirlwind*. The ancients were wont to employ chariots in going to war, and therefore he mentions not only *horses*, but *wheels*. All these circumstances must be understood to relate to the haste and rapidity with which they would proceed; or, in other words, that no length of journey would prevent the Lord from carrying forward the enemies without delay for the destruction of the Jews.

29. *His roaring shall be like that of a lion.* This denotes fierceness and cruelty, for he compares the Chaldeans to *lions*, which, we know, are frightful to behold, and savage by nature; as if he had said that they would not be men who were moved by any feeling of compassion or tenderness, but rather that they would be savage beasts. He adds, that they will likewise possess great strength, so that none will venture to approach for rescuing their prey. He means that the Jews will have no defense for warding off their attacks, because the dread of their cruelty will keep all at a distance from them. It was God who employed their agency in punishing the Jews, and therefore it was necessary that they should be armed with formidable power, that this wayward people might at length acknowledge that they had to do not with men but with

God, into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall.
(Hebrews 10:31.)

[93] And in that day they shall roar against them. — Eng. Ver.

30. *He shall roar against him.* [94] The Prophet adds this, that the Jews may understand that the fierce attack of the Chaldeans is not accidental, but that they have been appointed by God and are guided by his hand. By *the roaring of the sea* he means an attack so violent that it will look like a deluge, by which the whole of Judea will suffer shipwreck. He likewise cuts off all hope by foretelling that the punishment will have no alleviation and no end. "The Jews," he says, "will do what is usually done in a season of perplexity, will cast their eyes up and down to discover the means of escape; but in whatever direction they look, whether to heaven or to earth, they will find no relief whatever; for on all sides distresses and calamities will overwhelm them." This mode of expression has come to be frequently employed even by the common people, when misery and ruin appear on all sides, and no escape or relief can be found. This must unavoidably happen when the Lord pursues us, so that his uplifted arm meets our eyes on every side, and, wherever we turn, we behold his creatures armed against us to execute his judgments; for we may sometimes escape the hand of men, but how can we escape the hand of God?

[94] And his train filled the temple. [Or, the skirts thereof.] — Eng. Ver. And the train of his robe filled the temple. — Lowth. And his flowing train filled the temple. — Stock. That author adds in a note: "I add the epithet flowing, to distinguish the train of a robe from what the English word equally imports, a train of attendants; and שול is from שׁל to loosen, to flow loosely." --- Ed

Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6.

Isaiah Chapter 6:1-13

1. In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

1. Anno mortis regis Usiae, vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum, cujus extrema replebant templum.

2. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

2. Et seraphim stabant super ipsum: erant singulis sex alae; duabus operiebant faciem suam; duabus tegebant pedes suos; et duabus volabant.

3. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

3. Et clamabant alter alteri, dicentes, Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Iehova exercituum; plena est omnis terra gloriae ejus.

4. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

4. Et commota sunt superliminaria postium a voce clamantis; et domus impleta est fumo.

5. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

5. Tunc dixi, Vae mihi, quia excisus sum (vel in silentium redactus); cum homo sim pollutis labiis, et in medio populi habitem polluta labia habentis; et tamen regem Iehovam exercituum viderunt oculi mei.

6. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the alter:

6. Volavit autem ad me unus ex seraphim; habens in manu sua carbonem ardentem, forcipe correptum ab altari.

7. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

7. Et applicans super os meum, dixit, Ecce, tetigit hoc labia tua, et expiabitur peccatum tuum.

8. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

8. Postea audivi vocem Domini dicentis, Quem mittam? et quis ibit nobis? Tum dixi, Ecce ego, mitte me.

9. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

9. Tum dixit, Vade, et dic populo isti; audiendo audite, et ne intelligatis; videndo videto, et nesciatis;

10. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

10. Obstina cor populi hujus, et aures ejus aggrava, et oculos ejus obline; ne forte videat oculis suis, et auribus suis audiat, et cor ejus intelligat, et ubi conversus fuerit, sit illi sanatio.

11. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

11. Et dixi, Usque quo, Domine? et ait, Dum fuerint vastatae civitates absque habitatore, et domus vacuatae fuerint hominibus, et terra redacta fuerit in solitudinem;

12. And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

12. Donec procul amoverit Deus homines, sitque multa vastitas in medio terrae;

13. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil-tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves, so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

13. Donec in ea decima, et revertetur; et erit in excidium sicut tilia et quercus, quibus in projectione est subsistentia; ita in hac erit subsistentia, semen sanctum.

1. *In the year that king Uzziah died.* This is usually the beginning of the sixth chapter; but some think that it is the beginning of the book itself, and that in collecting the prophecies of Isaiah an error was committed. The reason which they assign is, that the Prophet here declines the office of a teacher, which he would not have refused if he had hitherto discharged it; that he appears to be a mere novice as yet unacquainted with his calling; and besides, that he declares that he has now seen the Lord, and that he has not

seen him, before. But such arguments I consider, as I have already noticed, to be too feeble and unsatisfactory; and I reply that it ought not to be thought strange that he was so completely overpowered by this extraordinary vision as to forget that he was a prophet. For there was no feeling in him which was not overpowered by the presence of God, so that, like one who had lost his senses, he willingly plunged himself in darkness, or rather, like one who despaired of life, he of his own accord chose to die. And it is necessary that the godly should be affected in this manner, when the Lord gives them tokens of his presence, that they may be brought low and utterly confounded. Besides, in the person of his servant God intended to strike his rebellious people with alarm; and therefore we need not wonder if he offers an apology for himself under the overwhelming influence of fear, and likewise because he had not felt the weight of his office, as he now felt it, after having beheld an illustrious display of the majesty of God.

But why was not this vision exhibited to him at the beginning? I answer, it was necessary in regard to the time, that he might be more and more confirmed in the discharge of his office. We have an instance of this in the Apostles themselves; for at first they were sent out with an injunction not to pass beyond the limits of Judea, (Matthew 10:5;) but after that Christ had risen, he again set them *apart* in a new and solemn manner, *breathed on them, bidding them receive the Holy Ghost*, (John 20:21,22;) and not only so, but sending his Spirit from heaven *in the forms of tongues of fire*, invested them with extraordinary power. (Acts 2:3.) Thus, on account of the various changes of times and of kings, it was necessary that Isaiah should be encouraged and again attested by a new vision; that he might be excited to perseverance, and might afterwards proceed with greater cheerfulness in his course; and also that the Jews might perceive his ministry to be supported by heavenly authority.

This appears to me to be a sufficient reason why this vision was not exhibited to him at the very beginning, but after that he had for some time discharged the office of a teacher. That this was not the beginning of the prophecy is evident enough from the consideration that the preface, which we have already examined, is much better adapted for the commencement, and more appropriate than what is contained in this chapter; and every approach having been shut up by the hard-hearted obstinacy of the people, it was proper that he should burst forth in this vehement manner. Besides, it is probable that he had long performed the office of a teacher under King Uzziah, who, I think, was dead before this prediction was published. In short, the Prophet means that it was not till he had commenced his course that God appeared to him.

Some think that *death* here means *leprosy*, which undoubtedly was a civil death, when the king was compelled to withdraw from the society of men, and to lay down the reins of government, (2 Kings 15:5;) but I choose rather to take *death* in its literal sense. So then, I think that Isaiah uttered the

former predictions during the reign of Uzziah, even after he had been struck with leprosy; and that when he had died, and Jotham had succeeded him, this vision was presented to Isaiah. We know what various commotions are produced by a change of kings, so that we need not wonder that Isaiah had his calling again sealed. But the prophecy itself, which follows, will sufficiently show that he had been a public teacher for some time before he *saw the* Lord; for it relates that the blinding of the people, whose obstinacy he had experienced to such an extent that he might have been induced to cease from his undertaking, for he saw that he was doing no good. The Lord, therefore, confirms him by this vision, that the opposition may not prevent him from boldly discharging his office, and performing what he undertook at the commandment of God.

I saw the Lord It is asked, How could Isaiah see God who *is a Spirit*, (John 4:24,) and, therefore, cannot be seen with bodily eyes? Nay, more, since the understandings of men cannot rise to his boundless height, how can he be seen in a visible shape? But we ought to be aware that, when God exhibited himself to the view of the Fathers, he never appeared such as he actually is, but such as the capacity of men could receive. Though men may be said to creep on the ground, or at least dwell far below the heavens, there is no absurdity in supposing that God comes down to them in such a manner as to cause some kind of mirror to reflect the rays of his glory. There was, therefore, exhibited to Isaiah such a form as enabled him, according to his capacity, to perceive the inconceivable majesty of God; and thus he attributes to God a *throne*, a *robe*, and a bodily appearance.

Hence we learn a profitable doctrine, that whenever God grants any token of his presence, he is undoubtedly present with us, for he does not amuse us by unmeaning shapes, as men wickedly disfigure him by their contrivances. since, therefore, that exhibition was no deceitful representation of the presence of God, Isaiah justly declares that he *saw him.* In like manner, when it is said that John

saw the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove, (John 1:32)

the name of the Holy Spirit is applied to the outward sign, because in the representation there was no deception; and yet he did not see the essence of the Spirit, but had a clear and undoubted proof, so that he could not doubt that the Spirit of God rested on Christ.

Secondly, it is asked, Who was that Lord? John tells us that it was Christ, (John 12:41,) and justly, for God never revealed himself to the Fathers but in his eternal Word and only begotten Son. Yet it is wrong, I think, to limit this, as some do, to the person of Christ; for it is indefinitely, on the contrary, that the Prophet calls him God. Nor do their views derive any support from the word אדוני, (*adonai*,) which seems particularly to apply to Christ; for it is often applied to God in an absolute and unrestricted manner. In this passage, therefore, God is mentioned indefinitely, and yet it is correctly said that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, for at that very time he was *the image*

of the invisible God. (Colossians 1:15.)

Sitting upon a throne. He could not have given a better description of God, in regard to place, than in the person of a Judge, that his majesty might strike greater terror into the Jews; for we shall afterwards see the dreadful judgment which the Lord pronounced from his judgment-seat. But lest we should suppose that the Prophet contrived the manner in which he would paint God, we ought to know that he faithfully describes the very form in which God was represented and exhibited to him. It may be questioned whether the Prophet was conducted into the temple, or saw this vision while he was asleep. Though many things are frequently adduced on both sides, which are fitted to leave the matter in doubt, yet it may be conjectured with some probability, that even if he had not been within the temple, this vision might have been presented to him, either in his own house or on a field, in the same manner as to other prophets.

And his remotest parts filled the temple. [95] Almost all the commentators understand by this the fringes of his robe, though it may be understood to refer to the extremities of the judgment-seat, giving us to understand that its dimensions were so vast as to extend to every part of *the temple.* He intends to ascribe to God a venerable aspect, and far beyond any human form. There is great weight in the circumstance that he appeared in *the temple*; for he had promised that he would meet with his people there, and the people expected his answers from that place, as Solomon had expressly stated at the dedication of it. (1 Kings 8:30.) In order, therefore, that the people might understand that those things came from God, on whom they called every day, and on whom they relied with a vain confidence which puffed them up, this vision was exhibited to the Prophet *in the temple.* To the certainty of what was said it contributed not a little, that he openly proclaimed that the discourse was not pronounced to him by any mortal man, but was a heavenly oracle, uttered by that God whose name they were accustomed disdainfully to hold out as a pretense, whenever they wished to make any extravagant claims; for otherwise this prophecy would have been harsh and repulsive, and needed great confirmation. It was also not uncommon with the Prophets to say that the Lord spake to them *from his temple*, or *from his sanctuary*

2. *And the seraphim stood upon it.* Having declared that God appeared to him full of majesty and of glory, he adds, that God was attended by angels, whom the Prophet calls *seraphim* on account of their fervor. Though the etymology of this word is well known, yet various reasons are adduced. Some think that they are called *seraphim* because they burn with the love of God; others, because they are swift like fire; others, because they are bright. However that may be, this description holds out to us, as in sunbeams, the brightness of God's infinite majesty, that we may learn by it to behold and adore his wonderful and overwhelming glory.

[95] For mine eyes have seen the king, the LORD of hosts. — Eng. Ver.

Many think that there were two *seraphim*, as there were two cherubim that encompassed the ark of the testimony. This opinion I willingly adopt, though I do not venture to make any assertion where Scripture is silent. As it is customary with the sacred writers to accommodate their descriptions of God to those outward signs which were commonly used and familiarly known among the godly, it is possible that the Prophet saw a representation of this kind. While I hold this to be a probable conjecture, I leave room for other interpretations which some may be disposed to prefer; for Daniel saw not two angels only, but thousands of thousands of angels. (Daniel 7:10.)

Each one had six wings. This representation is instructive; for those wings thus arranged contained some mystery which it was the will of the Lord should not remain wholly unknown. The *two wings* with which the angels *fly* mean nothing else than their ready and cheerful performance of the commandments of God. On this point the resemblance is so clear and manifest, that it will be at once admitted by all who do not take delight in controversy. The *two wings* with which they *cover their face* show plainly enough that even angels cannot endure God's brightness, and that they are dazzled by it in the same manner as when we attempt to gaze upon the radiance of the sun. And if angels are overwhelmed by the majesty of God, how great will be the rashness of men if they venture to intrude so far! Let us, therefore, learn that our inquiries concerning God ought never to go beyond what is proper and lawful, that our knowledge may soberly and modestly taste what is far above our capacity. And yet the angels do not cover their face in such a manner as not to be favored with beholding God in some degree; for their flight is not at random. In like manner we too ought to look at God, but only so far as our capacity shall enable us.

As to the remaining *two wings,* which were placed lower, the difficulty is somewhat greater. Some think that the angels *covered their feet*, that they might not touch the earth, and contract any defilement from it, as human beings like ourselves are wont to do; for in walking we gather filth and dust, and accordingly, so long as we dwell on earth, we are always tainted by some kind of contagion. This reminds believers that they will have no intercourse with angels till they raise themselves high, and are no longer fastened to the earth.

Such is the interpretation given by some expositors. But I rather agree with those who think that the use of those *wings* was opposite to that of the upper *wings*; for, as by the upper wings they *cover their face*, that they may not be overpowered by God's brightness, so they have also lower wings to conceal them from our view. Now, if it be true that we cannot behold the small and feeble rays of the Divine brightness without being altogether overpowered, how could we gaze upon that unspeakably bright and glorious majesty which lays prostrate all our faculties? Let men learn, therefore, that they are far distant from a perfect knowledge of God, since they cannot even reach to the angels. The latter appears to me to be the more correct

exposition, but I do not disapprove of the former.

3. *And they cried one to another.* It was necessary that all these things should be presented to the Prophet in vision, in order to produce a stronger impression on the people, and on Isaiah himself; for the vision was not less necessary to him than to the whole nation, because sharp and painful struggles awaited him, and he could not have boldly announced those events if he had not been previously confirmed. The people also, being warned by this vision how great and how dreadful was the majesty of God, by whom this condemnation was pronounced, had good reason for being alarmed. He who now came forth to public view is God, at the sight of whom the very angels tremble, whose praises they continually and loudly utter, and whom, in a word, they serve and obey; but men, whom he had been pleased to adopt as his children, obstinately and rebelliously opposed him.

Now, when we are informed that the angels are employed in uttering the glory of God, let us know that their example is set before us for imitation; for the most holy service that we can render to him is, to be employed in praising his name. When he associates us with angels, it is in order that, while we sojourn on earth, we may resemble and be joined to the inhabitants of heaven. That the harmony between us and the angels may be in every respect complete, we must take care not only that the praises of God may be sounded by our tongues, but likewise that all the actions of our life may correspond to our professions; and this will only be done if the chief aim of our actions be the glory of God.

Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts. The ancients quoted this passage when they wished to prove that there are three persons in one essence of the Godhead. I do not disagree with their opinion; but if I had to contend with heretics, I would rather choose to employ stronger proofs; for they become more obstinate, and assume an air of triumph, when inconclusive arguments are brought against them; and they might easily and readily maintain that, in this passage, as in other parts of Scripture, the number "three" denotes perfection. Although, therefore, I have no doubt that the angels here describe One God in Three Persons, (and, indeed, it is impossible to praise God without also uttering the praises of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit,) yet I think that it would be better to employ more conclusive passages, lest, in proving an article of our faith, we should expose ourselves to the scorn of heretics. And, indeed, this repetition rather points out unwearied perseverance, as if the Prophet had said, that the angels never cease from their melody in singing the praises of God, as the holiness of God supplies us with inexhaustible reasons for them.

The whole earth is full of his glory. Literally it is, *the fullness of the whole earth*, which might be understood to refer to the fruits, and animals, and manifold riches with which God has enriched the earth, and might convey this meaning, that in the ornaments and great variety of furniture of the world the glory of God shines, because they are so many proofs of a father's

love. But the more simple and natural interpretation is, that *the glory of God fills the whole world*, or is spread through every region of the earth. There is also, I think, an implied contrast, by which he puts down the foolish boasting of the Jews, who thought that the glory of God was nowhere to be seen but among themselves, and wished to have it shut up within their own temple. But Isaiah shows that it is so far from being confined to so narrow limits, that it fills *the whole earth.* And to this agrees the prophecy which immediately follows, (verse 10,) about the blinding of the Jews, which opened up for the Gentiles admission into the Church of God; for they occupied that place which the Jews had forsaken and left empty.

4. *And the lintels of the posts were moved.* This noise was an indication that it was not a human voice which the Prophet had heard; for no mortal man has a voice so powerful as to be capable of making the *lintels* and *posts* shake. Now, the Lord intended not only to establish the authority of his voice over the Prophet, but to confirm it to posterity in all ages, that it might never be forgotten. Let us, therefore, know that this noise confirms at this day the voice of God, that we may tremble whenever he speaks; for if inanimate and dumb creatures are moved, what ought we to do, who feel, smell, taste, and understand, for no other purpose than that we may obey his word in a holy and reverent manner?

And the house was filled with smoke. This was the common and ordinary sign which the Lord employed with his ancient people; for we read that, whenever Moses entered into the tabernacle, *smoke* was wont to be diffused through it in such a manner that the people could not see either Moses or the tabernacle. (Exodus 33:9.) The *smoke*, therefore, which Isaiah describes was not an unusual occurrence; but in the ordinary way God intended to demonstrate that he would display his power in executing judgment on the people.

But it may be asked, Why did God manifest his presence by this sign rather than by any other? This question may be answered in two ways. First, it was always the will of God to repress the insolence of men, in pushing their inquiries about his majesty beyond what is proper; for on this point almost all men are too rash and daring. They wish to rise above the clouds, and to penetrate into the secrets of God, while they do not see what lies at their feet. Hence arises a labyrinth of errors, and when the minds of men have been entangled in it, they adopt false and pretended modes of worship; for when men allow themselves to adopt any false notions about God, there is nothing which they will not venture to attempt against him. It was not without good reason, therefore, that he made use of *smoke*, in order to remind men of their weakness; and yet he did not intend that they should be blind or stupid, that is, that they should have the stupidity and error which the papists disguise under the name of simplicity; but he forbids us to inquire or search beyond what he has revealed to us in his word; for, as Augustine says, "that is a learned ignorance." Whenever, therefore, *smoke*

of this kind is mentioned, let us know that it lays a restraint upon us from indulging curiosity in our researches into the purpose of God.

Secondly, this *smoke* ought to strike terror, as David, when describing an angry and terrible God, says that *clouds and darkness are round about him.* (Psalm 97:2.) This also agrees well with the present passage; for he pronounces a dreadful judgment, namely, the blinding of the Jews. Others think that it indicated the burning by which he consumed the temple; but the view which I have given is more probable.

5. *Wo to me! for I am undone.* The Prophet now relates how powerfully he was affected by that vision; namely that he was so terrified by seeing God; that he expected immediate destruction. He assigns the reason for believing that it is all over with him; *because*, says he, *I am a man of unclean lips*

I wonder why Jerome renders it, *because I was silent*; seeing that there is no ambiguity in the expression. דמה (*damah*) does indeed signify *to be silent*, but here the undoubted mark of a passive verb is added. This passage may likewise be rendered, *Wo to me! for I have been reduced to silence.* In the Scriptures *silence* is often taken for death and those who have been buried are said to have been *reduced to silence.* But as the meaning is the same, I will not dispute much about the translation.

The Prophet therefore means, that he was so terrified as to resemble a dead man. And certainly we need not wonder at this; for the whole man, so far as relates to the flesh, must be reduced to nothing, that it may be renewed according to God. Whence comes it that men live, that is, imagine that they live, and are swelled with vain confidence in their wisdom or strength, but because they know not God? Accordingly, until God reveal himself to us, we do not think that we are men, or rather, we think that we are gods; but when we have seen God, we then begin to feel and know what we are. Hence springs true humility, which consists in this, that a man makes no claims for himself, and depends wholly on God; and therefore on this point the present and similar passages ought to be carefully studied.

It was customary with the godly fathers, whenever they saw God, to break out into these words:

I am gone; I am utterly undone. (Judges 13:22.)

Our life, therefore, until our minds earnestly draw near to God, is a vain delusion; we walk in darkness, and can with difficulty distinguish truth from falsehood; but when we come into the light it is easy to perceive the difference. So when God draws near to us, he brings light with him, that we may perceive our worthlessness, which we could not formerly see, while we entertained a false opinion of ourselves.

And yet mine eyes have seen the king, Jehovah of hosts. [96] But does the sight of God bring death to men? For it appears strange that the sight of God or approach to him should take away life, of which he is the source and giver. I reply that this is an accidental result; for it takes place through our

[96] And he laid it upon (marg., caused it to touch) my mouth. — Eng. Ver.

fault, and not on account of the nature of God. Death is within us; but we do not perceive it, unless when it is compared with the life of God. This is unquestionably what the Prophet means; for he does not merely say that he is dead, but assigns the reason, *because he has unclean lips.*

But why does he confine the pollution to the *lips*? Was he pure in understanding, or in the other parts of the body? I answer: the Prophet mentions that which he regarded as the most valuable, his tongue, which was consecrated to God; for God had appointed him to be a Prophet. Even though he was in other respects a sinner, yet because the office which he held was holy, this part of his body was sacred; and as it does not correspond to the divine holiness, he confesses that, even in that part which in itself is more holy, he is *polluted*. Such appears to me to be the true and natural meaning of this passage, in the explanation of which commentators have hitherto been unsuccessful.

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. This is added by way of explanation; for he includes himself as an individual in the number of the common people, tainted with that pollution which extends to the whole body, and forgets the purity which he had received from God, because it cannot dwell in his presence. Hence it is evident that they are mistaken who imagine that the Prophet spoke under erroneous views; as the common people are wont to contrive a variety of false notions concerning God. For, as I have said, the presence of God and approach to him is the destruction of our flesh; because it shows that we are nothing in ourselves. When he who is conscious of his wretchedness sees God, what can he expect but destruction? For God is our judge, to whom, we know, nothing is concealed or unknown, in whose sight our purity is impure. And if this happened to the Prophet, what ought we to think of ourselves? For what are we in comparison of him? Even if the LORD hath begun to cleanse us, yet we ought to acknowledge our pollution, the remains of which always continue in our flesh. Hence also we ought to draw a universal doctrine, that the *lips* of all men are impure and *polluted*, till the Lord has cleansed them; from which it also follows, that human doctrines have an uncleanness which betrays them, and that there is nothing pure but what has come from God.

6. *Then flew one of the seraphim to me.* The Prophet shows what kind of relief was brought to him, when he was so terrified as to think that he was a dead man; and this confirms what we have already said, that purity of *lips* comes from God alone; for men can produce nothing of themselves but what is filthy and abominable. If it be objected that it is absurd to say that the Lord now cleansed him, as if his tongue had formerly been impure and profane, though it had been the instrument employed by the Holy Spirit, I have already replied sufficiently to that objection. The Lord had already cleansed him, but according to his degree. The cleansing which is now added is greater; for it has its enlargements and additions, which no man can obtain all at once.

We must not conclude, therefore, that Isaiah's lips were impure, because they are now cleansed; but we ought to inquire why it is done. It was because the Lord intended to enlarge and extend his favor towards him, and to raise him to higher dignity, that he might have greater influence over the people; and this was rendered necessary by the character of the times, and the change which had taken place in the state.

The fire was *taken from the altar*, to intimate that it was divine or heavenly; for the law forbade any *strange fire* to be brought to it, (Leviticus 10:1,) because in sacred things every human mixture is absolute profanation. By this figure, therefore, Isaiah was taught that all purity flows from God alone.

7. *And applying it to my mouth.* [97] We see how God condescends to meet the weakness of human sense. He puts *the tongs* into the hand of a seraph, that by means of it he may take *a coal from the altar* and apply it to the Prophet's mouth. This was, no doubt, done in vision; but by the aid of the outward sign God assisted the Prophet's understanding. There is no reason to believe that the *coal* possessed any virtue, as superstitious persons imagine that in the magical arts there is some hidden power. Nothing of this sort is to be found here; for it is God alone who can cleanse our pollution, in whatever part it exists.

Here the angel administered the cleansing, but was not the author of it; so that we must not ascribe to another what belongs to God alone. This is expressly stated by the angel himself, who claims nothing as his own, but bringing forward the sacred pledge which he had received from God, laid it as a sacrament on the *lips* of the Prophet; not that he could not be cleansed without the *coal*, but because the visible sign was useful for the confirmation and proof of the fact. And such is the use of sacraments, to strengthen us in proportion to our ignorance; for we are not angels, that can behold the mysteries of God without any assistance, and therefore he raises us to himself by gradual advances.

Lo, this hath touched thy lips. He shows that the confirmation which was obtained by the sign was not without effect, but that the blessing signified by it was at the same time bestowed, so that Isaiah knew that he had not been deceived. Hence we may infer, that in the sacraments the reality is given to us along with the sign; for when the Lord holds out a sacrament, he does not feed our eyes with an empty and unmeaning figure, but joins the truth with it, so as to testify that by means of them he acts upon us efficaciously. And this ought to be the more carefully observed, because there are few persons in the present day who understand the true use of sacraments, and because many godly and learned men are engaged in frequent disputes respecting them.

First of all, we ought to believe that the truth must never be separated from the signs, though it ought to be distinguished from them. We perceive and feel a sign, such as the bread which is put into our hands by the minister

[97] And he said, Go, and tell this people. — Eng. Ver.

in the Lord's Supper; and because we ought to seek Christ in heaven, our thoughts ought to be carried thither. By the hand of the minister he presents to us his body, that it may be actually enjoyed by the godly, who rise by faith to fellowship with him. He bestows it, therefore, on the godly, who raise their thoughts to him by faith; for he cannot deceive.

Unbelievers indeed receive the sign; but because they linger in the world, and do not arrive at Christ's heavenly kingdom, they have no experience of the truth; for he who has not faith cannot raise his thoughts to God, and therefore cannot partake of Christ. Faith alone opens for us the gate of the kingdom of God; and therefore, whoever wishes to eat the flesh of Christ must be carried by faith to heaven beyond human conception. In short, it is the Spirit of God alone who can make us partakers of that fellowship. And yet it does not follow that the unbelief of men takes anything away from the truth of the sacrament, since God always presents to us a spiritual matter, but wicked men treat it with scorn; just as the grace of God is offered by the gospel, but all do not receive it, though they actually hear it, and are compelled to yield assent to the truth.

Besides, we learn from this passage that the sacraments are never separated from the word. The angel does not here act the part of a dumb man, but, after having given the sign, immediately adds the doctrine, in order to show what was intended by it; for it would have been no sacrament, if doctrine had not been added, from which Isaiah could learn for what purpose the *coal* was applied to his mouth. Let us therefore learn that the chief part of the sacraments consists in the word, and that without it they are absolute corruptions, such as we see every day in popery, in which the sacraments are turned into stage-plays. The amount of the whole is, that there is nothing to prevent Isaiah, who has been perfectly cleansed, and is free from all pollution, from appearing as God's representative.

8. *Afterwards I heard the voice of the Lord.* The Prophet now begins to discourse about the design of this vision, why God appeared to him with such glorious majesty, in order to ordain him anew as a prophet. It was because he was called to deliver an incredible message about blinding the Jews. On this revolting occasion, therefore, he is more fully assured of his calling, that he may lay aside fear and obey the command of God; for nothing gives greater confidence to pious minds than to know that they obey God. He had also another proof, namely, that the Lord had cleansed him; and this was sufficient to lead him to undertake any task, however difficult.

Whom shall I send? The Prophet represents the Lord as speaking, as if he could not find a man qualified for such a message. Some think that this is intended to reprove the ignorance of the priests and prophets; because, though they are very numerous, still not one of them was qualified to teach. This reason carries some probability, but I would rather view it as referring to the certainty of Isaiah's calling, as implying that it was not at random, but from choice, that the Lord appointed him. There is here, therefore, a weighty

deliberation whom the Lord will be pleased to send; not that he hesitates, but such modes of expression are used on our account, just as these words, *I will go down and see.* (Genesis 18:21.) For God, to whom all things are known, has no need to make any inquiry; but, lest men should think that he acts with precipitation, he thus accommodates himself to the ordinary modes of speaking among men. In like manner, when he asks *whom he shall send*, the meaning is, that he needs not an ordinary person, but a teacher of uncommon excellence on a subject of the greatest importance. Hence we infer that the authority of Isaiah was confirmed, so that he was reckoned to be not only a prophet, but eminent among the prophets.

Who will go for us? I am rather favorable to the opinion that this passage points to Three Persons in the Godhead, just as we elsewhere read,

Let us create man in our likeness. (Genesis 1:26.)

For God talks with himself, and in the plural number; and unquestionably he now holds a consultation with his eternal Wisdom and his eternal Power, that is, with the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Here am I. So ready a reply shows how great is that cheerfulness which springs from faith; for he who but lately lay like a dead man dreads no difficulty. Hence we see that the amazement of which we have formerly spoken did not spring from rebellion, in wishing to flee from God, or to refuse the charge which had been laid upon him; but because he needed new grace, that he might know that he would be able to endure the burden. On this account it ought to be observed, that we cannot undertake anything in a proper manner without the evidence of our calling; otherwise we shall pause and hesitate at every step.

Besides, it is a powerful aid to our confidence, when we know that we are not destitute of the necessary gifts, but that God has bestowed them on us, in order that we may be better enabled to discharge our office. Now, this remarkable instance of obedience ought to produce such an effect on our minds that we shall readily and cheerfully undertake any task which he may be pleased to enjoin, and shall never refuse any task, however difficult we may imagine it to be. When the Prophet says, *Here am I,* the meaning is, that he is ready to obey the commands of God; for this mode of expression is frequently employed in Scripture to denote obedience.

9. *Then he said, Go, and tell that people.* [98] This shows still more clearly how necessary the vision was, that Isaiah might not all at once fail in his course. It was a grievous stumblingblock, that he must endure such obstinacy and rebellion in the people of God, and that not only for a year or two, but for more than sixty years. On this account he needed to be fortified, that he might be like a brazen wall against such stubbornness. The Lord, therefore, merely forewarns Isaiah that he will have to do with obstinate men, on whom he will produce little effect; but that so unusual an occurrence must not lead him to take offense, and lose courage, or yield to the rebellion of men; that,

[98] Make the heart of this people fat. — Eng. Ver.

on the contrary, he must proceed with unshaken firmness, and rise superior to temptations of this nature. For God gives him due warning beforehand as to the result; as if he had said, "You will indeed teach without any good effect; but do not regret your teaching, for I enjoin it upon you; and do not refrain from teaching, because it yields no advantage; only obey me, and leave to my disposal all the consequences of your labors. I give you all this information in good time, that the event may not terrify you, as if it had been strange and unexpected." Besides, he is commanded openly to reprove their blind obstinacy, as if he purposely taunted them.

"My labors will do no good; but it matters not to me: it is enough that what I do obtains the approbation of God, to whom my preaching will be a sweet smell, though it bring death to you."
(2 Corinthians 2:15,16.)

10. *Harden the heart of this people.* [99] Here the former statement is more fully expressed; for God informs Isaiah beforehand, not only that his labor in teaching will be fruitless, but that by his instruction he will also blind the people, so as to be the occasion of producing greater insensibility and stubbornness, and to end in their destruction. He declares that the people, bereft of reason and understanding, will perish, and there will be no means of obtaining relief; and yet he at the same time affirms that the labors of the Prophet, though they bring death and ruin on the Jews, will be to him an acceptable sacrifice.

This is a truly remarkable declaration; not only because Isaiah here foretold what was afterwards fulfilled under the reign of Christ, but also because it contains a most useful doctrine, which will be of perpetual use in the Church of God; for all who shall labor faithfully in the ministry of the word will be laid under the necessity of meeting with the same result. We too have experienced it more than we could have wished; but it has been shared by all the servants of Christ, and therefore we ought to endure it with greater patience, though it is a very grievous stumbling-block to those who serve God with a pure conscience. Not only does it give great offense, but Satan powerfully excites his followers to raise a dislike of instruction on the pretense of its being not merely useless, but even injurious; that it renders men more obstinate, and leads to their destruction. At the present day, those who have no other reproach to bring against the doctrine of the gospel maintain that the only effect produced by the preaching of it has been, that the world has become worse.

But whatever may be the result, still God assures us that our ministrations are acceptable to him, because we obey his command; and although our labor appear to be fruitless, and men rush forward to their destruction, and become more rebellious, we must go forward; for we do nothing at our own suggestion, and ought to be satisfied with having the approbation of God.

[99] In the original text the reference reads: (John. xii. 39.) I added the next verse to include the quoted text. — fj.

We ought, indeed, to be deeply grieved when success does not attend our exertions; and we ought to pray to God to give efficacy to his word. A part of the blame we ought even to lay on ourselves, when the fruits are so scanty; and yet we must not abandon our office, or throw away our weapons. The truth must always be heard from our lips, even though there be no ears to receive it, and though the world have neither sight nor feeling; for it is enough for us that we labor faithfully for the glory of God, and that our services are acceptable to him; and the sound of our voice is not ineffectual, when it renders the world without excuse.

Hence arises a most excellent and altogether invaluable consolation to godly teachers, for supporting their minds against those grievous offenses which daily spring from the obstinacy of men, that, instead of being retarded by it, they may persevere in their duty with unshaken firmness. As it is also a general offense, that the lively word of God, at the hearing of which the whole world ought to tremble, strikes their ears to no purpose, and without any advantage, let weak men learn to fortify themselves by this declaration. We wonder how it is possible that the greater part of men can furiously oppose God; and hence also arises a doubt if it be the heavenly truth of God which is rejected without bringing punishment; for it can hardly be believed that God addresses men for the purpose of exciting their scorn. That our faith may not fail, we ought to employ this support, that the office of teaching was enjoined on Isaiah, on the condition that, in scattering the seed of life, it should yield nothing but death; and that this is not merely a narrative of what once happened, but a prediction of the future kingdom of Christ, as we shall find to be stated shortly afterwards.

We ought also to attend to this circumstance, that Isaiah was not sent to men indiscriminately, but to the Jews. Accordingly, the demonstrative particle הנה, (*hinneh*,) *behold*, is emphatic, and implies that the people whom the Lord had peculiarly chosen for himself do not hear the word, and shut their eyes amidst the clearest light. Let us not wonder, therefore, if we appear to be like persons talking to the deaf, when we address those who boast of the name of God. It is undoubtedly a harsh saying, that God sends a prophet to *close the ears, stop up the eyes, and harden the heart of the people*; because it appears as if these things were inconsistent with the nature of God, and therefore contradicted his word. But we ought not to think it strange if God punishes the wickedness of men by blinding them in the highest degree. Yet the Prophet shows, a little before, that the blame of this blindness lies with the people; for when he bids them hear, he bears witness that the doctrine is fitted for instructing the people, if they choose to submit to it; that light is given to guide them, if they will but open their eyes. The whole blame of the evil is laid on the people for rejecting the amazing kindness of God; and hence is obtained a more complete solution of that difficulty to which we formerly adverted.

At first sight it seems unreasonable that the Prophets should be repre-

sented as making men's hearts more hardened. They carry in their mouth the word of God, by which, *as by a lamp, the steps of men ought to be guided*; for this encomium, we know, has been pronounced on it by David. (Psalm 119:105.) It is not the duty of the Prophets, therefore, to blind the eyes, but rather to open them. Again, it is called *perfect wisdom*, (Psalm 19:9;) how then does it stupify men and take away their reason? Those hearts which formerly were of brass or iron ought to be softened by it; how then is it possible that it can harden them, as I have already observed? Such blinding and hardening influence does not arise out of the nature of the word, but is accidental, and must be ascribed exclusively to the depravity of man. As dim-sighted people cannot blame the sun for dazzling their eyes with its brightness; and those whose hearing is weak cannot complain of a clear and loud voice which the defect of their ears hinders them from hearing; and, lastly, a man of weak intellect cannot find fault with the difficulty of a subject which he is unable to understand; so ungodly men have no right to blame the word for making them worse after having heard it. The whole blame lies on themselves in altogether refusing it admission; and we need not wonder if that which ought to have led them to salvation become the cause of their destruction. It is right that the treachery and unbelief of men should be punished by meeting death where they might have received life, darkness where they might have had light; and, in short, evils as numerous as the blessings of salvation which they might have obtained. This ought to be carefully observed; for nothing is more customary with men than to abuse the gifts of God, and then not only to maintain that they are innocent, but even to be proud of appearing in borrowed feathers. But they are doubly wicked when they not only do not apply to their proper use, but wickedly corrupt and profane, those gifts which God had bestowed on them.

John quotes this passage as a clear demonstration of the stubbornness of the Jews. He does not indeed absolutely give the very words, but he states the meaning clearly enough.

Therefore, says he, they could not believe, because Isaiah said, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart.
(John 12:39,40 [100])

True, this prediction was not the cause of their unbelief, but the Lord foretold it, because he foresaw that they would be such as they are here described. The Evangelist applies to the Gospel what had already taken place under the law, and at the same time shows that the Jews were deprived of reason and understanding, because they were rebels against God. Yet if you inquire into the first cause, we must come to the predestination of God. But as that purpose is hidden from us, we must not too eagerly search into it; for the everlasting scheme of the divine purpose is beyond our reach, but we ought to consider the cause which lies plainly before our eyes, namely, the rebellion by which they rendered themselves unworthy of blessings so

[100] And convert. — Eng. Ver.

numerous and so great.

Paul, too, shows from this passage, on more than one occasion, (Acts 28:27; Romans 11:8,) that the whole blame of blindness rests with themselves. *They have shut their ears, says he, and closed their eyes.* What Isaiah here ascribes to doctrine, Paul traces to the wicked disposition of the nation, which was the cause of their own blindness; and accordingly, I have stated that this was an accidental and not a natural result of the doctrine. In that passage Paul introduces the Spirit as speaking, (Acts 28:25;) but John says that Isaiah spake thus of Christ, *when he had beheld his glory.* (John 12:41.) From this it is evident, as we formerly said, that Christ was that God who filled the whole earth with his majesty. Now, Christ is not separate from his Spirit, and therefore Paul had good reason for applying this passage to the Holy Spirit; for although God exhibited to the Prophet the lively image of himself in Christ, still it is certain that whatever he communicated was wholly breathed into him by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, however ungodly men may bark against us with their reproaches, that our doctrine ought to bear the blame, because the world is made worse by the preaching of it, they gain nothing at all, and take nothing away from the authority of the doctrine; for they must at the same time condemn God himself and the whole of his doctrine. But their calumnies will not hinder his justice from being displayed, or hinder him from vindicating itself, and at the same time vindicating us.

And when they shall be converted [101] Here he expressly declares that he did not send the Prophet because he intended to save the people; but, on the contrary, because he intended to destroy them. But the word of God brings salvation; at least some benefit must arise from the preaching of it, that it may do good to some, though many are deprived of the advantage by their own unbelief. I answer, the subject treated of is the whole body, which had already been condemned and devoted to destruction; for there were always some whom the Lord exempted from the general ruin; to them the word brought salvation, and on them it actually produced its proper effect; but the great body of the people were cut off and perished through obstinate unbelief and rebellion. So, then, we perceive that the word of God is never so destructive that there are not a few who perceive that it brings salvation to them, and feel that it does so in reality.

They shall be healed. We ought also to observe from the order and connection of the words, that the first step of *healing* is repentance. But in the first place, we must understand what he means by the word *healing*; for he uses it in reference to the chastisements which had been inflicted on the people on account of their sins. Now, the cause of all the evils which we endure is our rebellion against God. When we repent, he is reconciled to us, and the rods with which he chastised us are no longer employed. This is our *healing.* And this order ought to be carefully observed, from which it is evident what

[101] But yet in it shall be a tenth. — Eng. Ver.

object the Lord has in view in inviting us to himself, and what is the design of the heavenly doctrine, namely, that we may be *converted*

This is another part of the Gospel, *Repent ye.* (Matthew 3:2.) Then, offering reconciliation he holds out remedies for all diseases, not only of the body but of the soul. And such being the eminent advantage derived from the word of God, if we are not reconciled to God as soon as his word sounds in our ears, we have no right to lay the blame on any other, for it rests wholly with ourselves. Indeed, the Prophet here speaks of it as unnatural and monstrous, that, by the doctrine of the word, the native tendency of which is to *heal* and soften, men should become insolent and obstinate and altogether incurable. It is undoubtedly true, that when we are drawn inwardly, (John 6:44,) it is an extraordinary gift of God, and that the arm of God is not revealed to all, (Isaiah 53:1;) but by this dreadful punishment of obstinate malice, Isaiah intended to teach, that we ought earnestly to beware of despising when God calls.

11. *And I said, How long, O LORD?* Although the Prophets are severe in denouncing the wrath of God against men, yet they do not lay aside human feelings. It is therefore necessary that they sustain a twofold character; for they must proclaim the judgment of God with high and unshaken courage, so that they would rather choose that the world should be destroyed and utterly ruined than that any part of His glory should be taken away. And yet they are not devoid of feeling, so as to be unmoved by compassion for their brethren, whose destruction their office lays them under the necessity of foretelling. These two feelings, though they appear to be inconsistent, are in full harmony, as appears from the instance of Jeremiah, who at first complains of the hard task assigned him of proclaiming destruction to the people, but afterwards revives his courage, and proceeds boldly in discharging the duties of his office (Jeremiah 1:6, 17.) Such was also the state of Isaiah's mind; for, being desirous to obey God, he earnestly proclaimed His judgments; and yet he had some regard to the people, which led him to entreat, that if this *blindness* must come upon them, it might not be permanent. There can be no doubt, that when he thus prayed to God, he was moved with compassion, and desired that so dreadful a punishment should be mitigated.

Natural affections, (στοργαὶ φυσικαὶ,) therefore, ought not to prevent us from performing what is our duty. For instance, there is the natural affection of a husband to a wife, and of a father to a son; but it ought to be checked and restrained, so that we may chiefly consider what is suitable to our calling, and what the Lord commands. This ought to be carefully observed; for when we wish to give loose reins to ourselves, we commonly plead this excuse, that we are willing and ready to do what God requires, but are overpowered by natural affection. But those feelings ought to be restrained in such a manner as not to obstruct our calling; just as they did not hinder the Prophet from proceeding in the discharge of his duty; for to such an extent ought we to acknowledge the authority of the Lord over us,

that when he orders and commands, we should forget ourselves and all that belongs to us.

But although the godly anxiety of Isaiah about the salvation of the people is here expressed, still the severity of the punishment is likewise stated, that wicked men may not, as they are wont to do, indulge the hope of some mitigation. Nor can it be doubted that the Prophet was led by a secret impulse from God to ask this, that the stern and dreadful reply which immediately follows might be more fully brought out; from which it is evident what kind of destruction awaits unbelievers, that they will receive no light or moderate punishment, but will be utterly destroyed and cut off.

Until the houses be without man, and the land become a desolation. This is an additional aggravation; for it is possible that countries might be wasted, and yet that one city might remain; that even cities might be stormed and laid desolate, and yet very many houses be left. But here the slaughter, he tells us, will be so great, that not only the cities, but even the very houses will be thrown down, and the whole land will be reduced to frightful and lamentable desolation; though even amidst the heaviest calamities some remnant is still left. Though Isaiah said this but once, yet let us understand that it is also spoken to us; for this punishment has been pronounced against all who obstinately disobey God, or who with a stiff neck struggle against his yoke. The more violent their opposition, the more resolutely will the Lord pursue them till they are utterly destroyed.

12. *Till the Lord have removed men far away.* These words contain nothing new, but merely an explanation of the former verse, and a description by other words of the ruin that shall overtake Judea; namely, that God will send the inhabitants *far away.* He asserts that those who shall survive the war will not be exempted from punishment, for they will be led into captivity. And next he adds a general clause about the desolation of the land; as if he had said that it would be desolate and bereft of inhabitants, because some would flee away, others would be driven into banishment, and others would perish by the sword. Such is the reward prepared for obstinate and rebellious persons, who add crime to crime, till the indignation of God rise to such a height that it cannot be appeased.

13. *Till there shall be in it a tenth* [102] There is some obscurity in the words; but let us first ascertain the meaning, and then we shall easily find out what is the signification of the words. There are two ways of explaining this passage. Some explain עשיריה (*asiriyah*) to mean *decimation*; others make it

[102] Bishop Lowth's rendering is, And though there be a tenth part remaining in it, even this shall undergo repeated destruction; which accords with Calvin's view, that the substance of the tree will be left. Bishop Stock renders it for pasture: But yet in it shall be left a tenth, and it shall recover, and serve for pasture. He reasons thus: "The verb בער may either signify to eat grass, or to eat it down. The question is, in which sense it is to be understood here? whether the land is again to yield food to its inhabitants, or to be laid bare and waste? That the former is the true meaning I think very evident, as well from the tendency of the ensuing simile of the oak, which is of the consolatory kind, as because it is the almost constant practice of Isaiah to subjoin to denunciations of divine vengeance a prediction of final reconcilement and happiness." Jarchi, as interpreted by Breithaupt, renders the word, et erunt in combustionem (sive depastionem,) and they shall be for destruction, (or for pasture;) leaving it doubtful which of the above renderings ought to be preferred. --- Ed

to mean *a tenth part*, and consider it to be a collective noun. Undoubtedly, the Hebrew word עשירית, (*asirith*,) and not עשיריה, (*asiriyah*,) denotes *a tenth part*, though the difference between them is not great. Those who render it *decimation* think that a truce is promised to the people, because from the reign of Uzziah to the destruction of Jerusalem there would be ten kings; and undoubtedly that is the number of kings, reckoning from Uzziah to Zedekiah. His prophetical doctrine would derive no small support from the circumstance, that he could tell the number of kings who should reign even after his death, and that he described not only the fact itself, but likewise the time, and the day.

Yet I know not if another meaning be not somewhat more appropriate; for the Prophet appears to hold out to the people this consolation, that they will retain some hidden vigor, and will be capable of sprouting out, though they may appear for a time to be entirely dead; just as, when the winter is past, the trees renew their foliage. But as the former exposition carries sufficient probability, I shall therefore explain the whole verse according to the opinion of those who think that mention is here made of ten kings, so as to mean that, when the ten kings shall have completed their reign, the people will be carried into captivity, and then, as by a conflagration, the whole land will be consumed.

At the same time, the reader ought to be aware that whether עשיריה (*asiriyah*) be rendered *a tenth part*, or *decimation*, it may with the utmost propriety be viewed as referring to the people; and then the meaning will be, *Till the people be diminished to a tenth part.* He had formerly spoken of a *remnant*, and a *very small remnant*, (Isaiah 1:9,) and afterwards he will speak of it again, (Isaiah 10:22;) for it was a very small number that remained. It might therefore be naturally viewed as meaning, that out of a thousand there would be left a hundred; out of a hundred, ten; and out of ten, one.

And shall return. That is, a change will take place for the better: the Jews will return from captivity to their native country, and the land will assume a new aspect. But this may be thought to be somewhat at variance with what follows; for the Prophet immediately adds, *It shall be destruction.* How cold comfort will it yield to the people to be restored, if shortly afterwards they shall be again destroyed! Some commentators solve this difficulty, by supposing that Isaiah spoke about the final destruction of the people. But in my opinion he rather means that the destruction will not be complete, but such as happens to trees, when their leaves fall off in the winter, and nothing appears but dead timber; but when spring returns, they bud forth anew: and so also will this people.

לבער (*lebaer*) means to *burn*, [103] and therefore it means here that they will be *consumed* by a conflagration: but we ought to read it in connection

[103] "Syria is arm in arm with Ephraim; leans on the arm of the king of Israel, as on that of a friend." — Stock.

with the metaphor which immediately follows; for Isaiah does not barely mean that it will be *consumed*, but that it will be consumed *like the teil-tree*, that is, with the hope of immediate recovery. When Jerome rendered it *for exhibition*, I know not on what he supposed that opinion to be founded, if it were not that he made a free translation, looking rather to the meaning than to the etymology of the word; for when trees blossom or put forth leaves, their life is again brought forth and displayed; and this meaning will be very appropriate.

As a teil-tree and an oak. It appears that Isaiah did not select at random those two kinds of trees; for one of them puts forth its leaves, and likewise sheds them, sooner than the other. So it happened to the tribe of Judah; for first the ten tribes, with the half tribe of Benjamin, were carried into captivity; and thus they who were the first to blossom were likewise the first to decay. This tribe was the latest of all in decaying, not without high expectation of blossoming again; for here the hope of deliverance is held out, and this was different from the captivity of the Israelites. There appears, therefore, to be some appropriateness in this metaphor of the trees; but I would not choose to press it very far.

When they cast their leaves. By the phrase, *casting of leaves*, must be understood that *throwing of them down* which takes place when trees are stripped of their leaves as of their garment; for trees, in that state of nakedness, appear to be dry and withered; though there remains in them a hidden vigor, through which they are at length quickened by the returning mildness of the season.

So in it shall be substance. This is the application of the metaphor, which is exceedingly forcible; for when we see the spiritual grace of God in the very order of nature, we are strongly confirmed. As Paul holds out a likeness of the resurrection in the sowing of corn, which is a daily occurrence, (1 Corinthians 15:36,) so in like manner Isaiah in this passage describes the restoration of the Church, by taking a metaphor from trees, which wither at the end of autumn, but again blossom at the return of spring, and put forth new leaves; which could not happen, did they not retain some vigor during the winter, though to outward appearance they are dead. He foretells that a similar event will happen to this people; so that, although during their hard and oppressive captivity they resemble dry timber, and it may be thought that they can never be delivered, still there will always be preserved in them some vigor, by which they shall be supported amidst those calamities, and shall at length come forth and blossom.

This doctrine, we have said, is not peculiar to a single age, and therefore it ought to be carefully observed; for it frequently happens that the Church, amidst the numerous afflictions which she endures, appears to have no strength, and is supposed to be utterly ruined. Whenever this takes place, let us fully believe that, notwithstanding these appearances, there is still some concealed energy, which, though it be not immediately manifest

to our eyes, will at length yield its fruit. That energy lies hidden in the word of the Lord, by which alone the Church is sustained.

The holy seed. He shows what is that *substance*, that it consists of a small number of the godly, whom he calls *the holy seed*; for he means the elect, who would be preserved by the free mercy of God, and thus would survive that captivity. That banishment might be regarded as a cleansing of the Church, by which the Lord took away the ungodly; and when they had been cut off, he collected a people, small in number, but truly consecrated to himself. Some commentators consider this phrase to refer to Christ; but the interpretation appears to be too far-fetched, and it will be more consistent to extend it to all the godly; for *the holy seed is the substance* of the Church.

Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7

Isaiah Chapter 7:1-25

1. And it came to pass, in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

1. Accidit in diebus Achaz filii Iotham, filii Usiae regis Iuda, ut ascenderet Rezin rex Syriae, et Pecah filius Romeliae rex Israel, contra Ierusalem, ad oppugnandum eam; sed non potuit expugnare.

2. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim: and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

2. Nuntiatum est autem domui David, dicendo, Sociata est Syria cum Ephraim; et commotum est cor ejus, sicuti cum ligna sylvae moventur a vento.

3. Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field;

3. Tunc dixit Iehova ad Isaiam, Egredere in occursum Achaz, tu et Searjasub filius tuus ad finem aquaeductus piscinae superioris, ad viam agri fullonis.

4. And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted for the two tails of these smoking firebands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

4. Et dices ad eum, Contine et quiesce; non formides, neque mollescat cor tuum propter duas caudas istorum titionum fumigantium, in furore irae Rezin, et Syri, et filii Romeliae.

5. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,

5. Eo quod consilium contra te iniit Syrus malignum cum Ephraim et filio Romeliae, dicendo:

6. Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal:

6. Ascendamus contra Iudam, et excitemus eum, et aperiamus eum nobis; constituamusque in medio ejus Regem, filium Tabeal.

7. Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

7. Sic dixit Dominus Iehova, Non consistet, et non erit.

8. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

8. Quoniam caput Syriae, Damascus; et caput Damasci, Rezin. Et quidem adhuc sexaginta quinque anni, et frangetur Ephraim, ut non sit populus.

9. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

9. Interea caput Ephriam, Samaria; et caput Samariae, filius Romeliae. Si non creditis, profecto neque stabitis.

10. Moreover, the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

10. Et adjecit Iehova loqui ad Achaz, dicendo;

11. Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

11. Pete tibi signum a Iehova Deo tuo, petendo in profundo, vel sursum in excelso.

12. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.

12. Et ait Achaz, Non petam; et non tentabo Iehovam.

13. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

13. Et dixit, Audite nunc domus David; An parum est vobis, hominibus molestos esse, nisi Deo quoque meo sitis molesti?

14. Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

14. Propterea dabit vobis Dominus ipse signum: Ecce virgo concipiet, et pariet filium; et vocabit nomen ejus Immanuel.

15. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

15. Butyrum et mel comedet, donec sciat reprobare malum, et eligere bonum.

16. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

16. Et quidem antequam sciat puer rejicere malum et eligere bonum, relinquetur terra quam odisti, a duobus Regibus suis.

17. The Lord shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.

17. Adducet Iehova super te, et super populum tuum, et super domum patris tui, dies qui non venerunt a die defectionis Ephraim a Iuda: nempe, Regem Assur.

18. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.

18. Erit in die illa: sibilabit Iehova muscae, quae est in extremitate fluminum AEgypti, et api quae est in terra Assur.

19. And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes.

19. Venientque, et quiescent omnes in vallibus desertis, et in cavernis petrarum, et in omnibus spinetis, et in omnibus dumetis.

20. In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.

20. In die illa radet Dominus novacula conducta, per hos qui trans fluvium sunt, per Regem Assur, caput et pilos pedum; quin et barbam tollet.

21. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow and two sheep;

21. Fietque in die illa, ut homo nutriat vaccam armenti et duas oves.

22. And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give, that he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.

22. Et eveniet, ut propter copiam lactis quam proferent, comedet butyrum. Butyrum certe et mel comedet quisquis residuus fuerit in medio terrae.

23. And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns.

23. Erit etiam in die illa, ut quocunque in loco fuerint mille vites, prostent mille argenteis propter spinas et vepres.

24. With arrows and with bows shall men come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns.

24. Cum sagittis et arcu venient illuc; quoniam spinae et vepres erunt per universam terram.

25. And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.

25. Porro quod ad omnes montes qui sarculo fodiuntur, non veniet illuc timor spinarum et veprium; sed expositi erunt bobus, et conculcabuntur a pecoribus.

1. *And it came to pass.* Here is related a remarkable prophecy about the wonderful deliverance of Jerusalem, when it appeared to have been utterly ruined. Now the Prophet explains all the circumstances, that by means of them the miracle may be more fully displayed, and to make it manifest, that not by the wisdom or power of man, but by the favor of God, the city has been preserved. For so ungrateful were the people, that, at the close of this transaction, they would not have understood that they had been delivered by the hand of the Lord, if all the circumstances had not been expressly brought to their remembrance. And, indeed, there were very few persons who, in the hour of danger, ventured to hope what Isaiah promised; because they judged of themselves and of the state of public affairs from present appearances. In order, therefore, to make known the remarkable kindness of God, he enters into all the details, that they may perceive from what danger and from whose hand they have been delivered. Let us also understand that this kindness was conferred on ungrateful men, that the Church might be preserved, and that Christ might afterwards appear.

It ought to be observed that the Prophet speaks of the second war which was fought by *Rezin and Pekah*; and this may easily be inferred from the sacred history; for in the former war Ahaz was vanquished, and a vast multitude were carried into captivity, who were at length restored by the Israelites, when the Prophet, in the name of God, commanded that it should be done. Having again collected an army, (2 Kings 16:5,) the kings of Israel and Syria attacked Ahaz, because they thought that he had been worn out by the former war, and had no power to resist. The mention of this second war is intended to show the greatness of the miracle; for Ahaz had not strength left to resist so great a multitude, the flower of the whole nation having been swept away by the former war, and such of the people as remained being quite dispirited, and not yet recovered from the terror arising out of their recent defeat. So much the more, therefore, are the goodness and power of God displayed, that, pitying so great distress, he gave assistance to his people, and in a moment rescued them from the jaws of death, when all regarded their condition as hopeless.

Went up. This may be regarded as a statement and summary of the whole transaction; for he mentions the subjects on which he is about to speak, and in the Hebrew modes of expression briefly glances at those matters which he will afterwards explain more fully and at large. From the first he tells the result, that the expedition of the two kings was unsuccessful, and afterwards he will assign the reasons why Jerusalem could not be stormed; but before coming to that, he briefly notices the plan or design of King Ahaz.

2. *And it was told the house of David.* He does not mean that, at the very time when the two kings were approaching to the city, the king received intelligence about the league; for it would not have been safe for Ahaz to go out, when the invading army was spread over the country; but before they had collected their forces, it is said that King Ahaz trembled. Hence there

is reason to believe that his consternation became greater when he saw the danger nearer. *The house of David* means the king's palace and court; as if the Prophet had said that Ahaz and his counsellors had been informed about the conspiracy which had been formed against Judea.

As to the words, נחה (*nachah*) is variously rendered by interpreters. The signification of this Hebrew word being *to lead*, some draw from it this meaning, "The King of Syria *led* his soldiers to aid the army;" and they think that על (*al*) with ע (*ain*) is put for אל (*al*) with א (*aleph*). Others derive it from נוח (*nuach*), as if the letter ו (*vau*) were wanting, and render it, *he rested*. According to others, it is rather an inversion of the letters, and נחה (*nahah*) is put for חנה (*chanah*), which means *to pitch a camp*; and, therefore, they choose to render it, *Syria is confederate* [104] Nothing else was meant by the Prophet than that a league in war hath been formed between the Israelites and the Syrians, that with their united forces they might attack Jerusalem. In the use of the word *Ephraim* there is a figure of speech (synecdoche) very frequent in the Prophets, by which a part is taken for the whole. Under *Ephraim* the whole kingdom of Israel is included, not only because that tribe was superior to the rest in numbers and wealth, but because their first king, Jeroboam, was descended from it. (1 Kings 11:26.)

And his heart was moved. We see that by *the house of David* is here meant nothing else than "the king's palace," from which the terror spread to the whole nation; and indeed it was impossible but that, when they heard of the alarm of the king and the princes, the body of the people should be moved by the same kind of terror. As soon as this intelligence was received, all were struck with such dread that no man was master of himself. He expresses their trembling by an appropriate metaphor, which is also frequently employed by ourselves, (*Il tremble comme la fueille en l'arbre*,) *he trembles like the leaf of a tree*. The design of this is to heighten the miracle; for we learn from it that not only in the opinion of others, but likewise in their own opinion, their case was desperate. They would therefore have been utterly ruined if the Lord had not seasonably interposed.

This passage sets before us a very bright mirror, in which we may behold the thoughtlessness of the ungodly, when they do not feel the hand of God; and, on the other hand, the fearful trembling with which they are suddenly seized, when the Lord presents to them any danger. In the midst of their prosperity they are so much at their ease that they hardly believe that they are subject to the government of God, and undoubtedly imagine that they are placed beyond the reach of all danger. Adversity stuns them in such a manner that they suddenly fall down, and their senses are so entirely overpowered by terror that they lie like people who are lifeless or bereft of their senses. Such is the punishment by which the Lord arouses them from their deep slumber. At first they appear to be firm and immovable, as if nothing could throw them down from their rank; but now, at the slightest

[104] And say unto him. — Eng. Ver.

noise, they are suddenly seized with trembling. That terror is the righteous vengeance of God, to whom they never do homage until they are compelled.

Let us learn, that if we have any spark of faith, we ought not to distrust God when we are in any danger. It is indeed impossible that we should not be agitated and alarmed when dangers press upon us; but we ought not to tremble so as to be tossed about by our anxiety in every direction, and unable to see a harbour to which we may safely direct our course. There must always be this difference between the fear of the godly and of the ungodly, that the ungodly find no remedy for composing their minds; but the godly immediately betake themselves to God, in whom, knowing that they have a very safe harbour, though they be harassed by uneasiness, still they remain calm.

3. *Then said the LORD.* First, we see how God, remembering his covenant, anticipates this wicked king by sending the Prophet to meet him; for he does not wait for his prayers, but of his own accord promises that he will grant deliverance. *His son Shear-jashub* is joined with the Prophet as a witness of the prediction, and there is reason to believe that his name, *Shear-jashub*, was not given at random, but by the secret inspiration of the Spirit, or by an immediate command of God, and in order to point out the future deliverance of the people. He, therefore, carried in his name what might be regarded as an engraven seal, both of the approaching captivity and of the return. It is also probable that this symbol of the prediction was generally known, for he would not have been joined with his father on any other account than because he bore in his person some authority.

To the way of the fuller's field. The place is mentioned in order to give authenticity to the history. It is possible that the king, for the purpose of repelling the enemy, may have set out to watch his approach, which appears more clearly from the sacred history. (2 Kings 18:17.) It is called *the way of the fuller's field*, perhaps because it was customary to wash clothes there, or because the name arose out of some ancient occurrence. However that may be, it was an evidence of anxiety and dread, that this wretched hypocrite was running about in all directions, when Isaiah came forth to meet him and to soothe his mind.

4. *And thou shalt say to him* [105] The Hebrew word שמר (*shamar*,) which signifies *to keep*, is here put in the Hiphil; [106] and the greater part of interpreters take it for *beware*; but they erroneously apply this to an unnatural and far-fetched meaning, that Ahaz should *beware* of carrying on war. A more natural meaning is, that he ought not to waver or wander about in uncertainty, but to remain calm and serene. Accordingly, I have rendered it *refrain.* The meaning therefore is, that Ahab should be composed, and should not be agitated or harass his mind by uneasiness, as fickle and unsteady persons are wont to do when they are struck with terror.

[105] This is an oversight; for השמר (hishshamer) is in the Niphal conjugation. --- Ed

[106] Remuer les affaires.

This interpretation is confirmed by the word which follows, *Be quiet*; for these two are connected, first, to keep quiet *watch*, so as not to be distracted by a variety of opinions, or gaze around in all directions; and, secondly, to have a calm and composed mind. Such are the highly delightful fruits which are yielded by faith; for through a variety of attacks unbelievers give way, and wander in uncertainty, and know not to which hand they ought to turn, while believers keep themselves under restraint, and *quietly* betake themselves to God. Ungodliness is never at rest; but where faith exists, there the mind is composed, and does not tremble to an immoderate degree. These words very fitly express the power of faith.

Fear not. After having pointed out the remedy for allaying the distresses of the mind, he likewise bids them *not fear*; for faith, which places our salvation in the hand of God, is not more opposite to anything than to *fear*. It is impossible, I acknowledge, not to *fear* when dangers threaten, for faith does not deprive us of all feeling. On the contrary, the children of God are undoubtedly moved by two kinds of *fear*, one of which arises from the feeling of human nature, even though they be endued with perfect faith. The other arises from the weakness of faith; for no man has made such proficiency as not to have any remains of that distrust against which we ought continually to strive. We must not, therefore, understand the exhortation of the Prophet to mean that the Lord forbids every kind of *fear*, but he enjoins believers to be armed with such firmness as to overcome *fear*. As if he had said, "Do not suffer yourselves to be discouraged; and if you are assailed by fierce and severe attacks, maintain unshaken resolution, that you may not be overpowered by dangers, but, on the contrary, live to God and overcome all your distresses." For the same reason he immediately adds, —

And let not thy heart be faint. To be *faint* means "to melt away," for not without reason does the Apostle exhort us to strengthen our hearts by faith. (Hebrews 11:27; 13:9.) It is the softness of indolence, when we forget God and melt away, as it were, through our unbelief. You would not call that man soft or effeminate who relies on the Spirit of God and steadfastly resists adversity. Hence we infer that the Prophet meant nothing else than that Ahaz should undauntedly await the accomplishment of what the Lord had promised to him.

For the two tails. Isaiah employs an elegant metaphor to lessen the conception which the Jews had formed about those two very powerful kings which had filled their minds with terror. Their rage and cruelty appeared to be a devouring fire, which was sufficient to consume the whole of Judea, and could not be quenched. Isaiah, on the other hand, calls them not *firebrands*, (for that might have been thought to be something great,) but *tails*, that is, some fragments or ends of *firebrands*, and these, too, not burning, but only *smoking*, as if some *firebrand* snatched from the fire were going out, and gave out nothing else than a slight smoke. This metaphor yields high consolation, for it warns us to form a very different opinion about the violence of the

ungodly from what it appears to be. One would think that they are endued with so great power that they could burn and destroy the whole world. To put down the excess of terror, the Lord declares that what we imagined to be a burning, and a perpetual burning, is but a slight smoke and of short duration.

5. *The king of Syria hath taken evil counsel against thee.* Though he foretold that empty would be the threats, and vain the attempts of the enemies of the people of God, yet he does not conceal that their devices are cruel, if the Lord do not restrain them. By *evil counsel* he means *destructive counsel*, for these two kings had leagued together to destroy Judea. To express it more fully, and to place it as it were before their eyes, he relates their very words.

6. *Let us go up.* That is, *Let us make an invasion* נקיצנה (*nekitzennah*) is rendered by some, *Let us distress* or *afflict*; which is also expressed by the derivation of the word. But in this conjugation it rather signifies "to stir up and arouse." Though I do not reject the former interpretation, yet I prefer the latter, because it agrees better with the scope of the passage. Again, I understand the word *arouse* as meaning to *disturb*, and to cause revolutions; as we commonly say, *to raise disturbances*, [107] so as not to allow the tranquillity of that kingdom to be preserved.

Let us open it to us. The following word, נבקיענה, (*nabkignennah*,) is interpreted by some, *Let us break into it* [108] Others render it, *Let us cause it to break up to us.* I have rendered it, *Let us open*; for בקע (*bakang*) also signifies what we commonly express by the phrase, *to make a breach or opening* [109] Now, the way to *open* up the entrance to Judea was to rush through its fortifications by the force of arms, or, through the influence of fear, to induce timid and fickle persons to revolt; for so long as they continue to be loyal, entrance cannot be obtained; but when everything is disturbed by insurrections, an entrance is made, so that it becomes easy to break through into the strongest and best fortified places.

Thus, these two kings hoped that, as soon as they came into Judea, they would immediately terrify the whole nation by the extent and power of the army, so that there would be no ability or inclination to resist. When they brought together an army so prodigiously numerous, it is not probable that they placed any dependence on a long siege; for Jerusalem was strongly fortified; but they thought that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would be terrified and alarmed at the sight of their forces, and would be induced to make an immediate surrender. Yet I leave it to every person to adopt any interpretation of these words that he pleases, for whatever sense be put upon them, the meaning of the Prophet is not doubtful.

The son of Tabeal. Who this *Tabeal* was cannot easily be learned from

[107] Let us make a breach therein for us. — Eng. Ver.
[108] Faire bresche ou overture.
[109] And the head of Ephraim. — Eng. Ver.

history. Probably he was some Israelite, an enemy of the house of David, whom those kings were desirous to set up as one of their own dependents.

7. *It shall not stand.* What he had formerly stated was intended to show more fully that the deliverance was great and uncommon; for when the Lord intends to assist us in our trials, he represents the greatness of the danger, that we may not think that he promises less than the necessity requires. He does not usually give a mitigated view of the evils which press upon us, but rather holds out their full extent, and afterwards makes a promise, and shows that he is able to deliver us, though we may appear to be ruined. Such was the method adopted by the Prophet; for he might have told them in plain terms what would happen, and might have encouraged the king and the nation not to be terrified or discouraged at the sight of those armies. But he opened up the scheme and design of those kings, with which he now contrasts the promise and decree of God, that his wonderful assistance may be more strikingly displayed.

This is the sacred anchor which alone upholds us amidst the billows of temptations; for in adversity we shall never be able to stand if God take away his word from us. Although, therefore, the king was almost overwhelmed with despair, Isaiah shows that there is nothing so dreadful that it may not be despised, provided that he fortify himself by the promise of God, and patiently look for that which is not yet seen, and which even appears to be incredible. He affirms, that whatever men attempt, after the manner of the giants, in rising up against God, *it shall not stand.* He uses the word תקים, (*thakum,*) *shall arise*, in the same sense in which that metaphor is employed in the Latin language, that a work is making progress; and, in a word, he declares that such daring sacrilege *shall not stand*

Still more emphatic is that which he adds, לא תהיה, (*lo thihyeh,*) *it shall not be*; that is, it shall be reduced to nothing, as if it had never existed. This mode of expression deserves notice, for it was the bare and naked word of God which was contrasted with the vast army and scheme of the kings.

8. *For the head of Syria is Damascus.* As if he had said, "Those two kings shall have their limits, such as they have them now. They aspire to thy kingdom; but I have set bounds to them which they shall not pass." *Damascus* was the metropolis of *Syria*, as Paris is of France. He says, therefore, that those kings ought to be satisfied with their possessions, and that their future condition would be the same as it then was.

And Ephraim shall be broken. After having said that it is now useless to attempt to extend their boundaries, he foretells the calamity of the kingdom of Israel; for by the word *broken* he means that the kingdom of Israel shall be annihilated, so that it shall no longer exist. The Israelites were carried into captivity, and incorporated with another nation, just as in our own time a part of Savoy has passed under the government of France, and has lost its name. This is what the Prophet means, when he says מעם, (*megnam,*) *that it be not a people*; for at that time Israel was mixed with foreign nations, and

its peculiar name was blotted out.

Within sixty-five years. The Israelites were led into captivity in the sixth year of King Hezekiah, and Ahaz reigned not more than sixteen years; and, therefore, it is certain that this calculation ought not to be made from the day on which Isaiah was sent to deliver this message, for it was only twenty years to the time when the ten tribes were carried into captivity. Amoz had prophesied of that captivity; and there can be no doubt that this prophecy of Amoz, (Amos 3:11,) and the time specified in it were generally known, and that all understood the reckoning of the number of years. If, therefore, we reckon from the time when Amoz makes this prediction, we shall find it to be *sixty-five years*; for Jotham reigned sixteen years, (2 Kings 15:33;) Ahaz as many, (2 Kings 16:2;) to those must be added six years of King Hezekiah, which brings us down to the year when the ten tribes were carried into captivity; and if we afterwards add twenty-seven years, during which Uzziah reigned after the publication of the prophecy, there will be *sixty-five years* This conjecture is highly probable; and there ought not to be any doubt that this was Isaiah's meaning; for there is a prediction of the Prophet Amoz, in which the Lord warned the people that they might not meet with anything unexpected, and complain that they had been overtaken suddenly. Isaiah confirms that prediction, and announces the same time which already was universally known.

Moreover, by these words he sharply reproves the thoughtlessness of the Israelitish nation, that, when they had been warned of the destruction of their country and their name, not only did they freely indulge in despising the judgment of God, but as if they had purposely intended to mock at the heavenly predictions, they opened their mouth to devour Judea; for a long period was already past, and they thought that they had escaped. The Prophet ridicules this madness, in imagining that the word of God grew old in so small a number of years. But because the Israelites were deaf, Isaiah assigns to the Jews a time when they may look for the destruction of their enemies. Now, this passage shows that the Prophets faithfully assisted each other, that by their united labors they might serve God.

9. *Meanwhile* [110] *the head of Ephraim is Samaria.* As it is a repetition by which he confirms what he formerly said, that God had set bounds to the kingdom of Israel for an appointed time, I have rendered the copulative ו, (*vau*,) *meanwhile*. Otherwise, it would have been absurd to say that the metropolis of the kingdom would be preserved, after that the kingdom had been destroyed, as he lately foretold. The meaning therefore is, "In the meantime, till the *sixty-five years* are fulfilled, Israel enjoys a kind of truce. His *head* shall be *Samaria*. Let him be satisfied with his boundaries, and not aim at anything beyond them; for such shall be his condition, until he be utterly destroyed, and be no longer reckoned to be *a people*."

If you do not believe. The particle כי (*ki*) is placed in the middle of the

[110] Moreover, the LORD spake again to Ahaz. — Eng. Ver.

sentence, to mark the reason or cause; and, therefore, some render it, "If you do not believe, the reason is, that you are not believers." They limit the former clause to the prophecy of Isaiah, but extend the latter to any part of the word of God, as if he had said, "If you have no faith in my sayings, this gives a general proof of your unbelief." But in that way, the verb תאמינו, (*thaaminu*,) which is in Hiphil conjugation, will not differ from the verb תאמנו, (*theamenu*,) which is in the Niphal. It is not without reason, however, that the Prophet has changed the termination; and, from many passages of Scripture, it is abundantly evident that the Hebrew verb אמן, (*aman*,) in the Niphal conjugation, signifies *to stand*, or, *to remain fixed in its condition*. I interpret it, therefore, as if he had said, "This is the only support on which you can rely. Wait calmly and without uneasiness of mind for what the Lord has promised, that is, deliverance. If you do not wait for it, what else remains for you than destruction?"

The particle כי, (*ki*,) therefore, as in many other instances, means *truly*; for he declares that they cannot stand, if they do not rely on the promise; and indirectly he expresses still more, that God will stand, though they disbelieve his word, and, as far as lies in their power, endeavor to destroy its stability; but that they will not stand, unless they rely on the promise which has been made to them.

Hence we ought to draw a universal doctrine, that, when we have departed from the word of God, though we may suppose that we are firmly established, still ruin is at hand. For our salvation is bound up with the word of God, and, when this is rejected, the insult offered to it is justly punished by him who was ready to uphold men by his power, if they had not of their own accord rushed headlong to ruin. The consequence is, that either we must believe the promises of God, or it is in vain for us to expect salvation.

10. *And Jehovah added to speak to Ahaz.* [111] As the Lord knew that King Ahaz was so wicked as not to believe the promise, so he enjoins Isaiah to confirm him by adding a sign; for when God sees that his promises do not satisfy us, he makes additions to them suitable to our weakness; so that we not only hear him speak, but likewise behold his hand displayed, and thus are confirmed by an evident proof of the fact. Here we ought carefully to observe the use of signs, that is, the reason why God performs miracles, namely, to confirm us in the belief of his word; for when we see his power, if we have any hesitation about what he says to us, our doubt is removed by beholding the thing itself; for miracles added to the word are seals.

11. *Either in the deep.* I understand it simply to mean *Either above or below.* He allows him an unrestricted choice of a miracle, to demand either what belongs to earth or what belongs to heaven. But perhaps in the word *deep* there is something still more emphatic; as if he had said, "It belongs to you to choose. God will immediately show that his dominion is *higher* than this world, and that it likewise extends to all *depths*, so that at his pleasure

[111] Quae ex coitu viri gravida esset futura.

he can raise the dead from their graves." It was undoubtedly astonishing forbearance towards this wicked king and people of God, that not only did he patiently bear their distrust for a time, but so graciously condescended to them that he was willing to give them any pledge of his power which they chose. Yet he had in his eye not unbelievers only, but he intended likewise to provide for the benefit of the weak, in whom there was a seed of godliness; that they might be fully convinced that Isaiah did not speak at random, for he could easily give a proof of the power of God in confirmation of what he had said.

The same goodness of God is now also displayed towards men, to whom he exercises such forbearance, when he might justly have been offended at them; for how shockingly do they insult God, when they doubt his truth? What do you leave to God, if you take that from him? And whatever may be our doubts, not only does he pardon us, but even aids our distrust, and not only by his word, but by adding miracles; and he exhibits them not only to believers, but also to the ungodly, which we may behold in this king. And if he was at that time so kind to strangers, what ought not his own people to expect from him?

12. *And Ahaz said.* By a plausible excuse he refuses the sign which the Lord offered to him. That excuse is, that he is unwilling *to tempt the LORD*; for he pretends to believe the words of the Prophet, and to ask nothing more from God than his word. Ungodliness is certainly detestable in the sight of God, and in like manner God unquestionably sets a high value on faith. Accordingly, if a man rely on his word alone, and disregard everything else, it might be thought that he deserves the highest praise; for there can be no greater perfection than to yield full submission and obedience to God.

But a question arises. Do we *tempt* God, when we accept what he offers to us? Certainly not. *Ahaz* therefore speaks falsehood, when he pretends that he refuses the sign, because he is unwilling to *tempt God*; for there can be nothing fitter or more excellent than to obey God, and indeed it is the highest virtue to ask nothing beyond the word of God; and yet if God choose to add anything to his word, it ought not to be regarded as a virtue to reject this addition as superfluous. It is no small insult offered to God, when his goodness is despised in such a manner as if his proceedings towards us were of no advantage, and as if he did not know what it is that we chiefly need. We know that faith is chiefly commended on this ground, that it maintains obedience to him; but when we wish to be too wise, and despise anything that belongs to God, we are undoubtedly abominable before God, whatever excuse we may plead before men. While we believe the word of God, we ought not to despise the aids which he has been pleased to add for the purpose of strengthening our faith.

For instance, the Lord offers to us in the gospel everything necessary for salvation; for when he brings us into a state of fellowship with Christ, the sum of all blessings is truly contained in him. What then is the use of

Baptism and the Lord's Supper? Must they be regarded as superfluous? Not at all; for any one who shall actually, and without flattery, acknowledge his weakness, of which all from the least to the greatest are conscious, will gladly avail himself of those aids for his support. We ought indeed to grieve and lament, that the sacred truth of God needs assistance on account of the defect of our flesh; but since we cannot all at once remove this defect, any one who, according to his capacity shall believe the word, will immediately render full obedience to God. Let us therefore learn to embrace the signs along with the word, since it is not in the power of man to separate them.

When *Ahaz* refuses the *sign* offered to him, by doing so he displays both his obstinacy and his ingratitude; for he despises what God had offered for the highest advantage. Hence also it is evident how far we ought to *ask signs*, namely, when God offers them to us; and therefore he who shall reject them when offered, must also reject the grace of God. In like manner fanatics of the present day disregard Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and consider them to be childish elements. They cannot do this without at the same time rejecting the whole gospel; for we must not separate those things which the Lord has commanded us to join.

But a question may be asked, Is it not sometimes lawful to *ask signs* from the Lord? For we have an instance of this in Gideon, who wished to have his calling confirmed by some *sign.* (Judges 6:17.) The Lord granted his prayer, and did not disapprove of such a desire. I answer, though Gideon was not commanded by God to ask a sign, yet he did so, not at his own suggestion, but by an operation of the Holy Spirit. We must not abuse his example, therefore, so that each of us may freely allow himself that liberty; for so great is the forwardness of men that they do not hesitate to ask innumerable signs from God without any proper reason. Such effrontery ought therefore to be restrained, that we may be satisfied with those signs which the Lord offers to us.

Now, there are two kinds of *signs*; for some are extraordinary, and may be called supernatural; such as that which the Prophet will immediately add, and that which, we shall afterwards see, was offered to Hezekiah. (Isaiah 38:7.) Some are ordinary, and in daily use among believers, such as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which contain no miracle, or at least may be perceived by the eye or by some of the senses. What the Lord miraculously performs by his Spirit is unseen, but in those which are extraordinary the miracle itself is seen. Such is also the end and use of all *signs*; for as Gideon was confirmed by an astonishing miracle, so we are confirmed by Baptism and the Lord's Supper, though our eyes behold no miracle.

13. *And he said, Hear now, O house of David.* Under the pretense of honor to exclude the power of God, which would maintain the truth of the promise, was intolerable wickedness; and therefore the Prophet kindles into warmer indignation, and more sharply rebukes wicked hypocrites. Though it would have been honorable to them to be reckoned the descendants of

David, provided that they imitated his piety, yet it is rather for the sake of reproach that he calls them the *posterity* or *family of David.* It was indeed no small aggravation of the baseness, that the grace of God was rejected by that family from which the salvation of the whole world would proceed. Grievous disgrace must have been brought on them, by naming their ancestry, from which they had so basely and shamefully degenerated.

This order ought to be carefully observed; for we ought not to begin with severe reproof, but with doctrine, that men may be gently drawn by it. When plain and simple doctrine is not sufficient, proofs must be added. But if even this method produce no good effect, it then becomes necessary to employ greater vehemence. Such is the manner in which we hear Isaiah thundering on the present occasion. After having exhibited to the king both doctrine and signs, he now resorts to the last remedy, and sharply and severely reproves an obstinate man; and not him only, but the whole royal family which was guilty of the same kind of impiety.

Is it a small thing for you to weary men? He makes a comparison between *God* and *men*; not that it is possible to make an actual separation between *God* and the prophets and holy teachers of whom he speaks, who are nothing else than God's instruments, and make common cause with him, when they discharge their duty; for of them the Lord testifies,

He who despiseth you despiseth me.
He who heareth you heareth me. (Luke 10:16.)

The Prophet therefore adapts his discourse to the impiety of Ahaz, and of those who resembled him; for they thought that they had to deal with *men.* Those very words were undoubtedly spoken in ancient times which we hear at the present day from the mouths of the ungodly: "Are they not men that speak to us?" And thus they endeavor to disparage the doctrine which comes from God. As it was customary at that time for irreligious despisers of doctrine to use the same kind of language, the Prophet, by way of admission, says that those who performed the sacred office of teaching the word were *men.* "Be it so. You tell me that I am a mortal man. That is the light in which you view the prophets of God. *But is it a small thing to weary* us, if you do not also *weary God*? Now, you despise God, by rejecting the sign of his astonishing power which he was willing to give to you. In vain therefore do you boast that you do not despise him, and that you have to do with *men*, and not with *God.*" This then is the reason why the Prophet was so greatly enraged. Hence we see more clearly what I mentioned a little before, that the proper season for giving reproofs is, when we have attempted everything that God enjoined, and have neglected no part of our duty. We ought then to break out with greater vehemence, and to expose the ungodliness which lurked under those cloaks of hypocrisy.

My God. He formerly said, *Ask a sign for thee from the* Lord thy God; for at that time his obstinacy and rebellion had not been manifestly proved. But now he claims it as peculiar to himself; for *Ahaz*, and those who resembled

him, had no right to boast of the name of God. He therefore intimates that God is on his side, and is not on the side of those hypocrites: and in this way he testifies his confidence; for he shows how conscientiously he promised deliverance to the king; as if he had said, that he did not come but when God sent him, and that he said nothing but what he was commanded to say. With the same boldness ought all ministers to be endued, not only so as to profess it, but to have it deeply rooted in their hearts. The false prophets also boast of it loudly, but it is empty and unmeaning talk, or a blind confidence arising from rashness.

14. *Therefore the* Lord *himself shall give you a sign.* Ahaz had already refused the sign which the Lord offered to him, when the Prophet remonstrated against his rebellion and ingratitude; yet the Prophet declares that this will not prevent God from *giving the sign* which he had promised and appointed for the Jews. But what sign?

Behold, a virgin shall conceive. This passage is obscure; but the blame lies partly on the Jews, who, by much cavilling, have labored, as far as lay in their power, to pervert the true exposition. They are hard pressed by this passage; for it contains an illustrious prediction concerning the Messiah, who is here called *Immanuel*; and therefore they have labored, by all possible means, to torture the Prophet's meaning to another sense. Some allege that the person here mentioned is Hezekiah; and others, that it is the son of Isaiah.

Those who apply this passage to Hezekiah are excessively impudent; for he must have been a full-grown man when Jerusalem was besieged. Thus they show that they are grossly ignorant of history. But it is a just reward of their malice, that God hath blinded them in such a manner as to be deprived of all judgment. This happens in the present day to the papists, who often expose themselves to ridicule by their mad eagerness to pervert the Scriptures.

As to those who think that it was Isaiah's son, it is an utterly frivolous conjecture; for we do not read that a deliverer would be raised up from the seed of Isaiah, who should be called *Immanuel*; for this title is far too illustrious to admit of being applied to any man.

Others think, or, at least, (being unwilling to contend with the Jews more than was necessary,) admit that the Prophet spoke of some child who was born at that time, by whom, as by an obscure picture, Christ was foreshadowed. But they produce no strong arguments, and do not show who that child was, or bring forward any proofs. Now, it is certain, as we have already said, that this name *Immanuel* could not be literally applied to a mere man; and, therefore, there can be no doubt that the Prophet referred to Christ.

But all writers, both Greek and Latin, are too much at their ease in handling this passage; for, as if there were no difficulty in it, they merely assert that Christ is here promised from the Virgin Mary. Now, there is no

small difficulty in the objection which the Jews bring against us, that Christ is here mentioned without any sufficient reason; for thus they argue, and demand that the scope of the passage be examined: "Jerusalem was besieged. The Prophet was about to give them a sign of deliverance. Why should he promise the Messiah, who was to be born five hundred years afterwards?" By this argument they think that they have gained the victory, because the promise concerning Christ had nothing to do with assuring Ahaz of the deliverance of Jerusalem. And then they boast as if they had gained the day, chiefly because scarcely any one replies to them. That is the reason why I said that commentators have been too much at their ease in this matter; for it is of no small importance to show why the Redeemer is here mentioned.

Now, the matter stands thus. King Ahaz having rejected the sign which God had offered to him, the Prophet reminds him of the foundation of the covenant, which even the ungodly did not venture openly to reject. The Messiah must be born; and this was expected by all, because the salvation of the whole nation depended on it. The Prophet, therefore, after having expressed his indignation against the king, again argues in this manner: "By rejecting the promise, thou wouldest endeavor to overturn the decree of God; but it shall remain inviolable, and thy treachery and ingratitude will not hinder God from being, continually the Deliverer of his people; for he will at length raise up his Messiah."

To make these things more plain, we must attend to the custom of the Prophets, who, in establishing special promises, lay down this as the foundation, that God will send a Redeemer. On this general foundation God everywhere builds all the special promises which he makes to his people; and certainly every one who expects aid and assistance from him must be convinced of his fatherly love. And how could he be reconciled to us but through Christ, in whom he has freely adopted the elect, and continues to pardon them to the end? Hence comes that saying of Paul, that

all the promises of God in Christ are Yea and Amen.
(2 Corinthians 1:20.)

Whenever, therefore, God assisted his ancient people, he at the same time reconciled them to himself through Christ; and accordingly, whenever famine, pestilence, and war are mentioned, in order to hold out a hope of deliverance, he places the Messiah before their eyes. This being exceedingly clear, the Jews have no right to make a noise, as if the Prophet made an unseasonable transition to a very remote subject. For on what did the deliverance of Jerusalem depend, but on the manifestation of Christ? This was, indeed, the only foundation on which the salvation of the Church always rested.

Most appropriately, therefore, did Isaiah say, "True, thou dost not believe the promises of God, but yet God will fulfill them; for he will at length send his Christ, for whose sake he determines to preserve this city. Though thou art unworthy, yet God will have regard to his own honor." King Ahaz is therefore deprived of that sign which he formerly rejected, and loses the

benefit of which he proved himself to be unworthy; but still God's inviolable promise is still held out to him. This is plainly enough intimated by the particle לכן, (*lachen,*) *therefore*; that is, because thou disdainest that particular sign which God offered to thee, הוא, (*hu,*) *He*, that is, God himself, who was so gracious as to offer it freely to thee, he whom thou *weariest* will not fail to hold out *a sign.* When I say that the coming of Christ is promised to Ahaz, I do not mean that God includes him among the chosen people, to whom he had appointed his Son to be the Author of salvation; but because the discourse is directed to the whole body of the people.

Will give you a sign. The word לכם, (*lachem,*) *to you*, is interpreted by some as meaning *to your children*; but this is forced. So far as relates to the persons addressed, the Prophet leaves the wicked king and looks to the nation, so far as it had been adopted by God. He will therefore give, not *to thee* a wicked king, and to those who are like thee, but *to you* whom he has adopted; for the covenant which he made with Abraham continues to be firm and inviolable. And the Lord always has some remnant to whom the advantage of the covenant belongs; though the rulers and governors of his people may be hypocrites.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive. The word *Behold* is used emphatically, to denote the greatness of the event; for this is the manner in which the Spirit usually speaks of great and remarkable events, in order to elevate the minds of men. The Prophet, therefore, enjoins his hearers to be attentive, and to consider this extraordinary work of God; as if he had said, "Be not slothful, but consider this singular grace of God, which ought of itself to have drawn your attention, but is concealed from you on account of your stupidity."

Although the word עלמה, (*gnalmah,*) *a virgin*, is derived from עלם, (*gnalam,*) which signifies *to hide*, because the shame and modesty of *virgins* does not allow them to appear in public; yet as the Jews dispute much about that word, and assert that it does not signify *virgin*, because Solomon used it to denote a young woman who was betrothed, it is unnecessary to contend about the word. Though we should admit what they say, that עלמה (*gnalmah*) sometimes denotes *a young woman*, and that the name refers, as they would have it, to the age, (yet it is frequently used in Scripture when the subject relates to *a virgin,*) the nature of the case sufficiently refutes all their slanders. For what wonderful thing did the Prophet say, if he spoke of *a young woman* who *conceived* through intercourse with a man? It would certainly have been absurd to hold out this as a *sign* or a miracle. Let us suppose that it denotes a young woman who should become pregnant in the ordinary course of nature; [112] everybody sees that it would have been silly and contemptible for the Prophet, after having said that he was about to speak of something strange and uncommon, to add, *A young woman shall conceive.* It is, therefore, plain enough that he speaks of *a virgin* who

[112] Bishops Lowth and Stock concur in rendering כי (ki) for, which indeed is its ordinary meaning. FOR before this child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. --- Ed

should conceive, not by the ordinary course of nature, but by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit. And this is the mystery which Paul extols in lofty terms, that

God was manifested in the flesh. (1 Timothy 3:16.)

And shall call. The Hebrew verb is in the feminine gender, *She shall call*; for as to those who read it in the masculine gender, I know not on what they found their opinion. The copies which we use certainly do not differ. If you apply it to the mother, it certainly expresses something different from the ordinary custom. We know that to the father is always assigned the right of giving a name to a child; for it is a sign of the power and authority of fathers over children; and the same authority does not belong to women. But here it is conveyed to the mother; and therefore it follows that he is conceived by the mother in such a manner as not to have a father on earth; otherwise the Prophet would pervert the ordinary custom of Scripture, which ascribes this office to men only. Yet it ought to be observed that the name was not given to Christ at the suggestion of his mother, and in such a case it would have had no weight; but the Prophet means that, in publishing the name, *the virgin* will occupy the place of a herald, because there will be no earthly father to perform that office.

Immanuel. This name was unquestionably bestowed on Christ on account of the actual fact; for the only-begotten Son of God clothed himself with our flesh, and united himself to us by partaking of our nature. He is, therefore, called *God with us*, or *united to us*; which cannot apply to a man who is not God. The Jews in their sophistry tell us that this name was given to Hezekiah; because by the hand of Hezekiah God delivered his people; and they add, "He who is the servant of God represents his person." But neither Moses nor Joshua, who were deliverers of the nation, were so denominated; and therefore this *Immanuel* is preferred to Moses and Joshua, and all the others; for by this name he excels all that ever were before, and all that shall come after him; and it is a title expressive of some extraordinary excellence and authority which he possesses above others. It is therefore evident that it denotes not only the power of God, such as he usually displays by his servant, but a union of person, by which Christ became God-man. Hence it is also evident that Isaiah here relates no common event, but points out that unparalleled mystery which the Jews labor in vain to conceal.

15. *Butter and honey shall he eat.* Here the Prophet proves the true human nature of Christ; for it was altogether incredible that he who was God should be born of *a virgin.* Such a prodigy was revolting to the ordinary judgment of men. To hinder us from thinking that his fancy now presents to us some apparition, he describes the marks of human nature, in order to show, by means of them, that Christ will actually appear in flesh, or in the nature of man; that is, that he will be reared in the same manner that children commonly are. The Jews had a different way of rearing children from what is followed by us; for they used *honey*, which is not so customary

among us; and to this day they still retain the custom of causing a child to taste *butter and honey*, as soon as it is born, before receiving suck.

That he may know. That is, until he arrive at that age when he can distinguish between good and evil, or, as we commonly say, *till the years of discretion*; ל (*lamed*) denotes the term and period up to which he shall be reared after the manner of a child; and this contributes still more to prove the reality of his nature. He therefore means *understanding* and *judgment*, such as is obtained when the period of childhood is past. Thus we see how far the Son of God condescended on our account, so that he not only was willing to be fed on our food, but also, for a time, to be deprived of *understanding*, and to endure all our weaknesses. (Hebrews 2:14.) This relates to his human nature, for it cannot apply to his Divinity. Of this state of ignorance, in which Christ was for a time, Luke testifies when he says,

And he grew in wisdom, and in stature,
and in favor with God and with man. (Luke 2:52.)

If Luke had merely said that Christ *grew*, he might have been supposed to mean *with men*; but he expressly adds, *with God*. Christ must therefore have been, for a time, like little children, so that, so far as relates to his human nature, he was deficient in understanding.

16. *Before the child shall know.* Many have been led into a mistake by connecting this verse with the preceding one, as if it had been the same child that was mentioned. They suppose that it assigns the reason, and that the particle כי (*ki*) means *for* [113] But if we carefully examine the Prophet's meaning, it will quickly be apparent that he leaves the general doctrine, to which he had made a short digression, and returns to his immediate subject. After having founded the hope of the preservation of the city on the promised Mediator, he now shows in what way it will be preserved.

The child. I interpret this word as referring, not to Christ, but to all children in general. Here I differ from all the commentators; for they think that the demonstrative ה points out a particular child. But I view הנער, (*hannagnar*,) so that ה is indeed added for the purpose of making it more definite, but is intended to point out the age, and not any particular child; as when we say, *The child*, [114] and add the article *The* [115] for the purpose of giving greater definiteness. This is very customary in Scripture. If he had pointed out a particular child, he would have added הזה, (*hazzeh*,) as is frequently done in other passages. It is not probable that this promise of the overturn of the kingdoms of Syria and Samaria, which immediately followed, would be deferred for five hundred years, that is, till the coming of Christ; and, indeed, it would have been altogether absurd. The meaning therefore is, "Before the children, who shall be born hereafter, can distinguish between good and evil, the land which thou hatest shall be forsaken."

[113] L'enfant.

[114] Le.

[115] "At whose kings thou dost fret מפני, קץ אתה (attah kaz mippenei,) thou art fretting by reason of. See Exodus 1:12." --- Bishop Stock

The land. By *the land* I understand Israel and Syria; for though they were two, yet on account of the league which had been formed between the two kings, they are accounted one. Some understand by it Judea; but that cannot agree on account of the plural noun which follows, *her kings.* That these things happened as they are written may be easily inferred from the sacred history; for when Ahaz called the Assyrians to aid him, *Rezin* was slain by them. (2 Kings 16:9.) Not long afterwards, Pekah, king of Israel, died, in the twelfth year of King Ahaz, and was succeeded by Hoshea, the son of Elah. (2 Kings 15:30; 17:1.) Thus, before the children who should afterwards be born were grown up, both countries would be deprived of their kings; for before that time both Rezin and Pekah were removed out of the land of the living. Now the discourse is addressed to Ahaz, and God promises to him, by way of consolation, that he will inflict punishment on the enemies of Ahaz, but for no other purpose than to render him more inexcusable.

Which thou hatest. As to the word *hatest*, Syria and the land of Israel are said to be *hated* or *abhorred* by King Ahaz, because from that quarter he was attacked by invading armies. He therefore promises that those kings will soon perish. Some render מפני, (*mippenei,*) *on account of*; [116] and I admit that this word is generally used in this sense. But I adopt here a more natural rendering, as if he had said, *It shall be forsaken from the face or from the presence of the two kings,* and shall be left by them, so that they shall no more be seen. And by these words it is sufficiently evident that this must be understood as referring to both kingdoms.

17. *The* Lord *shall bring upon thee.* Here the Prophet, on the other hand, threatens the wicked hypocrite, who pretended that he was unwilling *to tempt God*, and yet called for those whom the Lord had forbidden him to call to his aid. (Exodus 23:32.) That he might not indulge in undue exultation and insolence on account of the former promise, he likewise threatens his destruction, and declares that what he hopes to be his preservation, that is, the aid of the Assyrians, will be utterly destructive to him. (2 Kings 16:7; 2 Chronicles 28:16.) As if he had said, "Thou promisest everything to thyself from the king of Assyria, and thinkest that he will be faithful to thee, because thou hast entered into a league and covenant with him, which God had forbidden; but thou shalt quickly understand of what advantage it will be to thee to have *tempted God.* Thou mightest have remained at home and at ease, and mightest have received the assistance of God; but thou choosest rather to call in the Assyrians. Thou shalt find them to be worse than thine own enemies;"

This discourse, therefore, agrees with what goes before; for he presses more closely the treachery and ingratitude of the king, who had rejected both the word of God and the sign, and had rendered himself unworthy of every promise. And as it is customary with hypocrites, when they have escaped from any danger and fear, immediately to return to their natural disposition,

[116] Unde et aquam pedum urinam vocant; et pedes tegere pro alvum exonerare.

he affirms that nothing shall protect the Jews from being likewise involved in just punishments. He expressly declares that *the family of David*, which might have claimed exemption on the ground of its peculiar privilege, will be exposed to the same kind of calamities; for God regulates his judgments in such a manner, that while he spares his Church and provides for her permanent existence, he does not permit the wicked, who are mingled with the good, to escape unpunished.

From the day that Ephraim departed from Judah. In this manner does Scripture speak when it describes any serious calamity; for the Jews could not have received a severer chastisement than when, by the withdrawing of the ten tribes, (1 Kings 12:16,) not only was the kingdom wretchedly divided, but the body of the nation was rent and torn. The revolt of *Ephraim from Judah* was, therefore, an indication of the worst kind of calamity; for the resources of the kingdom of Judah being more seriously affected by that division than it could have been by any defeat by a foreign enemy, he says that since that time the Jews had not sustained a greater calamity.

Hence, as I have already said, we see how God, while he punishes hypocrites, at the same time remembers believers, and opens the way for his mercy. We ought to observe this wonderful arrangement, that amidst the most dreadful deaths still the Church remains safe. Who would ever have thought that Jerusalem would be delivered from the vast army of the two kings? Or, that the kingdom of Syria, which was then in a flourishing condition, would quickly be overturned? Or, that Samaria was not far from destruction? And in the mean time, that the Assyrians, on whom the Jews relied, would do them more injury than the Israelites and Syrians had ever done? All these things the Lord did for the sake of preserving his Church, but at the same time in such a manner that he likewise took vengeance on the wickedness of King Ahaz.

18. *And it shall be in that day.* The Jews thought that the Assyrians were bound by their league with them; but the Prophet ridicules this folly, and declares that they will be ready at God's bidding to drive them in any direction that he thinks fit. Yet instead of command he employs the metaphor *hiss*, in allusion to the climate of those kingdoms of which he speaks; for Egypt abounds in flies, because the country is hot and marshy; and when the air is both hot and moist, there must be produced a great abundance of flies. Assyria, on the other hand, abounded in bees; and when he says that he will bring them by a *hiss*, he alludes to the natural habits of bees and flies, but he means that he will find no difficulty in sending them. As if he had said, "There will be no need of great exertion; for as soon as I shall give the sign, they will instantly run." In this manner he shows what efficacy belongs to his secret operation or design, that by a *hiss* he compels the most powerful nations to yield obedience.

19. *And they shall come.* He follows out the same metaphor; for bees commonly seek nests for themselves in caverns, or valleys and bushes, and

such like places; as if he had said that there would not be a corner in which the enemy would not settle down and dwell. It is unnecessary to give ourselves much trouble in explaining why he speaks of *bushes* and *thorns* rather than of other things, for the language is figurative. And yet I have no doubt that he intended to state, that whether they hide themselves in caverns, or seek concealment in valleys, there will be no escape; for the enemy will take possession of the whole country.

Hence we again infer what has been formerly observed, that nothing takes place at random or by chance, but that everything is governed by the hand of God. Again, though wicked men may rage and may be hurried forward in blind attack, still God puts a bridle on them that they may promote his glory. Therefore, when we see that wicked men throw everything into disorder, let us not think that God has laid the bridle on their neck, that they may rush forward wherever they please; but let us be fully convinced that their violent attacks are under control. From this we ought to derive wonderful consolation amidst those disturbances in which the Christian world is so deeply involved, and by the violence of which it is so powerfully shaken, that almost everything appears to be in a state of confusion. We should consider that the Lord has a concealed bridle by which he restrains furious beasts, so that they cannot break through wherever the madness of their rage drives them, or go beyond the limits which the Lord prescribes to them.

20. *The* Lord *will shave with a hired razor.* He now employs a different metaphor, and compares those enemies by whom the Lord had determined to afflict Judea at the appointed time, to *a razor*, by which the *beard* and *hair* are shaved, and other excrescences of the same kind are removed. ב (*beth*) is here superfluous, and is only employed in accordance with the Hebrew idiom, to denote an instrument, and, therefore, I have merely rendered it *he will shave with a razor.* What he means he immediately explains; namely, that *the Assyrians* will serve for *a razor* in the hand of God, and that they will come from a distant country.

Who are beyond the river. This means that Euphrates will not hinder them from passing over to execute the commands of God. He likewise adds, that it will not be some portion of that nation rushing forward of its own accord into foreign territories, or wandering without a settled leader; but that the king himself will lead them, so that the nation and the king at the same time will overwhelm Judea, and it will sink under such a burden.

A hired razor. It is not without reason that he says that this *razor* is *hired*; for he expresses by it the dreadful nature of the calamity which would be brought upon them by the Assyrians. If a man make use of a *hired* horse or a *hired* sword, he will use it the more freely, and will not spare or take care of it as he would do with his own, for men wish to gain advantage from what they have *hired* to the full value of the *hire.* Thus the Lord threatens that he will not at all spare the *razor*, though he should be under the necessity of blunting it, which means, that he will send the Assyrians with mad violence

and rage. If the Lord took such dreadful vengeance on the Jews for those reasons which the Prophet formerly enumerated, we ought to fear lest we be punished in the same manner; or rather, we ought to dread the *razor* with which he has already begun to shave us.

The head and the hair of the feet. By *the hair of the feet* he means the lower parts; for by *the feet* is meant all that is below the belly, and it is a figure of speech, by which a part is taken for the whole. [117] In short, he means that the whole body, and even the beard, must be shaved. Now, if we set aside the figures, and wish to get at the plain and natural meaning, it is as if he had said, that this *shaving* will reach from the top of the head down to the feet, and that kings and princes will not be exempted from that calamity, but that they also must feel the edge of the *razor*

21. *And it shall come to pass on that day.* In these verses, down to the end of the chapter, the Prophet describes the state of a country torn and wasted; for he intends to present a striking and lively picture of such overwhelming distress that, wherever you turn your eyes, nothing is to be seen but the traces of frightful desolation. Some think that a mitigation of punishment is here promised, but we shall soon see that this does not agree with the context. Though he employs the appellation, *a man*, without any limitation, yet strictly it is of the richest men that he speaks; for he does not say that every one will have so many; but they who formerly were accustomed to rear a large number of *oxen* and *sheep* will be satisfied with having a few. He means, therefore, that all will be reduced to very deep poverty. Some think that the Hebrew word which the Prophet employs, יחיה, (*yechaiyeh*,) *he shall quicken*, means "to deliver from death;" but the meaning which I have adopted is more natural and more generally approved.

22. *On account of the abundance of milk.* Some explain it thus: "there will scarcely be as much obtained from one cow as would be required for the food of a family;" for those who rear cattle do not feed on milk alone, but likewise make cheeses, and have butter to sell. When, therefore, he says, that out of all their abundance nothing more would be produced than what was necessary for the use of the family, in the opinion of those commentators it denotes poverty. Others think that this is a promise of fertility, that however small may be the number of their cows and sheep, still they will have abundant means of support. A third exposition is preferable; for it appears as if the Prophet intended to show that the *men* will be so few in number that a small quantity of milk will be sufficient for them all; and it is a far heavier affliction that a country should want inhabitants than that it should have a small supply of herds and flocks.

In the preceding verse Isaiah declared, that Judea would be so impoverished, that very few herds and flocks would be left; but now he adds that the men will be still fewer, for a very little milk will be sufficient for the inhabitants of the land. I adopt this exposition the more readily, because

[117] Bailler pour une piece de pain.

here a promise would be inappropriate. The former sense is forced; and he does not speak only of cattle-feeders who had cows, but of all the inhabitants; for he expressly says, *Every one that shall be left,* and by that expression he again denotes the smallness of their number. His statement, therefore, is intended to show, that the country will be so generally forsaken and so miserably wasted, that no great supply of *milk* and *butter* will be needed; for, when the devastation has taken place, there will be few men left.

23. *A thousand vines.* As to the opinion of those who think that Isaiah here comforts believers, I pass it by without refutation; for it is sufficiently refuted by the context, and the words plainly declare that Isaiah continues to threaten destruction, and to describe the desolation of the land. Others think that the meaning is this, "Where a thousand vines were, which were sold for a thousand pieces of silver, there briers and thorns will be found." But it is plain that this would be far too low a price, if the statement were applied to the whole country; for who would think of reckoning a shekel to be the price of *a vine*, which is the most precious of all possessions? It is of the same import with a common expression, "to sell for a trifle," *to give away for a piece of bread*; [118] when anything is sold at a very low price. Any field, however barren or uncultivated, might be sold at a higher price, if due attention were paid to the cultivation of land, as is usually done where there is a crowded population.

On account of briers and thorns. He assigns a reason for the alteration of the price, which makes it evident that he speaks of desolation. *On account of briers and thorns*, says he; for there will be none to cultivate the land, which usually happens when a heavy calamity has been sustained. ל, (*lamed,*) which some render *to* or *for*, means, I think, *on account of*; for, everything having been thrown into confusion by the fury of the invading army, there are no vinedressers or laborers, and the most highly cultivated lands must have been covered over and choked up by *briers and thorns.* The meaning therefore is, that the inhabitants will be so few, that you will scarcely find and one that would give the smallest coin to buy the most valuable estates.

24. *With arrows and bow shall they come thither.* The verb יבא, (*yabo,*) *he shall come*, is in the singular number; but it ought to be explained by the plural, that the archers will march through Judea. Some think that Isaiah speaks of *bows and arrows*, because such would be the dread of enemies, that no man unarmed would venture to approach his possessions. But I consider it to be more probable that the Prophet means that, where the richest cultivation formerly existed, opportunity for hunting will be found; for there the wild beasts have their dens. Now, it is a most wretched change, when fields formerly cultivated and fertile are turned into woods and thickets. By *bow and arrow* here, therefore, I understand *hunting*, in this sense: "it shall not be approached by husbandmen but by hunters, and they shall not

[118] "The shepherds shall be under no apprehension of finding on those hills hedges of briar and thorn, to interrupt the free range of their flock." — Rosenmuller.

plant or dress vines, but chase wild beasts." In short, it means nothing else than frightful desolation, which shall change the aspect of the land.

25. *And on all the hills that are dug with the hoe.* Here the Prophet appears to contradict himself; for, having hitherto spoken of the desolation of the land, he now describes what may be called a new condition, when he says that, where *thorns and briers* were, there oxen will feed. The consequence has been, that some have applied these words to the consolation of the people. But the intention of the Prophet is totally different; for he means that *hills*, which were at a great distance from a crowded population, and which could not be approached without much difficulty, will be fit for pasturage, on account of the great number of men who go thither; that is, because men will betake themselves to desert mountains, which formerly were inaccessible, there will be no need to be afraid of *briers*, [119] for there will be abundance of inhabitants. Now, this is a most wretched state of things, when men cannot escape death but by resorting to *thorns and briers*; for he means *hills* formerly desolate and uncultivated, in which men shall seek a residence and abode, because no part of the country will be safe. Thus he describes a distressful and melancholy condition of the whole country, and destruction so awful that the aspect of the country shall be altogether different from what it had formerly been.

When he foretold these things to King Ahaz, there can be no doubt that Ahaz despised them; for that wicked king, relying on his forces and on his league with the Assyrians, settled, as it were, on his lees, as soon as the siege of the city was raised. But Isaiah was bound to persevere in the discharge of his office, in order to show that there was no help but from God, and to inform the wretched hypocrite, that his destruction would come from that quarter from which he expected his preservation.

[119] Moreover, the LORD said unto me. — Eng. Ver.

Chapter 8

CHAPTER 8

Isaiah Chapter 8:1-22

1. Moreover, the Lord said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahar-shalal-hash-baz.

1. Et dixit Iehova ad me: Sume tibi volumen grande, et scribi in eo stylo vulgari, (vel, hominis:) Accelera ad diripiendum, festina ad praedam.

2. And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

2. Et adhibui mihi testes fideles, Uriam sacerdotem, et Zachariam filium Iebarachiae.

3. And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son: then said the Lord to me, Call his name Mahar-shalal-hash-baz:

3. Et accessi ad prophetissam, quae concepit, et peperit filium. Dixitque mihi Iehova: Voca nomen ejus, Accelera ad diripiendum; festina ad praedam.

4. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

4. Sane antequam sciat puer clamare, Pater mi et mater mea, tolletur substantia Damasci, et spolia Samariae, coram Rege Assyriae.

5. The Lord spake also unto me again, saying,

5. Rursus loquutus est mecum Iehova, iterum dicens:

6. Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

6. Quandoquidem rejecit populus iste aquas Siloe, quae fluunt cum silentio, et gaudium fuit illi ad Rezin, et filium Romeliae.

7. Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory; and

he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks.

7. Ideo, ecce Dominus adducit super eos aquas fluvii, violentas et magnas: nempe Regem Assyriae et omne robur ejus; ascendetque super omnes rivos, et transibit super omnes ripas ejus.

8. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even to the neck: and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

8. Et trajiciens in Iudam inundabit, et transibit, pertinget usque ad collum. Et implebit extensio alarum ejus latitudinem terrae tuae, O Immanuel.

9. Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

9. Consociate vos populi, et confringemini; auribus percipite quotquot e longinqua terra estis. Accingite vos, et confringemini; accingite, inquam, vos, et confringemini.

10. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

10. Consultate consilium, et dissolvetur; decernite decretum, et non stabit; quia nobiscum Deus. (Hebraice, Immanuel.)

11. For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

11. Nam sic dixit mihi Iehova, tanquam apprehensione (vel, roboratione) manus; et erudivit me, ne irem per viam populi hujus, dicens:

12. Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

12. Ne dicatis, Conspiratio, in quibuscunque populus iste dicit, Conspiratio, neque timorem eorum timueritis, aut formidaveritis.

13. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

13. Iehovam exercituum ipsum sanctificate; et sit ipse timor vester; et idem sit pavor vester.

14. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

14. Tum ipse erit in sanctuarium; in lapidem offendiculi; et in petram ruinae, duabus domibus Israel; in laqueum, et tendiculum incolae Ierusalem.

15. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

15. Et impingent multi inter eos; ideoque corruent, et conterentur, irretientur, et capientur.

16. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

16. Liga contestationem; obsigna legem inter discipulos meos.

17. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

17. Itaque expectabo Iehovam, qui abscondit faciem suam a domo Iacob, et praestolabor eum.

18. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

18. Ecce ego et pueri, quos dedit mihi Iehova, in signa et prodigia in Israel; a Iehova exercituum, qui habitat in monte Sion.

19. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

19. Quod si dixerint vobis, Sciscitamini a pythonicis et divinis, qui mussitant et demurmurant; annon populus Deum suum consulet, a vivis ad mortuos?

20. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

20. Ad legem et testimonium. Si non loquuti fuerint secundum verbum hoc, ideo nempe quod nihil est lucis.

21. And they shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

21. Tum per hanc terram transibunt oppressi et famelici. Et accidet ut cum esurierint, irritentur, ac maledicant regi suo, Deo suo, attollentes sursum faciem.

22. And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.

22. Et quum spectaverit ad terram, ecce tribulatio et tenebrae, caligo, angustia, et ad obscuritatem impulsus.

1. *And Jehovah said to me.* [120] This prophecy contains nothing new, but is a confirmation of the preceding one, in which Isaiah predicted the approaching desolation of the kingdom of Israel and Syria. He had foretold that both countries would be deprived of their kings, before the children who should soon afterwards be born could distinguish between good and evil, that is, before they were grown up. (Isaiah 7:16.) But because the wicked are not terrified by any threatenings, it was therefore necessary that this prediction should be repeated and demonstrated by some outward sign.

First, in order more effectually to arouse the nation, God commands that this prophecy be made publicly known by writing, that it may be understood by all. We have formerly said, [121] that it was the custom of the Prophets, after having been enjoined to deliver any message to the people, to sum up in a few words the substance of what they had said, and to affix it to the gates of the temple; as may be learned from Habakkuk 2:2; for if that passage be

[120] See the Author's Preface, page 32.

[121] With a man's pen. — Eng. Ver. Our Author's version is Write on it with a common pen, and his marginal reading is, or, with the pen of a man. — Ed.

compared with the present, the matter will be sufficiently obvious. But here something peculiar is expressed; for God does not merely command him to *write* the prophecy, but demands *a great and large roll*, in order that it may be read at a distance. The smaller the writing is, it is the more obscure, and can with greater difficulty be read. To the same purpose is what immediately follows, *with the pen of a common man*, [122] for אנש (*enosh*) denotes any man of ordinary rank; and the meaning is, that not even the most ignorant and uneducated persons may be unable to read the writing.

Make speed to spoil, hasten to the prey. [123] This concise brevity is more emphatic than if he had made a long discourse; for any one could carry home four words, and perceive in them the swiftness of the wrath of God, and be truly and deeply affected by the judgment of God, as if it had been pointed out with the finger. In short, God determined that he should not waste words, because there was no time for controversy, but that he should represent the matter by an outward sign. The Prophets having so frequently, and without any good effect, threatened vengeance, he gave a striking exhibition of it by an example, that it might make a deeper impression on their minds, and be engraven on their memory. As often as these words מהר שלל הש בז (*Maher-shalal-hash-baz*) were mentioned, they would recall to their remembrance the destruction of Israel and Syria, and would make them more certain of it.

Isaiah having prophesied about the coming of Christ in the former chapter, (Isaiah 7:14,) many improperly explain this also as relating to the same subject, that, endued with heavenly power, he came to spoil *the prince of this world*, (John 12:31,) and therefore *hastened to the prey.* This ingenuity is pleasing enough, but cannot at all harmonize with the text; for the true and natural view of the context shows that in this passage the Prophet brings forward nothing that is new, but supports what he had formerly said.

2. *And I took into me witnesses.* The noun עדים, (*gnedim*,) and the verb אעיד, (*agnid*,) which the Prophet employs, are derived from the same root, and the allusion is elegant, as if we were to say, "I have called-to-witness witnesses." [124] As this was a matter of great importance, he therefore *took to himself witnesses*, as is usually done on important occasions.

Faithful witnesses. He calls them *faithful*, that is, true and worthy of credit; and yet one of them was an ungodly and worthless apostate, who, wishing to flatter his king, erected an altar resembling the altar at Damascus, and openly defended ungodliness and unlawful modes of worship. Some

[122] Our translators have not translated these words, but have left them in the form of the original Hebrew, Maher-shalal-hash-baz. Their marginal reading is, "Heb. In making speed to the spoil he hasteneth the prey, or, make speed," etc. "To the next word ,מהר (maher,) the prefix ל (lamed) shews," says Bishop Stock, ``that it is an inscription; as in Ezekiel 37:16, Write on it ישראל ולבני להודה (lihudah velibne Israel) (τὸ) this inscription, Judah and the sons of Israel. Maher-shalal-hash-baz means, Hasteneth the spoil! soon cometh the prey.'' --- Ed

[123] The Latin language afforded to our Author an exceedingly successful imitation of the Hebrew phrase, "Contestatus sum testes." It is readily acknowledged that the turn of expression adopted by the translator is much less felicitous; but it is hoped that it will aid the judgment, though it may fail to gratify the taste, of the English reader. — Ed.

[124] Nec dubium est, quin animos piorum a libidinoso coitu data opera abducere voluit Isaias, ut ad sacrum mysterium attenti forent. Et certe quamvis in conjugio, etc.

commentators, I am aware, are of opinion that it was a different person; but a careful examination of the circumstances will convince any one, that this was the same *Urijah*, of whom the sacred history declares that he was slavishly devoted to the ungodliness and lawless desires of the king. (2 Kings 16:11.) As to those who think that it was a different person, because Isaiah here calls this man *faithful*, such an argument carries little weight; for the Prophet did not look at the man, but at the office which he held, and which rendered him a fit person for bearing testimony. Accordingly, he does not mean that he was a good and excellent man, but that his office gave him such influence that nobody could reject him, and that his testimony was, as they say, free from every objection.

Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. I think that this prophecy was affixed to the gates of the temple, *Uriah and Zechariah* having been *taken* to be *witnesses*; for he does not speak of a vision, but of a command of God, which he actually obeyed, in order that these words, like a common proverb, might be repeated by every person.

3. *And I approached to the prophetess.* What follows happened to the Prophet, I have no doubt, by a vision, for the purpose of sealing the former prediction. The vision given to Isaiah was, that he had a child by his wife, and was enjoined to give him this name. There would, indeed, be no absurdity in admitting that the Prophet actually had a son by his wife, and gave him this name; and I shall not eagerly dispute with any one who is of that opinion. But as it is not probable that this name was given to any man, and as there is no evidence to prove it, I am more disposed to think that this was a vision exhibited to the Prophet, in order to confirm the former prediction. He calls his wife a *prophetess*, not in the same sense in which the wives of kings, for the sake of showing them respect, are called queens, but because in this vision she sustained a public character. [125]

4. *Truly before the child have knowledge to cry.* This is an interpretation both of the dark saying and of the vision which was added to it; for although God did not intend to speak in direct language, still it was proper that obscurity should be removed. I interpret הנער, (*hannagnar*,) *the child*, to mean not the Prophet's son, but rather all who should be born soon afterwards. He declares that, before they are grown up, the two kings of Israel and Samaria [126] will be destroyed.

Before the face of the king of Assyria. That is, at the disposal, or at the will, *of the king of Assyria*; alluding perhaps to an ancient custom of carrying the spoils of the enemies *before* the chariot of those who received a public triumph. In like manner shall the spoils of Samaria and Damascus be carried *before the king of Assyria.*

This makes it still more evident that the Prophet intended nothing else than to foretell the desolation of the kingdom of Israel and of Syria. He does

[125] It is evident that, by a slip of the pen, Samaria is put for Syria. — Ed.

[126] The former word occurs in the version, and the latter at the exposition. — Ed.

this for the purpose of comforting the godly, and likewise of holding up to scorn the foolish dread of the wicked king, who could not endure that the Lord should assist him; for he rejected not only the promises, but likewise the sign which was offered. In consequence of this, the Prophet goes farther and farther in reproving his wickedness, and that of the whole nation. "Thou dost, indeed, believe nothing, but the Lord will assist his own; and thou shalt quickly see sudden and unexpected changes, by which the Lord will deliver his people." And yet these words were spoken not so much to the king as to godly men; and hence we ought to infer that the servants of God do not always speak so as to be believed by their hearers; for Isaiah here addresses wicked men, in whom he produces no conviction. Why, then, does he speak to them? To convict them more and more of their unbelief, and to reprove them for it; and next, to render the goodness of God more manifest: for who would not have thought that such aggravated wickedness would entirely shut the door against the mercy of God? And yet the Lord, by his goodness, rises superior to the wickedness both of the king and of the people. The object of the Prophet therefore is, to reprove the ungodly for their rebelliousness, and at the same time show that God is always like himself.

6. *Because this people hath despised (or, disdained* [127] *) the waters of Shiloah* That Ahaz may not slumber in unfounded expectation, the Prophet all at once breaks off his discourse about the general safety of the godly, and next threatens punishment on unbelievers. Some think that he speaks against those who wished for revolutions; as it frequently happens that the multitude are not satisfied with their present condition, and desire to have a new king. Those who are diseased often expect that, by a change of place, they will be in better health. So perverse is the will of men, that when matters do not go to their wish, they look for a change of their condition, snatch at it eagerly, and hope to obtain from it some relief.

But I think that the Prophet's meaning is more extensive, and does not apply to those only who desired a change; but that the discourse is general, and includes all ranks; for impiety and contempt of God almost universally prevailed, and he does not speak of a few persons, or of a particular party, but of the great body of the nation. I confess, indeed, that he excepts a few persons, servants of God, who will afterwards be mentioned; but that does not prevent the remonstrances of Isaiah from being directed against the whole nation; for since almost all were corrupted, he justly reproves them all. The offense is, that the people, distrusting their own weakness, sought increased wealth and increased forces. He says, therefore, that they *despised the waters of Shiloah*, because the Jews *despised* and *disdained* their condition.

And their joy was to Rezin and Remaliah's son. [128] Some render it with *Rezin*, but the preposition *to* expresses more fully the perverse desire. He

[127] And rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son. — Ed.

[128] The Author illustrates it by a word borrowed from his own vernacular, entasser, which, like the Latin verb coacervare, signifies to heap up, or gather into heaps. — Ed.

means that the Jews, perceiving that they had not strong fortresses, looked in another direction, and longed for the wealth of the kingdom of Israel. Beholding their small number and their poverty, they trembled, and placed no confidence in God, but only in outward assistance, and thought that they would be perfectly safe, if they had as powerful a king as the Israelites had. Thus they *rejoiced in* the riches of others, and in longing for them.

7. *Therefore, behold.* He speaks in the present tense, that all may attend more closely: *Behold, the* Lord *bringeth violent waters.* We must attend to the metaphors which the Prophet employs, for the style is much more elegant than if it had been naked and unadorned. "It is as if he had said, Because the people are not satisfied with their condition, and desire the riches of others, I will show them what it is to have a powerful king." For instance, if a small nation, whose king was mean and little esteemed, had powerful neighbors over whom an illustrious king reigned, and said, "How delightful would it be to serve that prosperous king, to be the subjects of the emperor, or of the kings of France; for their power is irresistible!" would not God justly punish such an unlawful desire? The more powerful that kings are, the more grievously do they oppress their people; there is nothing which they will not attempt, they do everything according to their caprice. Besides, they know no limit to their power, and in proportion to their strength they indulge with less restraint. The Lord reproves that mad desire of the Jews, in not being satisfied with their condition, and in looking, not to the Lord, but to the resources of powerful kings; and this reproof is far more graceful under these metaphors than if he had spoken in plain and direct language.

Shiloah, as Jerome tells us, was a small fountain, from which flowed a little river that ran gently through the midst of Jerusalem. That narrow river yielding them little protection, they therefore distrusted it, and desired to have those great rivers by which cities are usually defended and greatly enriched; for there is nothing by which a country is more enlarged or more rapidly enriched, than by those large and navigable rivers, which render it easy to import and export merchandise of every description. He therefore compares Euphrates, which was the most celebrated river in all the East, to *Shiloah*, and pursues the same metaphor, meaning by those rapid waters of the river the Assyrians, who would destroy the whole of Judea, and would waste it like a deluge. (2 Kings 18:13, 17.) "I will show," saith the Lord, "what it is to desire those rapid and violent waters."

And he shall come up. This passage ought to be carefully observed; for we all have a distrust that may be called natural to us, so that, when we see ourselves deprived of human assistance, we lose courage. Whatever God may promise, we cannot at all recover ourselves, but keep our eyes fixed on our nakedness, and sit like bewildered persons in our fear; and therefore we ought to seek a cure for this fault. *Shiloah*, therefore, that is, the calling or lot which God has assigned to us accompanied by a promise, though we do not see it with our eyes, ought to be our defense, and we should prefer it

to the highest power of all the kings in the world. For if we rely on human aid, and place our strength in large forces and abundance of wealth, we must look for the punishment which is here threatened by the Prophet.

The sacred history assures us that these things were fulfilled, so that any one who shall read the history will not need a lengthened exposition of this passage; for the Assyrians, whom the Jews called to their assistance, destroyed them. This was the just punishment of their distrust; and we see in it a striking instance of the wicked greediness of men, who cannot be satisfied with the promise and assistance of God.

From this destruction of the Jews let us learn to attend to our own interests. The Church is almost always in such a condition as to be destitute of human aid, lest, if we were too largely furnished, we should be dazzled by our wealth and resources, and forget our God. We ought to be so well satisfied and so highly delighted with our weakness as to depend wholly on God. The small and gentle waters should be more highly valued by us than the large and rapid rivers of all the nations, and we ought not to envy the great power of the ungodly. Such is the import of what is written in the Psalms:

"The streams of the river shall make glad the city of God, the sanctuary of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; God will help her before the dawn. Let the heathen rage, let the kingdoms be moved, and let the earth melt when the sound is uttered. Jehovah of armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." (Psalm 46:4-7.)

If it be objected that we ought not to reject human aid, the answer is easy. The Prophet does not condemn human aid, but he condemns that wicked fear by which we are thrown into distrust, and tremble, so that no promise of God can keep us within reasonable bounds. Now, we ought to render to God this honor, that though all things else should fail, we shall be satisfied with him alone, and shall be convinced that he is at hand. And in that case it matters little whether we have or have not outward assistance; if we have it, we are at liberty to use it; if we have it not, let us bear the want of it with patience, and let God alone suffice us for all that we need; for he will be able to execute his promises, since he has no need of any outward aid. Only let us trust entirely to his power and defense.

8. *And crossing over into Judah* The verb חלפ, (*chalaph*,) which sometimes signifies *to pass through*, here means to *attack* and *cut off*: that is, it will not only water Judea, but will overflow it, so as utterly to drown it; for it will spread far and wide on every part. He adds —

Even to the neck. The comparison is taken from a man who, entering a river, dips into it gradually, till the water reaches *to the neck*. In this manner shall Judea be overflowed by that rapid river, that is, by the Assyrian, till he be plunged up *to the neck*. He means Jerusalem, which was the metropolis of the country; and when the Assyrian came to it, Judea was at no great distance from destruction.

The breadth of thy land. That is, in all directions; for he pursues his metaphor in his prophecy, and shows how violent the Assyrian will be, and enlarges the representation of his strength and violence by the same comparison; that is, by comparing him to an impetuous river, which bursting through its barriers and overflowing its banks, spreads far and wide, and overturns and destroys everything by its violence. He proceeds in his discourse against the Jews, as he had begun to do in the two former verses; for, having foretold the destruction of the Israelites and Syrians, he likewise threatens that the Jews, in their turn, shall be punished for their unbelief.

To understand this better, Isaiah's highly beautiful and closely connected discourse must be examined. First, he turned aside to address others; for Ahaz was unworthy of being addressed. *The Lord will give you a sign*; which was declared in the former chapter. Next, he adds the manner of preserving Jerusalem, by the sudden changes which should take place in Syria and Samaria. This was confirmed, in the beginning of this chapter, both by a commandment and by a vision. He now comes to the Jews themselves, that they may not hope to escape without being punished, or be too highly elated by the destruction of their enemies; for he declares that for them also a reward is prepared, and that they, too, will be punished for their wickedness and treachery, because they despised the Lord, and would not rest satisfied with his promises, and signs, and acts of kindness largely and bountifully offered.

O Immanuel. It may be asked, Why does the Prophet direct his discourse to Christ, instead of simply calling the land "God's holy land?" For there can be no doubt that by the name *Immanuel* he means Christ. It might be thought that this expression was used in order to express the disgrace more strongly; for, since Judea not only was set apart to God, but in the person of the Mediator had God as the guardian of its safety, it was disgraceful that it should be destroyed by a heathen king. But I rather think that the Prophet added this name, in order to hold out to good men some remnant of hope, and to comfort them in so great a calamity; for, when the country was wasted and cruelly torn, they might have lost courage. He therefore means, that that desolation would not prevent the coming of the Redeemer, of whom he had formerly spoken. As if he had said, "Nevertheless, the land shall be thine, O Immanuel; in it shalt thou have thy residence and abode." This was, therefore, added instead of a consolation, in order to intimate that the land, though torn and wasted, belongs to God and not to men. The sudden change too a direct address (ἀποστροφὴ) is emphatic; for in this way the Prophet solemnly declares his belief in redemption, that the Lord may set a limit to the frightful calamities.

9. *Associate yourselves.* The verb רעו, (*rognu*,) whether it be derived from רוע (*ruang*) or from רעה, (*ragnah*,) signifies *to bruise*. But as רעה (*ragnah*) signifies *to associate*, some prefer taking it in this sense, which certainly agrees better with the scope and argument of the Prophet. Some render it,

Bruise ye, that is, *bruise* the kingdom of Judah, or, *bruise* the Assyrians; but this appears to be unnatural or far-fetched. That it describes the plans and undertakings by which they endeavored to crush the Church of God, is evident from its being immediately added, and a second time repeated, by the Prophet, *Gird you*, that is, "Form a plan." The word *associate*, therefore, is the most suitable, unless, perhaps, it be thought preferable to take the verb רעו (*rognu*) metaphorically; and I willingly favor that opinion, so as to make it mean *to heap up* [129] ; for those things which are *bruised* must of necessity be violently pressed and squeezed together. He therefore means not only *gathering together*, but likewise *pressing closely together*; as if he had said, "Draw close to one another, as if you were a dense mass." This meaning agrees beautifully, I think, with the scope of this passage; for to the same purpose is what he immediately adds, "Arm yourselves, *Gird you*."

The Prophet rises into confidence after having mentioned *Immanuel*, that is, God, who would assist his people; and at the same time cherishes increased hope in opposition to enemies, that though it might be thought that they had gained their object when they had depopulated the country, still the Lord would be victorious, and would preserve his people against the cruelty of their enemies. Withdrawing his mind, therefore, from the sight of that calamity, he turns to Christ, and, by contemplating him, acquires such courage that he ventures to taunt his enemies as if he had vanquished them. We must view the Prophet as on a watch-tower, from which he beholds the distressed condition of the people, and the victorious Assyrians proudly exulting over them. Refreshed by the name and the sight of Christ, he forgets all his distresses, as if he had suffered nothing; and, freed from all his wretchedness, rises against the enemies whom the Lord would immediately destroy. This ought to be carefully observed; that, as we have still to contend against the same temptations amidst those afflictions which the Church endures, and by the weight of which it is almost overwhelmed, we may direct our eyes to Christ, by the sight of whom we shall be able to triumph over Satan and over enemies of every description.

Ye peoples. [130] Why does he call them עמים, (*gnammim,*) *peoples*, when it was the Assyrian only that would lay waste Judea? I reply, the army of the Assyrian was composed of various *peoples*; for he had subdued not only the Chaldeans, but many other *peoples*; and, accordingly, that monarchy consisted of various nations. Yet the Prophet might refer to the Israelites, the Syrians, and the Egyptians, and to all others who were enemies of the Church of God; for he does not speak of one stroke inflicted on the Church, but of the incessant contests which the chosen people had continually to endure. But in order to understand this better, we must join with it the following verse, at the end of which we find the words *for Immanuel,* that is, *for God is with us*; for this is the security for our deliverance. Let men

[129] "O ye people." — Eng. Ver.
[130] See page 271.

league together, and contrive, and form plans and determinations, they will not be able to accomplish anything;

for there is no counsel against the Lord, (Proverbs 21:30;)

and therefore we must begin with this foundation, if we wish to stand firm.

But we must ascertain if all men have a right to glory on that ground, for wicked men also boast that *God is with them*, and in his name do not scruple to grow insolent and haughty; but their glorying is idle and unfounded. Now, the valor of the godly rests on the word of God, and proceeds from true faith; and if this dwells in our minds, we may triumph over all our enemies; as Paul also teaches, when he encourages the godly by this doctrine,

If God be for us, who shall be against us?
(Romans 8:31.)

First, then, we ought to make sure that *God is with us*, which cannot be unless we embrace the promises by faith; and if we have faith, we do not glory in vain. As to his addressing a nation so distant, to whom that word could not reach, the reason is obvious, that the efficacy of the word might be made known to unbelievers, and that they might know that he would restrain the Assyrians with all their warlike accoutrements, though they were at a great distance; as if he had said, "You do indeed despise God, but it will be easy for him to keep you at a distance, and to repress all your rage."

Gird yourselves. This is not a superfluous repetition; for it is far more difficult to expect the assistance of God a second time, when we have once been delivered, than to embrace the promise of one single deliverance. Besides, although the first attacks of enemies do not so greatly alarm us, yet when we see them hardened in their malice, their obstinacy reduces us to weakness. We have experience of this every day; for if any danger threatens us, we may expect assistance from the Lord; but if we are again in danger, we give way; and so great is our ingratitude, that we scarcely think that God will help us a second time. In consequence of this, we faint if we are frequently brought into danger, and do not consider that God is never wearied by doing us good, and by continually assisting us.

Isaiah, therefore, intended to oppose this frailty of men, that when armed foes had once and again attacked us, we may stand firm. If, after being vanquished or weakened, they again muster their forces, and do not cease to annoy us, let us not be discouraged; for to-morrow, and the next day, and as often as they league together, God will be able to frustrate and destroy them. Hence, also, we are reminded of our condition, that we may be always prepared for enduring additional conflicts, and may not think that we have done all that was required from us, when we have once resisted; for Satan is unwearied in his efforts, and continually labors to accomplish our destruction; he animates his soldiers, and inflames them with new eagerness. But although the contests must be often maintained, we are certain of victory, and therefore we ought to fight boldly, and to remain constantly on the field.

10. *Take counsel.* After having spoken of the forces of the enemies, he now comes to their *counsels*; as if he had said, "Although the enemies may abound not only in armor and in strength, but, in *counsel* and wisdom, still they will accomplish nothing." And this warning was very necessary; for it often happens that we despise enemies, though powerful and well armed, because they want *counsel*, and are guided by blind violence rather than by reason. He therefore forewarns them that the craftiness of the enemies, and all the arts by which they endeavor to gain advantage over the people of God, will in the end be unsuccessful; and, therefore, that they will accomplish nothing, though they be in want of nothing, and though they may have a great abundance of everything, of forces, and *counsels*, and crafty designs. He adds —

Speak the word. To make the meaning more clear, I have rendered it *decree a decree.* This relates to their insolence, or it is the conclusion of the consultation; for after deliberation a *decree* usually follows. He declares that all these things will vanish into smoke. It is, therefore, sufficiently evident what the Prophet means, and to what purpose this passage ought to be applied; for it may be regarded as a shield by which we can drive away all the terrors of enemies, whether they excel, on the one hand, in forces, wealth, power, influence, and rank; or, on the other, in wisdom, counsel, craftiness, sagacity, and invention, or, in a word, in insolence. For we are well armed and very powerful, if *God is with us*; and, therefore, all the contrivances or decrees of adversaries will immediately vanish away.

For God is with us. כי עמנו אל, (*ki Immanu-el*;) literally, *for Immanuel.* We have already explained the force of this argument. [131] For my own part, I have no doubt that he alludes to the name which he formerly gave to Christ; for although he means that God assists his people, yet as the majesty of God is not of itself sufficient to support us, he contemplates God himself in the person of the Mediator, in whom alone he has promised to assist us.

11. *For thus Jehovah spake to me.* Here the Prophet contends against another kind of temptations, that is, against the unbelief of the people; and in order to make that more manifest, it ought to be observed that there were two remarkable temptations, the one external, and the other internal. The external temptation came from professed enemies, such as from the Assyrian; and when the people saw his plundering and cruelty, they thought that all was over with them, because he had brought them almost to utter ruin. The other temptation was internal; for that sacred people, which boasted of having been chosen by God, relied on the assistance of man rather than of God. Now, this was a most dangerous temptation; for it appeared as if that nation, by its unbelief, refused admission to the promises of God, which were daily offered, and which were continually sounded in their ears. And what could the Prophet think, amidst so great perplexity, but that the

[131] With a strong hand. — Eng. Ver. The marginal reading is, "Heb. in strength of hand." — Ed.

destruction of this wicked people, which did not cease wickedly to reject the grace of God, was close at hand? The Lord, therefore, determined that both the Prophet and his disciples should be armed against a temptation of this kind.

As if by taking hold of my hand. [132] This is a beautiful metaphor, which the commentators, I think, have not understood. He alludes to fathers or teachers, who, when their words have not sufficient effect, seize the hand of their children or scholars, and hold them so as to compel them to obey. Thus the servants of the Lord are sometimes disposed to throw everything away, because they think that they are laboring to no purpose; but the Lord *lays* as it were, *his hand* on them, and holds them fast, that they may go forward in the discharge of their duty. This is well understood to be very necessary, and is actually experienced by all who faithfully serve the Lord; for no temptation is more severe than when they in whom faith ought to dwell revolt; and, in a word, when faith appears to be banished from the world.

This *taking hold of the hand* is, therefore, highly necessary, because not only are we fickle and liable to unsteadiness, but we are also by nature too much inclined to what is evil, though no one entice us. But if the force of custom be added, we are scarcely master of ourselves. Undoubtedly, we would every moment be driven up and down, were it not that we are held by the powerful government of God, and fix the anchor of constancy in firm ground. Every one of us ought to meditate earnestly on this thought; for though we may be convinced, yet when it comes to the trial we fail, and look at men rather than God. We should, therefore, attend more carefully to this doctrine, and pray to God to hold us, not only by his word but by *laying his hand* on us.

Besides, it ought to be observed that we are exceedingly disposed to wicked imitation. When we see bad examples, we are drawn to them with great force, and take the example for a law; for when others go before us, we think that we have a right to act in the same manner, and especially when it is not only one or a few persons who have led the way, but the custom has become universal. What is in itself manifestly wrong is concealed by the plausible cloak of public opinion; and not only so, but all are carried, as it were, by the violence of a whirlwind, to adopt an established custom, as if the will of the people had the force of a law to authorize their corruptions. This has not been the fault of a single age, but at the present day it abounds as much or even more than before; for it is an evil deeply seated in all by the corruption of nature, to reckon a prevailing error as a law. Hence arise the superstitions of all ages, and those which at the present day exist in Popery, the origin of which, if it be investigated, will be found to be nothing else than that some persons have drawn others into the same error; and thus

[132] It may aid the English reader, in understanding this observation, to be reminded that the two words sanctify and sanctuary, come from the same root, sanct, or saint, that is, holy. — Ed.

almost all have been foolishly caught by the snares of Satan, and the general agreement of men is still the chief foundation of those superstitions. All defend themselves by this weapon. "We are not alone," say they; "we follow an immense multitude."

12. *Say not, a conspiracy.* First, we must consider what was the condition of that people, for they saw that they were not provided with numerous forces, and were not able to contend in battle against such powerful enemies. They longed for outward assistance, and eagerly desired to obtain it, for they thought that they were utterly ruined if they did not obtain the assistance of others. In this sense I understand the word *conspiracy*, that they thought it necessary to have the assistance of allies. The word *conspiracy* being employed by the Hebrews in different acceptations, and sometimes denoting a *bond*, I take it in a good sense. But some take it in a bad sense: "Behold thy enemies, the king of Israel and the king of Syria, have *conspired* together." But I rather agree with those who apply it to the league and friendship which many unbelievers were desirous to contract with the Assyrian. The Lord therefore admonishes Isaiah not to regard the counsels of wicked men, though the whole of the people should vie with each other in attending to them.

Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. There may also be a twofold meaning; for some read it separately, as if in this second clause the Prophet condemned in general terms the wicked customs of the people. But these two clauses ought rather to be joined together. "Let it not distress you, if your countrymen in the present day plot about unlawful confederacies, and do not consent to them." Now, though the Prophet belonged to the number of those who needed to be admonished not foolishly to dissuade others from following by faith, yet the plural number, *say ye not*, shows that all the godly were taught in his person.

Their fear. Hence we perceive what is the source of those wavering *counsels* by which men are agitated; it is, because their minds are overwhelmed by *terror*, so that they are violently hurried along without any moderation. He describes the cause of all this, why the Jews so eagerly desired to have the Assyrians for allies. It was because they were terrified beyond measure, and did not expect to be preserved in any other way, and because their blind *fear* did not permit them to look to the assistance of the Lord. This was the reason why they so eagerly desired a league. The same cause of fear was alleged both against the godly and against the ungodly; but all did not fear in the same manner, for the godly composed their minds, because they knew that God took care of their preservation, and, armed by the promise of God, cheered their hearts whenever they mentioned the name of *Immanuel*. But the ungodly, overcome by terror, thought of nothing but the assistance of the Assyrians, did not consider that there is help in God, and did not betake themselves to him. The Lord certainly does not forbid the godly to *fear*, for they cannot avoid that; but he bids them overcome that excessive terror by

which the ungodly are swallowed up. Let us not, therefore, by their example, gaze around in every direction, and rush headlong to seek unlawful aid; and especially we must beware lest *fear* take away our judgment. There is but one remedy for this evil, to restrain ourselves by the word of God, from which proceeds real tranquillity of mind. Comparing the condition of that people with our own, let us learn to betake ourselves to *the name of God*, which will be to us an impregnable fortress. (Proverbs 18:10.)

That the Lord did not speak to the Prophet alone, is also evident from the words being in the plural number, לא תיראו, (*lo thireu,*) *fear ye not.* Peter also has drawn from it a general doctrine, (1 Peter 3:14,) warning us not to *fear* with the *fear* of the ungodly, but to place all our confidence in God, and to keep our eyes continually fixed on him, that we may remain steadfast, though heaven and earth should be mingled. If that warning of Peter was ever necessary, it is especially so in the present day, for we see all things tossed up and down and mingled in frightful confusion. That we may not be disturbed, the Lord withdraws us from beholding men, that we may, by attending to his word, keep our position firmly. Peter, indeed, understands this *fear* passively, while Isaiah understands it actively; for Peter exhorts believers to perseverance, so as not to waver on account of the threats and terrors of the ungodly; but Isaiah condemns the *trembling*, which induced the Jews to seek heathen alliances. But as it was not the intention of Peter to explain this passage, or even to quote the exact words, and as he meant only to allude to that statement, we need not wonder at this diversity.

13. *Sanctify Jehovah of hosts himself.* We have said that the reason why dangers lead to immoderate alarm is, that wretched men do not raise their eyes and minds to heaven. The Prophet now, therefore, proposes a suitable remedy for allaying terrors, that they who dread the evils which threaten them may learn to give to God the honor due to him. To *sanctify the God of armies* means to exalt his power highly; so as to remember that he holds the government of the world, and that the beginning and the end of good and evil actions are at his disposal. Hence it follows that, in some respects, God is robbed of his holiness, when we do not immediately betake ourselves to him in cases of perplexity. This mode of expression, therefore, is highly emphatic; for it shows us that no higher affront can be offered to God than to give way to *fear*, as if he were not exalted above all creatures, so as to control all events. On the other hand, when we rely on his aid, and, through victorious steadfastness of faith, despise dangers, then do we actually ascribe to him lawful government; for if we are not convinced that innumerable methods, though unknown to us, are in his power for our deliverance, we conceive of him as a dead idol.

And let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. He properly adds, that *God himself* should be the *fear* and the *dread* of the people, in order to inform them that there awaits them a just and lawful reward of their crimes and of their contempt of God, when they thus in wretchedness and alarm

tremble at dangers. Though he speaks not only of *fear* but of *dread*, yet he does not mean that the Jews should be filled with horror at the name of God, so as to desire to flee from him, but merely demands from them reverence for God, and uses both words in order to express continuance. He therefore means that they will be free and exempted from solicitude of mind, if a sincere fear of God be deeply engraven on their hearts, and never pass away from them; and indeed every person who freely devotes himself to God, and undertakes to fear him alone, so as to lay this restraint on himself, will find that no haven is more safe than his protection. But as the ungodly do not cease to provoke his anger by shameless transgression, he harasses their minds by continual uneasiness, and thus inflicts the most appropriate revenge for their careless indifference.

14. *And he shall be for a sanctuary.* He promises that the true worshippers of God will enjoy tranquillity of mind, because the Lord, covering them, as it were, under his wings, will quickly dispel all their fears. There is an allusion to the word *sanctify* which he had lately used; for the word מקדש, (*mikdash*,) which means sometimes *a sanctuary*, and sometimes *a place of refuge*, is derived from the same root. [133] The meaning therefore is, that God demands nothing for which he does not offer mutual recompense, because every one that *sanctifies* him will undoubtedly find him to be *a place of refuge*. Now, although in this sanctification there is a mutual relation between us and God, yet there is a difference, for we *sanctify* him by ascribing all praise and glory to him, and by relying entirely upon him; but he *sanctifies* us, by guarding and preserving us from all evils. As there were few who believed and relied on his promises, the Prophet wished that the godly should be fortified against this kind of temptation; for there was a danger lest they should be carried away by such bad examples as by a kind of tempest.

The Prophet therefore meant, "The Lord will be your best and most faithful guardian. Though others stumble against him, yet be not you terrified; remain steadfastly in your calling." And here a contrast is implied, though not expressed; for a *sanctuary* may be said to be a citadel situated in a lofty position, and a bulwark for defending and guarding the godly, but for destroying and overwhelming the ungodly, because they rashly stumble against it. We shall afterwards see more clearly how this was fulfilled, partly during the reign of Hezekiah, and partly at the time of the captivity into Babylon; and yet at the same time Christ was prefigured, who was to be not a place of refuge, but rather *a stone of stumbling* to the Israelites. Isaiah forewarns them of this *stumbling*, that the godly may be aware of it.

To the two houses of Israel. The Jews ignorantly and improperly tear asunder this verse, instead of dividing it. "God will be," say they, "partly a *sanctuary* and partly a *stone of stumbling*; as if by the two families he distinguished between the godly and the unbelievers. On the contrary, he enjoins

[133] Which is also followed in the English Bible, namely, Bind. — Ed.

believers, though nearly the whole multitude of both kingdoms should dissuade them from obedience to God, not to be discouraged, but to disregard everything else, and break through all opposition. The Prophet might have simply said, *he will be for an offense to Israel*; but he intended to express more, for he includes the whole nation, and declares that God will be their destruction. The nation was divided into two kingdoms, Ephraim and Judah; and, therefore, he mentioned both. There were, indeed, some exceptions, but he speaks here of the whole body.

This is a remarkable passage and cannot be sufficiently called to remembrance, especially at the present time, when we see the state of religion throughout the whole Christian world brought nearly to ruin. Many boast that they are Christians who are strongly alienated from God, and to whom Christ is a *stone of stumbling*. The papists insolently and proudly boast of his name, though they profane the whole of his worship by superstitions, and bring upon it dishonor and reproach. Among those to whom a purer worship of God has been restored, there are very few who embrace the Gospel of God with sincere regard. Wherever we turn our eyes, very sore temptations meet us in every direction; and, therefore, we ought to remember this highly useful instruction, that it is no new thing, if a great multitude of persons, and almost all who boast that they belong to the Church, *stumble against* God. Yet let us constantly adhere to him, however small may be our numbers.

For a snare to the inhabitant of Jerusalem. This is the second circumstance introduced for heightening the picture; for, after having mentioned the two kingdoms, he names the metropolis itself. Although the whole country was crippled, yet it seemed that the Lord kept his abode there. He therefore means that God became *a snare*, not only to the common people who were scattered throughout the fields and villages, but to the nobles themselves, and to the priests who dwelt in *Jerusalem*, who dwelt in that holy habitation in which God intended that the remembrance of his name should be chiefly preserved. That was testified also by David, that *those builders* whom the Lord appointed *rejected the chief corner-stone*. (Psalm 118:22.) Christ quotes this passage against the Jews, and shows that it applies to himself. (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10.) This happened, indeed, in the time of Isaiah, but still more in the time of Christ; for ungodliness and rebellion gradually increased till they came to a height. Accordingly, both the highest and the lowest, who always had obstinately disobeyed God, at that time broke out against him still more with unrestrained indulgence, and therefore their destruction also reached its height; for they were altogether rejected by God, whose Son they had refused. Hence also we infer the eternal divinity of Christ, for Paul shows that it is God of whom the Prophet here speaks. (Romans 9:33.) Now, he speaks not of a pretended God, but of that God by whom heaven and earth were created, and who revealed himself to Moses. (Exodus 3:6.) It is, therefore, the same God by whom the Church has been always governed.

15. *And many among them shall stumble.* He goes on to threaten the ungodly, as he had formerly begun, and declares that those who refuse to trust in God will not escape without being punished. The threatening runs thus: "when they have *stumbled*, they will then *fall*, and afterwards they will *be bruised*." This agrees with the former metaphor, in which he compared God to a stone. Christ has alluded to that metaphor, including both clauses.

"He who shall fall on this stone will be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will bruise him."
(Matthew 21:44.)

And shall be snared and taken. This agrees with the latter metaphor, in which he compared God to a *snare* and *gin*. Let not the ungodly, therefore, imagine that they are stronger or wiser than God; for they will find that he excels them in strength and wisdom, and that to their destruction. They must, therefore, unavoidably be ruined; for either they will be utterly *bruised*, or they will be *snared* in such a manner, that they can never extricate themselves.

This threatening also regards the godly, that they may not hesitate to withdraw from holding fellowship with the multitude, and that they may not resolutely disregard the sinfulness of revolt. Now, this does not strictly belong to God, but is rather, as we would say, accidental; for it belongs to God to receive men into his favor, and to give them a firm security for their salvation. That was more clearly manifested in Christ, and is still manifested; and, therefore, Peter reminds us that, though many unbelievers *stumble*, this is no reason why their *stumbling* should obstruct the progress of our faith; for Christ is notwithstanding *a chosen and precious stone*. (1 Peter 2:4.)

16. *Bind up the testimony.* The Lord now turns his discourse to the Prophet, and encourages him, while he must contend against apostates and rebels, to discharge his office with boldness and perseverance. This was highly necessary, for Isaiah had met with great obstinacy in the people; so that if he had only looked at their present condition, that is, at the unbelief of the people, and his fruitless and unsuccessful exertions, he must have altogether given way. On this account the Lord determined to confirm and *seal* his calling, not only on his account, but for the sake of all who should obey his doctrine; and if very few persons believed the words of the Prophet, still the Lord testifies that his doctrine has been sealed to them, and that, therefore, neither must he desist from his office of teaching, nor must they cease to yield the obedience of faith.

Seal the law. He compares the doctrine of the word to a *sealed* letter, which may indeed be felt and handled by many persons, but yet is read and understood by few, that is, by those to whom it is sent and addressed. Thus the word of God is received by few, that is, by the elect, though it is held out indiscriminately to all. The word is therefore *sealed* to those who derive no advantage from it, and is *sealed* in such a manner that the Lord unseals and opens it to his own people by the Spirit. Some derive the verb

צור (*tzor*) from נצר, (*natzar*,) and translate it *keep*. But though this does not greatly affect the general meaning, still the superiority of the rendering which I have followed [134] may be proved from the other verb *seal*; for the custom in ancient times was, first, to tie a thread around a letter, and then to *seal* it.

We draw from it this highly useful doctrine, namely, that teachers and ministers of the word ought constantly to persevere in discharging their office, though it may seem that all men revolt, and give no evidence of anything but obstinacy and rebellion; for the Lord will reserve for himself some disciples, by whom his letter will be read with advantage, though it be closed to others. The Prophet afterwards employs the same metaphor, when he says, that *the word is like a closed book*, (Isaiah 29:11;) but there he only mentions wicked men, and here he mentions disciples, to whom the doctrine of the word is not without advantage.

It may be objected, Was it then the duty of the Prophet to disregard the people, and to withdraw and shut himself up with the disciples, among whom some good effect was produced? I reply, this was not the Prophet's meaning; for it was the will of the Lord that Isaiah should appear in public, and cry aloud, and reveal his will to all. But as he spoke to the deaf, and might be discouraged by seeing no evidence of the fruit of his labors, the Lord determined to excite and encourage him to go forward, even when matters were in a desperate condition, and, satisfied with his disciples, though their number was small, to become every day more and more courageous.

17. *Therefore I will wait for the Lord.* [135] I have chosen to render the particle ו (*vau*) by *therefore*; for the Prophet recovers himself, after having received from the Lord the consolation which we have just now seen. "Seeing that the Lord is pleased to have disciples to whom his doctrine is sealed, *I will wait for him*, though *he hath hid his face from Jacob*, that is, hath rejected and cast off his people." This is a remarkable passage, and, by meditating continually on it, we must be greatly encouraged; for though it may seem as if the whole world had revolted, still we ought boldly to persevere; and even though God *hath hid his face* from his people, and they who professed his name have been cast off, still we ought to *wait for him* with unshaken hope. This is the only remedy that is left to us.

The word *wait* is exceedingly emphatic; as if he had said, "Still I will not turn aside from God, I will persevere in faith." He increases the force of it by adding, *I will look for him*; for the occurrence of any offense is wont to make our faith waver and faint, and it is most grievously shaken when we see that we are deprived of allies, and that there are open enemies who boldly take to themselves the name of the Church. Offenses commonly turn us aside from God, and perplex us in such a manner that we call in question the truth of the word. This consolation is therefore highly necessary, whether

[134] And I will wait for the Lord. — Eng. Ver.

[135] The allusion is to the Latin noun Puer, to which might have been added the Greek noun Π , and similar uses of the word denoting Child are found in modern languages. — Ed

the Church is oppressed by outward calamities, or thrown into confusion by the treachery of the multitude.

18. *Behold, I.* Here the Prophet not only testifies that he will wait patiently, but also gives an evidence of courage, by appearing in public along with the disciples whom he had gained to God, and who still remained. As if he had said, "Though others may withdraw, yet I am ready to obey thee, and I bring along with me those whom thou hast been pleased to preserve in a wonderful manner through my agency." He therefore declares by these words his unshaken courage, and promises that he will persevere in faith and obedience to the Lord, though all should revolt.

And the children. By *children* are meant the various classes of servants, agreeably to the ordinary custom of the Hebrew, and also of the Latin language. [136] He speaks of the disciples whom he had formerly mentioned. Hence we see what is demanded from those who wish to be reckoned among the true disciples of the Lord. It is, to declare with Isaiah that they are submissive and ready to hear, and that, as soon as the Lord has spoken, they will yield immediate obedience. Now, teachers ought to bring disciples with them, and not merely to send them before; they ought, I say, to go before them, and by their example to point out the way, as was formerly explained, [137] (Isaiah 2:3;) otherwise they will have no authority in teaching. The apostle to the Hebrews applies this passage to Christ, (Hebrews 2:13,) and draws from it an instruction which ought to be a very powerful excitement to us, that considering ourselves to be followers not only of Isaiah, but of Christ himself, as our leader and instructor, we may press forward with greater alacrity.

Whom the Lord *hath given me.* By this the Prophet shows to whom our faith ought to be ascribed. It is to God, and to his undeserved election; for Isaiah taught publicly, admonished every person, and invited all without exception to come to God; but his doctrine is of advantage to those only who have been given to him by God. By *given* he means those whom God drew by an inward and secret operation of his Spirit, when the sound of the external voice fell on the ears of the multitude without producing any good effect. In like manner Christ declares that the elect were *given to him by the Father.* (John 17:6.) Thus we see that readiness to believe does not depend on the will of men; but that some of the multitude believe, because, as Luke tells us, *they had been foreordained.* (Acts 13:48.) Now, *whom he foreordained he likewise calls*, (Romans 8:30,) and efficaciously seals in them the proof of their adoption, that they may become obedient and submissive. Such, therefore, is the *giving* of which Isaiah now speaks. This applies strictly to Christ, to whom the Father presents and gives disciples, as it is said in the Gospel by John,

[136] See page 94 where the difference between Come and Go up is explained. — Ed.

[137] If אלהים (elohim) were not only a plural form, as it actually is, but used in a plural signification, it would mean gods, and אלהיו (elohaiv) would mean his gods; but since אלהים (elohim) means God, אלהיו (elohaiv) means his God. It may be proper to add that the pronominal affix, his agrees with ,עם (gnam,) people, which is masculine. --- Ed

No man cometh to me, unless the Father hath drawn him. (John 6:44.)

Hence it follows, that he is also appointed to be our guardian, to preserve us under his protection to the end. (John 10:28.) Wherefore he saith,

not one of those whom the Father hath given to me shall perish. (John 17:12.)

For signs and wonders. Some consider this passage to refer to miracles, but that is inapplicable, for the meaning is totally different, namely, that all the godly will be regarded not only with hatred, but even with abhorrence, as if they had been monsters; and that not only by strangers or by professed enemies, but even by *Israel*. We have experience of this at the present day; for papists look upon us with greater abhorrence than they look upon Mahometans or Jews, or even dogs or monsters. Though this is exceedingly base, we need not greatly wonder at it; for it was necessary that this prophecy should even now be fulfilled. It was experienced by Isaiah from his countrymen, and has been experienced by all others who have followed his doctrine.

Nor is it only in papists that we discover it, but in those who wish to be regarded as very closely connected with the Church, the greater part of whom either view us with strong dislike, or ridicule us, or, in a word, hold us to be monsters, because we are so anxious, and give ourselves so much uneasiness, about the salvation of the Church, the honor of God, and eternal life; and because we do not scruple to undergo so many dangers, such hatred, censure, reproach, banishment, poverty, hunger, nakedness, and, in a word, death itself. These things appear monstrous to them; for when they are so careful to protect their skin, how could they have a relish for the highest blessings? But that we may not be disturbed by their reproaches, we must arm ourselves with this exhortation of the Prophet.

From the Lord *of hosts.* To show how trifling and worthless is the conspiracy of the wicked multitude, he contrasts the *God of armies* with the pride of the whole world, and raises a lofty defiance; as if he had said, that he cared not though he were universally abhorred by men, because he knew that God was on his side.

Who dwelleth in Mount Zion. The addition of these words carries great weight; for although the people abounded in every kind of crimes and enormities, still they boasted that they were devoted to God, and, abusing his promises, condemned the true servants of God who reproved them. On the other hand, the Prophets, in order to shake off their false confidence and pride, declared that they were the servants of the only and true God, whom the people falsely boasted of worshipping *in Mount Zion.* God had not chosen it for his habitation as if, because he was bound to the spot, he would accept of false and spurious worship, but he wished to be sought and worshipped according to the rule of his word.

Accordingly, when Isaiah claims for himself God *who dwelleth in Mount*

Zion, he sharply reproves hypocrites, because through false boasting they indulge in foolish pride whenever they say, *The temple of the Lord*, (Jeremiah 7:4,) for it was rather an idol in which they boasted contrary to the word. Though they snatched at the promises, yet they falsely tortured them against the true servants of God, as the papists at the present day are wont to torture them against us. The Prophets, therefore, distinguish God by this title, in order to tear the mask from hypocrites, who were accustomed to quote the mere name of *the temple* in opposition to the plain word of God. For this reason Isaiah now says, "Take us, if you choose, for monsters, yet God acknowledges us to be his own; and you cannot detest us without at the same time abhorring the God of Abraham and David, whose servants we are."

19. *And when they shall say to you.* Isaiah continues the former subject, which is, that all the godly should not only use the authority of God as a shield, but should fortify themselves with it as a brazen wall, to contend against all ungodliness. He therefore entreats them to resist courageously if any one shall tempt them to superstition and unlawful modes of worship. The plural number is employed by him in order to signify that it was a vice which pervaded all ranks, and which abounded everywhere; as if he had said, "I see what will happen; you will be placed in great danger; for your countrymen will endeavor to draw you away from the true God; for, being themselves ungodly, they will wish you to resemble them." At the same time he shows how wickedly they had departed from God's law and covenant, by shamelessly pushing forward diviners and soothsayers whose name ought to have been held by them in abhorrence.

Should not a people ask counsel of their God? Some read these words in connection with what goes before, applying them to the ungodly, as if this were a pretense which they abused in order to deceive the simple; because there is no nation that has not oracles and revelations, but every nation *consults its gods*, or, in place of them, magicians and soothsayers. But what I reckon to be the more correct view is, that Isaiah advises his disciples to give this answer if they shall happen to be tempted to wicked modes of worship. Still the meaning is not fully cleared up; for this passage is commonly expounded as if it were a comparison drawn from the less to the greater. "What! seeing that the Gentiles consult their gods, and yet these gods are false, shall we not more highly esteem him whom we know to be the true God, and who hath revealed himself to us by so many proofs? What a shame will it be if their idols are more highly valued by the Gentiles than God is by us!"

But I interpret this as referring to the Jews themselves, who were called by way of eminence (κατ᾽ ἐξοχὴν) *the people*, because God had adopted them. Nor is it of any importance that the Prophet employs the plural form אלהיו, [138] (*elohaiv*;) for אלהים (*elohim*) is used as in the singular number. This is a

[138] Through it. — Eng. Ver.

shield by which all the superstitions which come imperceptibly upon us ought to be repelled. While some ponder and hesitate whether or not it be proper to consult diviners, let us have this answer in readiness, that God alone ought to be consulted. The Prophet alludes to that passage in Deuteronomy in which the Lord forbade them to go to magicians and soothsayers; and lest they should excuse themselves on the pretense that every nation had its interpreters or fortune-tellers, added, that they would not cease to have a *Prophet*, or be deprived of necessary instruction (Deuteronomy 18:10-15.) It was therefore the will of the Lord that they should depend entirely on his word, and should learn from it alone whatever was useful for them to know, and should render obedience to him.

From the living to the dead. The preposition בעד (*begnad*) is variously rendered: frequently it is translated *for*; and in that case the meaning will be, "Shall *the dead* be consulted *for* the business of *the living*?" But as that meaning is forced, it would perhaps be better to explain it thus: "The Lord desires to be our teacher, and for that purpose hath appointed prophets, that we may learn from them his will, for a prophet is the mouth of the Lord. It is therefore unlawful to go *to the dead*, who have not been appointed for that end; for God did not intend to make use of *the dead* for instructing us."

But when I examine the whole matter more closely, I choose rather to consider בעד (*begnad*) to mean *from*, that is, *from the living to the dead*; as if he had said, "One God is sufficient for us for *the living and the dead*. If you search through heaven, earth, and hell, you will find that one God is sufficient for us." This is, I think, the best sense, and flows naturally. Accordingly, the Prophet arms the godly against the schemes and contrivances of wicked men by whom they might otherwise have been tempted to revolt, with the exhortation to be satisfied with God alone as their teacher, and not to offer him such an insult as to disregard his instruction and seek other teachers, but to cast away everything else, and depend on his truth alone, which immediately afterwards he again repeats and confirms.

20. *To the law and testimony.* There are indeed various ways of explaining this passage. Some think that it is the form of an oath, as if the Prophet were swearing *by the law* that they were apostates, and would entice others to a similar apostasy. But I take a different view of it, which is, that he directs our attention *to the law and the testimony*; for the preposition ל, (*lamed*,) *to*, plainly shows that this is the meaning. Now, *the testimony* is joined with the *law*, not as if it were different, but for the sake of explanation, "*to the law*," which contains *the testimony* or *declaration* of the will of God toward us. In short, we ought to take the word *testimony* as describing a quality, in order to inform us what advantage we derive from *the law*; namely, that God reveals himself to us in *the law*, and declares what is that relation to us which he chooses to hold, and lays down what he demands from us, and in short everything necessary to be known.

It is therefore a very high commendation of *the law* that it contains the

doctrine of salvation, and the rule of a good and happy life. For this reason also he justly forbids us to turn aside from it in the smallest degree; as if he should say, "Forsake all the superstitions on which they are so madly bent; for they are not satisfied with having God alone, and call to their aid innumerable inventions." In this manner also Christ speaks,

They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them, (Luke 16:29;)

for though Abraham is there brought forward as the speaker, still it is a permanent oracle which is uttered by the mouth of God. We are therefore enjoined to *hear the law and the prophets,* that we may not be under the influence of eager curiosity, or seek to learn anything from *the dead.* If *the law and the prophets* had not been sufficient, the Lord would not have refused to allow us other assistance.

Hence we learn that everything which is added to the word must be condemned and rejected. It is the will of the Lord that we shall depend wholly on his word, and that our knowledge shall be confined within its limits; and therefore, if we lend our ears to others, we take a liberty which he has forbidden, and offer to him a gross insult. Everything that is introduced by men on their own authority will be nothing else than a corruption of the word; and consequently, if we wish to obey God, we must reject all other instructors. He likewise warns us that, if we abide by *the law* of the Lord, we shall be protected against superstitions and wicked modes of worship; for, as Paul calls

the word of God is the sword of the Spirit,
(Ephesians 6:17,)

so by the word, Satan and all his contrivances are put to flight. We ought therefore to flee to him whenever we shall be attacked by enemies, that, being armed with it, we may contend valiantly, and at length put them to flight.

If they shall not speak. I do not relate all the expositions of this passage, for that would be too tedious; and I consider the true exposition to be so well supported that it will easily refute all others. It is usually explained to mean that wicked men trifle with their inventions, and expose their impostures to sale, *because there is no light in them*; that is, because they have not ordinary understanding. For my own part, I consider this to be a reason for encouraging believers to perseverance; that if wicked men depart from the true doctrine, they will evince nothing else than their own blindness and darkness. We ought to despise their folly, that it may not be an obstruction to us; as Christ also teaches us that we should boldly set aside such persons, so as not to be in any degree affected by their blindness or obstinacy. "*They are blind*," says he, "*and leaders of the blind.* Do you wish of your own accord to perish with them?" (Matthew 15:14.)

The Prophet therefore enjoins us to ascribe to the word such high authority, that we shall venture boldly to despise the whole world, if the word be opposed by them; for if even angels should do this, we might condemn them

also by the authority of the word.

If an angel from heaven, says Paul, preach anything else, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8, 9.)

How much more boldly, therefore, shall we condemn men who set themselves in opposition to God? The mode of expression is emphatic, *If they shall not speak according to this word.* He brings an accusation of blindness against every man who does not instantly and without dispute adopt this sentiment, that we ought not to be wise beyond *the law* of God.

21. *Then they shall pass through that land.* Not to permit believers to be ensnared by the common errors, he adds how dreadful is the punishment which awaits the ungodly when they have revolted from God, and have labored to induce others to join in the same revolt. The passage is somewhat obscure; but the obscurity arises from the want of proper attention in examining the words. The verb עבר (*gnabar*) is emphatic; for by *passing through* he means that *uncertainty* in which men wander up and down, and are not able to find a resting-place, or any permanent abode. To the indefinite verb we must supply a noun, *The Jews shall pass.* By the pronoun בה, (*bahh,*) *in it*, [139] he means Judea, which the Lord had preferred to all other countries; and therefore it is easily understood, though the Prophet does not express it. As if he had said, "I promised indeed that that country would be the perpetual inheritance of my people, (Genesis 13:15; 17:8;) but they shall lead a wandering and restless life, as is the case with those who, driven from their habitations, and afflicted with hunger and pestilence and every kind of calamities, seek, but nowhere find, a better condition and abode." These words are therefore contrasted with the extraordinary kindness of God, which is so frequently mentioned by Moses, namely, that they will have a fixed residence in Judea; for here he threatens that they will be stragglers and wanderers, not in their own, but in a foreign country; so that, wherever they come, they will be attacked and hunted down by innumerable vexations.

When they shall be hungry. The Prophet appears to point out the conversion of the Jews, as if he had said, "When they have been weighed down by afflictions they will at length repent;" and undoubtedly this is the remedy by which the Lord generally cures the disease of obstinacy. Yet if any one suppose that the word *hunger* describes the indignation and roaring of the wicked without repentance, it may be stated that it includes not only hunger and thirst, but, by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) every other kind of calamity.

They shall fret themselves. [140] They will begin to be displeased with themselves, and to loathe all the supports on which they had formerly relied;

[139] Not satisfied with the Latin word irritentur for conveying the import of the Hebrew התקצף, (hithkatzeph,) Calvin illustrates it by a phrase taken from his own vernacular, Ils se despiteront, which means, they will fume, or chafe, or burst into furious passion. --- Ed

[140] The Hebrew particle כי, (ki,) which is placed at the beginning of this verse, is rendered in the English version by Nevertheless; but Calvin says that he is willing to translate it for --- Ed

and this is the beginning of repentance; for in prosperity we flatter ourselves, but in sore adversity we loathe everything that is around us. But if it be thought preferable to refer it to the reprobate, this word denotes the bitterness, which is so far from leading them to humility that it rather aggravates their rage.

And curse their king and their God. By *King* some suppose that he means *God*. In this sense Zephaniah used the word מלכם (*malcham*), that is, *their King*. (Zephaniah 1:5.) But here I draw a distinction between *King* and *God*; for wicked men are first blinded by a false confidence in idols, and afterwards they place their defense in earthly things. When the Jews had a *king*, they were proud of his glory and power; and when Isaiah preached, wicked men enraged *the king* against him, and even aroused the whole of the nation to follow *the king* as their standard-bearer. Since, therefore, their false boasting had been partly in the idols and partly in *the king*, he threatens that they will be afflicted with so many calamities, that they will be constrained to abhor both *their gods and the king*. And this is the beginning of repentance, to loathe and drive far from us everything that kept us back or led us away from God.

And look upward. He describes the trembling and agitation of mind by which wretched men are tormented until they have learned steadfastly to look up. There is, indeed, some proficiency, as I lately hinted, when, in consequence of having been taught by afflictions and chastisements, we throw away our indifference and endeavor to find out remedies. But we must advance farther. Fixing our eye on God alone we must not gaze on all sides, or through fickleness be *tossed to and fro*. (Ephesians 4:14.) However that may be, Isaiah threatens the utter destruction of the Jews; for so thoroughly were they hardened, that their rebellion could not be subdued by a light and moderate chastisement from the hand of God. Yet it might be taken in a good sense, that the Jews will at length raise their eyes to heaven; but in that case we must read separately what follows: —

22. *And when they shall look to the earth.* The meaning will then be, that the Jews will be converted to God, because they will be deprived of every assistance on *the earth*, and will see nothing but frightful calamities, to whatever side they turn their eyes.

Behold, trouble and darkness. These words are partly figurative and partly literal; for by *dimness* and *darkness* he means nothing else than adversity, according to the custom of Scripture. But he adds, *driven to darkness*. This aggravates the calamity to an amazing degree; for if one who is in *darkness* be *driven* or *pushed forward*, he is far more in danger of stumbling than before. Thus he intimates, that to a heavy calamity another still heavier will be added, that they may be more completely ruined; for he means nothing else than that the judgments of God will be so dreadful, and the punishments so severe, that, whether they will or not, they shall be constrained to look up to heaven.

Chapter 9

CHAPTER 9

Isaiah Chapter 9:1-21

1. Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

1. Non tamen obscuratio juxta angustiam quae ei accidit tempore quo primum leviter attigerunt terram Zabulon et terram Nephtali: nec posterius, cum aggravarunt per viam maris ultra Iordanem, in Galilaea Gentium.

2. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

2. Populus ambulans in tenebris vidit lucem magnam. Qui habitabant in terra umbrae mortis, lux affulsit super eos.

3. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

3. Multiplicando gentem non auxisti laetitiam, laetati sunt coram te secundum laetitiam in messe, quemadmodum exultant dividendo spolia.

4. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

4. Quoniam jugum ejus onerosum, et virgam humeri ejus, sceptrum exactoris ejus confregisti, sicut in die Madian.

5. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.

5. Quanquam omne proelium bellantis fit cum strepitu et volutatione vestis in sanguine; erit hoc in combustionem, cibum ignis.

6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the govern-

ment shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

6. Quia puer natus est nobis; et constitutus est principatus super humerum ejus; et vocabitur nomen ejus, Admirabilis, Consiliarius, Deus fortis, Pater seculi, princeps pacis.

7. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

7. Multiplicationi principatus et paci non erit finis; super solium David, et super regnum ejus, ut disponat et stabiliat ipsum in judicio et justitia, ab hoc tempore usque in perpetuum. Zelus Iehovae exercituum hanc rem faciet.

8. The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.

8. Verbum misit Dominus in Iacob, et cecidit in Israel.

9. And all the people shall know, even Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,

9. Et sciet populus, omnes Ephraim, et incolae Samariae, qui dicunt in superbia et altitudine cordis,

10. The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.

10. Lateres ceciderunt, et politis aedificabimus; sycomori succisae sunt, et cedros sufficiemus.

11. Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;

11. Atqui roborabit Iehova hostes Rezin contra ipsum; et inimicos ejus coadjuvabit.

12. The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

12. Syria a fronte, et Philistaei a tergo; devorabuntque Israel toto ore. Nec in hoc toto aversus erit furor ejus, sed manus ejus adhuc extenta.

13. For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts:

13. Atqui populus non est reversus ad percussorem suum; nec Iehovam exercituum quaesierunt.

14. Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.

14. Abscindet ergo Iehova ab Israele caput et caudam, ramum et arundinem die uno.

15. The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.

15. Senex et vulta suspiciendus, hic est caput: Propheta autem qui docet mendacium, hic est cauda.

16. For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.

16. Nam gubernatores populi hujus, sunt seductores; et qui reguntur in eo, perditi.

17. Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evil-doer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

17. Propterea super adolescentibus ejus non gaudebit Dominus; et pupillorum ejus et viduarum non miserebitur. Quoniam omnes sunt hypocritae et scelerati, et omne os loquitur nequitiam. In hoc toto non erit aversus furor ejus, sed adhuc manus ejus extenta.

18. For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest; and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke.

18. Quoniam succensa est velut ignis impietas; vepres et spinas devorabit. Postea exardebit in condensa sylvae; et elevabitur fumus ascendentis.

19. Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother.

19. Prae ira Iehovae exercituum obscurabitur terra, et fiet populus quasi cibus ignis. Nemo fratri suo parcet.

20. And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:

20. Rapiet quisque ad dexteram, et esuriet; comedet ad sinistram, et non saturabitur: quisque carnem brachii sui devorabit;

21. Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: and they together shall be against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

21. Menasse Ephraim, et Ephraim Menasse; pariter ipsi contra Iudam. Nec in hoc toto aversus erit furor ejus; sed manus ejus adhuc extenta.

1. *Yet the darkness shall not be.* He begins to comfort the wretched by the hope of alleviation, that they may not be swallowed up by the huge mass of distresses. Many take these words in quite an opposite meaning, that is, as a threatening which denounces against the Jews a heavier affliction than that with which Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 15:29) and Shalmanezer (2 Kings 17:6) afflicted them. The former inflicted a heavy calamity, the latter inflicted one still heavier, for he carried the twelve tribes into captivity, and blotted out the name of the nation. Some think that he now foretells the heaviest calamity of all, for if it be compared with the former two, it exceeds both of them. Though I am not prepared to reject this view, for it does not want plausibility, yet I rather favor a different opinion. The other interpretation is indeed more plausible, that the Prophet intended to deprive hypocrites

of every enjoyment, that they might not imagine that this calamity would quickly pass away like a storm as the others had done, for it would be utterly destructive; and so we shall take the particle כי (*ki*) in its literal meaning. [141]

But in my opinion it is most appropriate to view it as a consolation, in which he begins to mitigate what he had said about that frightful *darkness* and *driving*, (Isaiah 8:22,) and, by allaying the bitterness of those punishments, encourages them to expect the favor of God. As if he had said, "*and yet*, amidst that shocking calamity which the Jews shall endure, *the darkness will not be such as when* the land of Israel was afflicted, first, by Tiglath-pileser, (2 Kings 15:29,) and afterwards more grievously by Shalmanezer," (2 Kings 17:6.) Amidst so great extremities believers might otherwise have fainted, if their hearts had not been cheered by some consolation. Isaiah therefore directs his discourse to them lest they should think that they were ruined, for he intimates that the chastisements which are now to be inflicted will be lighter than those which came before. That this is the natural interpretation will quickly appear from what immediately follows.

But why does the Prophet say that this calamity, which was far more dreadful, would be more mild and gentle? For Jerusalem was to be razed, the temple thrown down, and the sacrifices abolished, which had remained untouched during the former calamities. It might be thought that these were the severest of all, and that the former, in comparison of them, were light. But it ought to be observed, that while in the former instances there was no promise, an explicit promise was added to this threatening. By this alone can temptations be overcome and chastisements be rendered light. By this seasoning alone, I say, are our afflictions alleviated; and all who are destitute of it must despair. But if, by means of it, the Lord strengthen us by holding out the hope of assistance, there is no affliction so heavy that we shall not reckon it to be light.

This may be made plain by a comparison. A man may happen to be drowned in a small stream, and yet, though he had fallen into the open sea, if he had got hold of a plank he might have been rescued and brought on shore. In like manner the slightest calamities will overwhelm us if we are deprived of God's favor; but if we relied on the word of God, we might come out of the heaviest calamity safe and uninjured.

As to the words, some take מועף (*mugnaph*) for an adjective, as if the Prophet said, *It shall not be darkened*; but the feminine pronoun which immediately follows, בה (*bahh*), *in her*, does not allow us to refer this to men. It is more accurately described by others to be a substantive noun; and, therefore, I have resolved to render it literally, *there shall not be darkness* in Judea *according to the affliction of the time when, etc.* Some explain הקל

[141] הקל (hekal) signifies literally to make light, and in accordance with an English idiom, sometimes denotes figuratively, to make light of. Stock's rendering is, he made vile, answering to Lowth's, he debased. Both agree in rendering הכביד (hikbid) he hath made it glorious. The English version concurs with Calvin in rendering הקל, (hekal,) he lightly afflicted, and הבביד, (hikbid,) he did more grievously afflict. --- Ed

(*hekal*) to mean that the land was *relieved of a burden*, in consequence of the people having been carried into captivity; but this is altogether at variance with the Prophet's meaning, and does not agree with what follows; for it is immediately added that the seacoast has been *more grievously afflicted* by a second calamity. There can be no doubt, therefore, that this verb corresponds to the other verb הכביד, (*hikbid.*) [142] Not more than a small part of the kingdom having been afflicted by Tiglath-pileser, the calamity which he brought upon it is said to be light as compared with the second which was inflicted by Shalmanezer.

By the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles. He calls it *the way of the sea*, because *Galilee* was adjoining to the coast of the Mediterranean *Sea*, and on one side it was bounded by the course of the *Jordan.* It is called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, not only because it was contiguous to Tyre and Sidon, but because it contained a great multitude of *Gentiles*, who were mingled with the Jews; for from the time that Solomon granted this country to King Hiram, (1 Kings 9:11,) it could never be subdued in such a manner as not to have some part of it possessed by *the Gentiles*

2. *The people walking in darkness hath seen a great light.* He speaks of future events in the past tense, and thus brings them before the immediate view of the people, that in the destruction of the city, in their captivity, and in what appeared to be their utter destruction, they may behold the *light* of God. It may therefore be summed up in this manner: "Even *in darkness*, nay, in *death* itself, there is nevertheless good ground of hope; for the power of God is sufficient to restore life to his people, when they appear to be already dead." Matthew, who quotes this passage, appears to torture it to a different meaning; for he says that this prediction was fulfilled when Christ preached along the sea-coast. (Matthew 4:16.) But if we take a just view of the comparison, it will be found that Matthew has applied this passage to Christ correctly, and in its true meaning. Yet it does not appear that the view generally given by our commentators is a successful elucidation of the passage; for they merely assert that it belongs to the kingdom of Christ, but do not assign a reason, or show how it accords with this passage. If, therefore, we wish to ascertain the true meaning of this passage, we must bring to our recollection what has been already stated, that the Prophet, when he speaks of bringing back the people from Babylon, does not look to a single age, but includes all the rest, till Christ came and brought the most complete deliverance to his people. The deliverance from Babylon was but a prelude to the restoration of the Church, and was intended to last, not for a few years only, but till Christ should come and bring true salvation, not only to their bodies, but likewise to their souls. When we shall have made a little progress in reading Isaiah, we shall find that this was his ordinary custom.

[142] In the original text the reference reads: (Hos. ii. 13.) which I assume was a typographical error. — fj.

Having spoken of the captivity in Babylon, which held out the prospect of a very heavy calamity, he shows that this calamity will be *lighter* than that which Israel formerly endured; because the Lord had fixed a term and limit to that calamity, namely, *seventy years*, (Jeremiah 25:11, 12; 29:10,) after the expiration of which the *light* of the Lord would shine on them. By this confident hope of deliverance, therefore, he encourages their hearts when overpowered by fear, that they might not be distressed beyond measure; and thus he made a distinction between the Jews and the Israelites, to whom the expectation of a deliverance so near was not promised. Though the Prophets had given to the elect remnant some taste of the mercy of God, yet, in consequence of the redemption of Israel being, as it were, an addition to the redemption of Judah, and dependent on it, justly does the Prophet now declare that a new *light* has been exhibited; because God hath determined to redeem his people. Appropriately and skilfully, too, does Matthew extend the rays of *light* to *Galilee* and *the land of Zebulun.* (Matthew 4:15.)

In the land of the shadow of death. He now compares the captivity in Babylon to *darkness* and *death*; for those who were kept there, were wretched and miserable, and altogether like dead men; as Ezekiel also relates their speech,

Dead men shall arise out of the graves. (Ezekiel 37:11, 12.)

Their condition, therefore, was such as if no brightness, no ray of *light*, had shone on them. Yet he shows that this will not prevent them from enjoying *light*, and recovering their former liberty; and that liberty he extends, not to a short period, but, as we have already said, to the time of Christ.

Thus it is customary with the Apostles to borrow arguments from the Prophets, and to show their real use and design. In this manner Paul quotes (Romans 9:25) that passage from Hosea,

I will call them my people which were not my people,
(Hosea 2:23,) [143]

and applies it to the calling of the Gentiles, though strictly it was spoken of the Jews; and he shows that it was fulfilled when the Lord brought the Gentiles into the Church. Thus, when the people might be said to be buried in that captivity, they differed in no respect from the Gentiles; and since both were in the same condition, it is reasonable to believe that this passage relates, not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles also. Nor must it be viewed as referring to outward misery only, but to the *darkness* of eternal *death*, in which souls are plunged, till they come forth to spiritual light; for unquestionably we lie buried in *darkness*, till Christ shine on us by the doctrine of his word. Hence also Paul exhorts,

[143] The Author's meaning must be, not that א (aleph) ever becomes the third singular pronominal affix, but that in Exodus 21:8, to which he refers, ו and not א is probably the true reading. A better illustration might have been found in Psalm 100:3, on which the reader may consult a valuable note by the editor. (Com. on the Psalms, vol. 4.) In all the three cases (Exodus 21:8; Psalm 100:3; Isaiah 9:3) the Keri, or conjectural emendation, has strong internal evidence to recommend it above the Ketib, or reading that stands in the copies which have come down to us. Another method of solving the difficulty is exceedingly ingenious, and consists in turning the first part of the verse into the form of a question. Hast thou multiplied the nation, and hast thou not increased the joy? --- Ed

Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give thee light. (Ephesians 5:14.)

If therefore we extend the commencement of the deliverance from the return from Babylon down to the coming of Christ, on whom all liberty and all bestowal of blessings depends, we shall understand the true meaning of this passage, which otherwise has not been satisfactorily explained by commentators.

3. *Thou hast multiplied.* This passage is somewhat obscure, both in itself, and on account of the diversity of interpretations; for it appears to be absurd to say that *the joy was not increased*, seeing that he immediately afterwards adds, *they rejoiced.* On this account the Jews interpret לא (*lo*) not negatively, but as if ו (*vau*) had been substituted for א (*aleph*); for sometimes, though rarely, it has this meaning in the Scriptures. [144] (Exodus 21:8.) The Jews do this, because they cannot reconcile the words of the Prophet with their opinion. Again, some view these words as referring to Sennacherib, because his army, though it was large, brought him no ground of *joy*, but rather of grief. (2 Kings 19:35.) Others explain it as relating to the Church, and justly, but mistake the method of applying it; for they think that the Prophet said this because believers, as long as they live, are subject to numerous and diversified afflictions. Others go still farther from the point, by saying that the conversion of the Gentiles, which will enlarge the Church, *will not bring joy* to the Jews and the ancient synagogue.

But I cannot approve of any of those interpretations, and therefore I interpret it in this manner. As the Prophet, in the beginning of the chapter, had made a preliminary statement, that this blessing of redemption was greater than all other blessings, though it might appear to be unworthy of being so highly extolled, on account of the small number of those who were redeemed; so now he repeats the same comparison, or one not very different from it, namely, that this favor of God would be more remarkable than when he had formerly *multiplied* his people. This might at first sight be thought to be highly inappropriate; for if we compare the condition of the Jewish kingdom, before the Babylonish captivity, with its condition after the return from it, we may be led to think that the period during which its ancient possession remained unimpaired was a season of greater prosperity. It was but a small remnant that returned in comparison of that multitude which had been carried away. Besides, they had not the free possession of their land, but might be said to be tenants at will; and they had to pay tribute to the Persians, and retained hardly any semblance of their former rank. Who, therefore, would not have preferred that prosperous reign which had been enjoyed by the family of David to that condition?

But the Prophet declares that this latter condition, though it may appear to be greatly inferior, and even more wretched, ought to be preferred to that which was prosperous and splendid, and shows that it will yield greater

[144] See page 244.

joy than when they had an abundant share of wealth and of all kinds of possessions. This was also testified by Haggai,

that the glory of the latter temple would be greater
than the glory of the former, (Haggai 2:9,)

though at first sight it might appear to be far otherwise. It is as if Isaiah had said, "There never was greater joy, though the multitude of the people was greater. Though we are few and contemptible in number, yet by the light with which thou shinest on us thou hast cheered us to such a degree that no joy of our former condition can be compared with the present." For that redemption might be regarded as a prelude to the full and perfect salvation which was at length obtained through Christ.

Before thee. He means that the *joy* was true and complete, not slight or temporary. Men often rejoice, but with a deceitful and transitory *joy*, which is followed by mourning and tears. He affirms that this *joy* has its roots so deeply laid, that it can never perish or be destroyed. Such is also the import of the phrase *before thee*; for nothing cheers the godly so much as when the face of God shines sweetly on them. They are not like irreligious men, who are carried hither and thither by a blind and uncertain *joy*, but they have that which alone gives ground for full joy, their reliance on God's fatherly kindness. Perhaps also the Prophet intended to allude to those words which frequently occur in the writings of Moses: *Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God.* (Leviticus 23:40; Deuteronomy 12:12,18.) For though the subject there spoken of is the Tabernacle, still the mode of expression is fitly applied to the present occasion, that the *joy* of a believing people will not be irreligious, but will arise from acknowledging God, and beholding him by the eyes of faith to be *the author of salvation.* (Hebrews 5:9.)

Others explain it more ingeniously, that inwardly believers rejoice *before God* in their consciences, because in the world grief and sighing continually awaits them. Though this is true, yet a more natural meaning is drawn from the connection of the passage, namely, that believers whom God shall redeem will possess true *joy*; because they will have been instructed by undoubted proof that he is their Father, so that they may freely boast that they will always be safe under his guidance; and, therefore, as I lately mentioned, it denotes continuance.

According to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoils. The comparisons of *Harvest* and *Victory*, by which he heightens the amount of the joy, are sufficiently plain. Now, hence it is evident what Christ brings to us, namely, a full and perfect joy, of which we cannot in any way be robbed or deprived, though various storms and tempests should arise, and though we should be weighed down by every kind of afflictions. However weak and feeble we may be, still we ought to be glad and joyful; for the ground of our joy does not lie in numbers, or wealth, or outward splendor, but in spiritual happiness, which we obtain through the word of Christ.

For thou hast broken his burdensome yoke. He explains the cause of *the*

joy, that believers, when they have been delivered from a frightful and cruel tyranny, will feel as if they had been rescued from death. In order to illustrate the grace of God, he reminds them how shameful and burdensome was the slavery with which the Jews had been oppressed and afflicted; and this is his object in heaping up the expressions, *the yoke of the shoulder, the staff of the shoulder, the rod of the oppressor* or *overseer*. Whatever may be our excessive effeminacy or cowardice, while we actually feel afflictions, yet as soon as they are gone, we easily come to forget them. That the redeemed people may not think lightly of the favor of God, the Prophet bids them consider how bitter and mournful was the slavery, when they groaned under a heavy *yoke* or triumphal car, when the *staff* was laid on their shoulders, and they were oppressed by tyrannical rule; and therefore their deliverance ought justly to make them more glad and joyful.

Next, he extolls the excellence of this favor on another ground, that God has openly displayed his hand from heaven. For this purpose he adduces an ancient and memorable instance. As God had formerly overthrown the Midianites, without the help of men, by a wonderful and amazing method, (Judges 7:21,) so now there will be a similar and illustrious display of power; for God will deliver his people from a cruel tyranny, when not one of the wretched Jews will venture to lift a finger. Now, it ought to be observed that God sometimes assists his people in such a manner as to make use of ordinary methods; but when he sees that this hinders men from beholding his hand, which may be said to be concealed, he sometimes works alone, and by evident miracles, that nothing may prevent or obscure the manifestation of his power. Thus in this victory of Gideon, when the enemies were routed without any agency of men, the arm of God openly appeared. For what had Gideon but the noise of pitchers, which could scarcely have driven away mice, and a small band of men, against a vast army, and, instead of weapons, a useless scarecrow? To this deliverance, therefore, he compares the future deliverance of the people, in which the hand of God will be not less openly and illustriously displayed.

Some explain this passage as relating merely to the law, which might not inappropriately have been called *a burdensome yoke*, and *a rod* lying on the shoulders. But that interpretation is unsuitable; for it would give to the Prophet the appearance of having suddenly broken off from his subject, and would be a violent torture of this passage. We must therefore attend to that arrangement which I formerly noticed, namely, that when God brought his people out of Babylon, he continued that blessing of deliverance till Christ. The meaning therefore is, "Thou hast broken those burdens by which thy people were unjustly and cruelly oppressed."

Others apply it to the destruction of Jerusalem during the reign of Vespasian, but they have no argument on their side. Almost all the Jews refer it to Hezekiah, when in this manner the Lord delivered the city from the siege of Sennacherib, and cut off his army. (2 Kings 19:35; Isaiah 37:36.) But that

interpretation could not be admitted, for Hezekiah did not reign tyrannically over the Jews. Besides, at that time the Lord rescued the people from fear and danger, and not from slavery. Hence it is evident that this prediction had a more distant object, and that the interpretation which I have given to this passage is just and reasonable.

5. *For every battle.* Here commentators are nearly agreed that Isaiah intended to contrast the victory which God was about to give to his people with other victories. Others conquer by making a great slaughter of the enemies, but here the Lord will conquer by his own hand alone. He expresses more fully what he had said, *As in the day of Midian.* (Verse 4.) The Lord therefore, he says, will not employ the agency of a great multitude, but will achieve a victory for himself from heaven. When the Lord acts by himself, every covering is removed, and we perceive more clearly that he is the Author of our life and salvation.

Now, since there is a contrast which expresses the difference between the ordinary mode of warfare and the miracle of redemption, the copulative ו, (*vau,*) in the middle of the verse, ought to be rendered *but*; as if he had said, that it is usually amidst the confusion of the battle that enemies are hewn down: but God will act in a very different manner; for he will destroy the enemies of the Church, as if he sent down lightning from heaven, or suddenly struck them by thunderbolts. It may perhaps be thought better to adopt the opinion of those who explain the second clause as a continuation of the first, that *all warriors will be with trembling and with burning fire.* But the former meaning is more appropriate, and is likewise supported by the words of the Prophet. Hence it is evident that the present subject is not merely the deliverance which the people obtained from Cyrus, permitting them to return to their native country, but that these words must be viewed as extending to the kingdom of Christ.

6. *For unto us a child is born.* Isaiah now argues from the design, to show why this deliverance ought to be preferred to the rest of God's benefits, namely, because not only will God bring back the people from captivity, but he will place Christ on his royal throne, that under him supreme and everlasting happiness may be enjoyed. Thus he affirms that the kindness of God will not be temporary, for it includes the whole of that intermediate period during which the Church was preserved till the coming of Christ. Nor is it wonderful if the Prophet makes a sudden transition from the return of the ancient people to the full restoration of the Church, which took place many centuries afterwards; for in our observations on Isaiah 7:14, [145] we have remarked, that there being no other way that God is reconciled to us than through the Mediator, all the promises are founded on him; and that on this account it is customary with the Prophets, whenever they wish to encourage the hearts of believers by good hope, to bring this forward as a

[145] Π ˆ , Father of the future age. In the Messiah, Pope has beautifully introduced this passage —

pledge or earnest. To this must be added, that the return from the captivity in Babylon was the commencement of the renovation of the Church, which was completed when Christ appeared; and consequently there is no absurdity in an uninterrupted succession. Justly, therefore, does Isaiah teach that they ought not to confine their attention to the present benefit, but should consider the end, and refer everything to it. "This is your highest happiness, that you have been rescued from death, not only that you may live in the land of Canaan, but that you may arrive at the kingdom of God."

Hence we learn that we ought not to swallow up the benefits which we receive from God, so as instantly to forget them, but should raise our minds to Christ, otherwise the advantage will be small, and the joy will be transitory; because they will not lead us to taste the sweetness of a Father's love, unless we keep in remembrance the free election of God, which is ratified in Christ. In short, the Prophet does not wish that this people should be wholly occupied with the joy occasioned by the outward and short-lived freedom which they had obtained, but that they should look at the end, that is, at the preservation of the Church, till Christ, the only Redeemer, should appear; for he ought to be the ground and perfection of all our joy.

A child is born. The Jews impudently torture this passage, for they interpret it as relating to Hezekiah, though he had been born before this prediction was uttered. But he speaks of it as something new and unexpected; and it is even a promise, intended to arouse believers to the expectation of a future event; and therefore there can be no hesitation in concluding that he describes *a child* that was afterwards to be *born*

He is called the *Son* of God. Although in the Hebrew language the word *son*, I admit, has a wide acceptation, yet that is when something is added to it. Every man is the *son* of his father: those who are a hundred years old are called (Isaiah 65:20) *the sons of a hundred years*; wicked men are called *the sons of wickedness*; those who are blessed are called *the sons of blessing*; and Isaiah called a fruitful hill *the son of fatness.* (Isaiah 5:1.) But *son*, without any addition, can mean none else than *the Son of God*; and it is now ascribed to Christ, by way of eminence, (κατ ᾽ ἐξοχὴν,) in order to inform us, that by this striking mark he is distinguished from the rest of mankind. Nor can it be doubted that Isaiah referred to that well-known prediction, which was in the mouth of every person,

I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son,

(2 Samuel 7:14,)

as it is afterwards repeated,

Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

(Psalm 2:7.)

Had it not been commonly and generally known that the Messiah would be the *Son* of God, it would have been foolish and unmeaning for Isaiah simply to call him *the Son.* Accordingly, this title is derived from the former prediction, from which the Apostle reasons, that the excellence of Christ

exalts him above all the angels. (Hebrews 1:5.)

Now, though in the person of *a child* Christ might have a mean appearance, still the designation of *Son* points out his high rank. Yet I do not deny that he might have been called the *Son* of David, but it is more natural to apply it to him as God. The titles which follow are still less applicable to Hezekiah. I shall soon give an ample refutation of the sophistry by which the Jews attempt to evade this passage. Let them slander as they may, the matter is sufficient plain to all who will calmly and soberly examine it.

A Son hath been given to us. There is weight in what he now adds, that this *Son* was *given* to the people, in order to inform the Jews that their salvation and that of the whole Church is contained in the person of Christ. And this *giving* is one of the chief articles of our faith; for it would have been of little avail to us, that Christ was *born*, if he had not likewise been our own. What this *child* will be, and what is his rank, he declares in the following statements.

And the government hath been laid upon his shoulder. To suppose, as some do, that this is an allusion to the cross of Christ is manifestly childish. Christ *carried the cross* on his shoulders, (John 19:17,) and by the cross he gained a splendid triumph over *the prince of this world.* (John 14:30.) But as *the government* is here said to have been *laid on his shoulders* in the same sense in which we shall see that *the key of the house of David was laid on the shoulders* of Eliakim, (Isaiah 22:22,) we need not go far to seek ingenious expositions. Yet I agree with those who think that there is an indirect contrast between *the government* which the Redeemer *bore on his shoulders* and *the staff of the shoulder* which was just now mentioned; for it agrees well, and is not liable to any objections. He therefore shows that the Messiah will be different from indolent kings, who leave off business and cares, and live at their ease; for he will be able to *bear the burden* Thus he asserts the superiority and grandeur of his government, because by his own power Christ will obtain homage to himself, and he will discharge his office, not only with the tips of his fingers, but with his full strength.

And his name shall be called. Though יקרא, (*yikra,*) *he shall call*, be an active verb, I have not hesitated to translate it in a passive sense; for the meaning is the same as if he had made use of the plural number, *they shall call.* We have a French idiom that resembles it, *on appellera*, literally, *one shall call*, that is, *he shall be called.* The Jews apply it to God, and read it continuously, *he shall call his name Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.* But it is very evident that this proceeds from a desire, or rather from a licentious eagerness, to obscure the glory of Christ; for if they had not labored with excessive keenness to rob him of his Godhead, the passage would run on very smoothly as interpreted by our divines. Besides, what necessity was there for ascribing to God those attributes, if the Prophet meant nothing more than that God gave a name to Messiah? For the attributes which are usually ascribed to

God are either perpetual or accommodated to the case in hand, neither of which suppositions can here be admitted. Again, it would have been an interruption of the regular order to insert the name of God in the midst of various titles, but it ought to have run thus, *the mighty God, Wonderful, Counsellor, shall call.* Now, I do not see how the name יועץ (*yognetz*) can be applied absolutely to God, for it belongs to *counsellors* who attend kings or other persons. If any obstinate wrangler shall contend for the notion of the Rabbins, he will show nothing but his own impudence. Let us follow the plain and natural meaning.

Wonderful. It ought to be observed that those titles are not foreign to the subject, but are adapted to the case in hand, for the Prophet describes what Christ will show himself to be towards believers. He does not speak of Christ's mysterious essence, but applauds his excellencies, which we perceive and experience by faith. This ought to be the more carefully considered, because the greater part of men are satisfied with his mere name, and do not observe his power and energy, though that ought to be chiefly regarded.

By the first title he arouses the minds of the godly to earnest attention, that they may expect from Christ something more excellent than what we see in the ordinary course of God's works, as if he had said, that *in Christ are hidden* the invaluable *treasures* of *wonderful* things. (Colossians 2:3.) And, indeed, the redemption which he has brought surpasses even the creation of the world. It amounts to this, that the grace of God, which will be exhibited in Christ, exceeds all miracles.

Counselor. The reason of this second title is, that the Redeemer will come endowed with absolute wisdom. Now, let us remember what I have just noticed, that the Prophet does not here reason about the hidden essence of Christ, but about the power which he displays towards us. It is not, therefore, because he knows all his Father's secrets that the Prophet calls him *Counsellor*, but rather because, *proceeding from the bosom of the Father*, (John 1:18,) he is in every respect the highest and most perfect teacher. In like manner we are not permitted to get wisdom but from his Gospel, and this contributes also to the praise of the Gospel, for it contains the perfect wisdom of God, as Paul frequently shows. (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:9.) All that is necessary for salvation is opened up by Christ in such a manner, and explained with such familiarity, that he addresses the disciples *no longer as servants but as friends.* (John 15:14, 15.)

The mighty God. אל (*El*) is one of the names of God, though derived from *strength*, so that it is sometimes added as an attribute. But here it is evidently a proper name, because Isaiah is not satisfied with it, and in addition to it employs the adjective גבור, (*gibbor*,) which means *strong.* And indeed if Christ had not been *God*, it would have been unlawful to glory in him; for it is written,

Cursed be he that trusteth in man. (Jeremiah 17:5.)

We must, therefore, meet with the majesty of God in him, so that there

truly dwells in him that which cannot without sacrilege be attributed to a creature.

He is, therefore, called *the mighty God*, for the same reason that he was formerly called *Immanuel*. (Isaiah 7:14.) For if we find in Christ nothing but the flesh and nature of man, our glorying will be foolish and vain, and our hope will rest on au uncertain and insecure foundation; but if he shows himself to be to us *God* and *the mighty God*, we may now rely on him with safety. With good reason does he call him *strong* or *mighty*, because our contest is with the devil, death, and sin, (Ephesians 6:12,) enemies too powerful and strong, by whom we would be immediately vanquished, if the *strength* of Christ had not rendered us invincible. Thus we learn from this title that there is in Christ abundance of protection for defending our salvation, so that we desire nothing beyond him; for he is *God*, who is pleased to show himself *strong* on our behalf. This application may be regarded as the key to this and similar passages, leading us to distinguish between Christ's mysterious essence and the power by which he hath revealed himself to us.

The father of the age. The Greek translator has added μέλλοντος *future*; [146] and, in my opinion, the translation is correct, for it denotes *eternity*, unless it be thought better to view it as denoting "perpetual duration," or "an endless succession of ages," lest any one should improperly limit it to the heavenly life, which is still *hidden* from us. (Colossians 3:3.) True, the Prophet includes it, and even declares that Christ will come, in order to bestow immortality on his people; but as believers, even in this world, *pass from death to life*, (John 5:24; 1 John 3:14,) this world is embraced by the eternal condition of the Church.

The name *Father* is put for *Author*, because Christ preserves the existence of his Church through all ages, and bestows immortality on the body and on the individual members. Hence we conclude how transitory our condition is, apart from him; for, granting that we were to live for a very long period after the ordinary manner of men, what after all will be the value of our long life? We ought, therefore, to elevate our minds to that blessed and everlasting life, *which as yet we see not*, but which we possess *by hope and faith*. (Romans 8:25.)

The Prince of Peace. This is the last title, and the Prophet declares by it that the coming of Christ will be the cause of full and perfect happiness, or, at least, of calm and blessed safety. In the Hebrew language *peace* often signifies *prosperity*, for of all blessings not one is better or more desirable than *peace*. The general meaning is, that all who submit to the dominion of

[146] This means that what is usually called Final Mem ( ) is here used, instead of the form which the letter usually takes in the beginning or middle of a word. A Greek scholar would have been startled at seeing instead of a the beginning of a syllable. The peculiarity now in question must originally have been accidental, but took place at so early a period, and was so extensively copied, that no transcriber ventured to replace the ordinary form of the letter. At length it gave rise to the following Masoretic note: תיבה, באמצע סתומה מ that is, Shut Mem in the middle of the word. The Jewish Rabbins have expended on it many conjectures and much useless learning. In their writings they excite no surprise, but it is impossible not to regret that they should have had even a momentary influence on the calm and sober judgment of Calvin, who so heartily despised idle sophistry and frivolous remarks. --- Ed

Christ will lead a quiet and blessed life in obedience to him. Hence it follows that life, without this King, is restless and miserable.

But we must also take into consideration the nature of this *peace*. It is the same with that of the kingdom, for it resides chiefly in the consciences; otherwise we must be engaged in incessant conflicts and liable to daily attacks. Not only, therefore, does he promise outward *peace*, but that peace by which we return to a state of favor with God, who were formerly at enmity with him. *Justified by faith*, says Paul, *we have peace with God*. (Romans 5:1.) Now, when Christ shall have brought composure to our minds, the same spiritual *peace* will hold the highest place *in our hearts*, (Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15,) so that we will patiently endure every kind of adversity, and from the same fountain will likewise flow outward prosperity, which is nothing else than the effect of the blessing of God.

Now, to apply this for our own instruction, whenever any distrust arises, and all means of escape are taken away from us, whenever, in short, it appears to us that everything is in a ruinous condition, let us recall to our remembrance that Christ is called *Wonderful*, because he has inconceivable methods of assisting us, and because his power is far beyond what we are able to conceive. When we need counsel, let us remember that he is the *Counsellor*. When we need strength, let us remember that he is *Mighty* and *Strong*. When new terrors spring up suddenly every instant, and when many deaths threaten us from various quarters, let us rely on that *eternity* of which he is with good reason called the Father, and by the same comfort let us learn to soothe all temporal distresses. When we are inwardly tossed by various tempests, and when Satan attempts to disturb our consciences, let us remember that Christ is *The Prince of Peace*, and that it is easy for him quickly to allay all our uneasy feelings. Thus will these titles confirm us more and more in the faith of Christ, and fortify us against Satan and against hell itself.

7. *To the increase of the government there will be no end.* He begins to explain and confirm what he had formerly said, that Christ is *The Prince of Peace*, by saying that his government is extended to every age, and is perpetual; *that there will be no end to the government or to peace*. This was also repeated by Daniel, who predicts that his *kingdom is an everlasting kingdom*. (Daniel 7:27.) Gabriel also alluded to it when he carried the message to the virgin; and he gave the true exposition of this passage, for it cannot be understood to refer to any other than to Christ.

He shall reign, says he, over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1:33.)

We see that the mightiest *governments* of this world, as if they had been built on a *slippery* foundation, (Psalm 73:18,) are unexpectedly overturned and suddenly fall. How fickle and changeable all the kingdoms under heaven are, we learn from history and from daily examples. This *government* alone is unchangeable and eternal.

Now, this continuance, of which Isaiah now speaks, consists of two parts. It belongs both to time and to quality. Though the kingdom of Christ is in such a condition that it appears as if it were about to perish at every moment, yet God not only protects and defends it, but also extends its boundaries far and wide, and then preserves and carries it forward in uninterrupted progression to *eternity.* We ought firmly to believe this, that the frequency of those shocks by which the Church is shaken may not weaken our faith, when we learn that, amidst the mad outcry and violent attacks of enemies, the *kingdom* of Christ stands firm through the invincible power of God, so that, though the whole world should oppose and resist, it will remain through all ages. We must not judge of its stability from the present appearances of things, but from the promise, which assures us of its *continuance* and of its constant increase.

And to the peace. To *the government* he adds the eternity of *the peace*, for the one cannot be separated from the other. It is impossible that Christ should be *King* without also keeping his people in calm and blessed *peace*, and enriching them with every blessing. But as they are daily exposed to innumerable vexations, endure fierce attacks, and are tossed and perplexed by fears and anxieties, they ought to cultivate that *peace* of Christ, which holds the highest place *in their hearts*, (Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15,) that they may remain unhurt, and may even retain their composure amidst the destruction of the whole world.

In the word לִמַרְבֵּה, (*lemarbeh,*) contrary to the usual manner of writing, there is the close form of ם (*mem*). [147] Some think that it denotes the slavery by which the Jewish people should be oppressed till the coming of Christ. Others think that that nation, on account of its treachery, was excluded by this mark from having any share in this *kingdom.* I do not find fault with these views. Indeed, we can hardly assert that the Prophet wrote it in this manner; but yet, since this is the form in which it has come into our hands, and since the Rabbins were so close observers of the minutest portion of a letter, we cannot avoid thinking that this was not rashly done. And if we admit that the Prophet intentionally wrote it in this manner, I think that it conveyed this useful instruction, that believers should not imagine that the splendor of Christ's kingdom would consist in outward pomp, or cherish vain hopes of worldly triumphs, but should only expect, amidst various calamities, an unseen extension of the kingdom, because it had been promised.

Upon the throne of David. A promise having been made to *David* that the Redeemer would spring from his seed, (2 Samuel 7:12,13,) and his kingdom having been nothing else than an image or faint shadow of that more perfect and truly blessed state which God had determined to establish by the hand of his Son, the Prophets, in order to remind the people of that remarkable miracle, usually call Christ *the Son of David.* (Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15.) Though the name of such a holy and upright king was justly beloved

[147] It hath lighted. — Eng. Ver.

and revered, yet believers esteemed more highly the promised restoration to full salvation, and even among the most ignorant persons that prediction was universally remembered, and its truth and authenticity were considered to be clear and undoubted. I shall collect but a few of the passages in which the Prophets promise to an afflicted people restoration in the person of *David* or of *his Son*. (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24; Hosea 3:5.) Sometimes they foretell that *David*, who was already dead, would be king. In like manner Isaiah, in this passage, intimates that he brings forward nothing that is new, but only reminds them of that which God had formerly promised about the perpetuity of *the kingdom*. Indirectly also he insinuates what Amoz more plainly states, that Christ will

again raise up the throne which for some time had been fallen. (Amos 9:11.)

To order it, and to establish it with judgment and with righteousness. He describes the quality of the kingdom, but by a comparison drawn from earthly governments; for he says that Christ will be a King, to order and establish his kingdom with judgment and with righteousness. These are the means by which earthly governments prosper and take deep roots; but those which are only administered by fear and violence cannot be lasting. Since, therefore, justice is the best guardian of kingdoms and governments, and since the happiness of the whole of the people depends on it, by this clause Isaiah shows that the kingdom of Christ will be the model of the best kind of government.

Judgment and *righteousness* do not here relate to outward affairs of state. We must observe the analogy between the kingdom of Christ and its qualities; for, being spiritual, it is established by the power of the Holy Spirit. In a word, all these things must be viewed as referring to the inner man, that is, when we are regenerated by God to true *righteousness*. Outward *righteousness* indeed follows afterwards, but it must be preceded by that renovation of the mind and heart. We are not Christ's, therefore, unless we follow what is good and just, and bear on our hearts the impress of that *righteousness* which hath been sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Henceforth even for ever. This must be understood, I think, to refer to the perpetuity of *righteousness* and doctrine rather than of *the kingdom*, lest we should imagine that his laws resemble the statutes of kings and princes, which are in force for three days, or for a short period, and are continually renewed, and soon become old again, but that we may know that their obligation is everlasting; for they have been established, as Zecharias says,

that we may serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. (Luke 1:74, 75.)

As Christ's kingdom is everlasting, because *he dieth no more*, (Romans 6:9,) so it follows that *righteousness* and judgment will be everlasting, for they cannot be changed by any length of time.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. By *zeal* I understand

that ardent desire which God will display in preserving his Church, by removing all difficulties and obstructions which might otherwise have hindered its redemption. When we engage in any difficult undertaking, our earnestness, and the warmth of our feelings, overcome the difficulties which present themselves to baffle or retard our attempts. In like manner Isaiah shows that God is inflamed with an uncommon and extraordinary desire to promote the salvation of the Church, so that if believers cannot measure by their own capacity what he has just now promised, still they ought not to cease to entertain confident hope, for the manner of it is wonderful and inconceivable. In short, he intimates that God will come with no light or slow arm to redeem his Church, for he will be all on flame with amazing love of believers, and anxiety about their salvation.

8. *The Lord hath sent a word.* Here he relates a new prediction, for I think that this discourse is separated from the former, because the Prophet now returns to speak of the future condition of the kingdom of *Israel*, which was at that time hostile to the Jews. Now, we know that the Jews had good reason for being alarmed at the forces and power of that kingdom, especially when it had made a league with the Syrians, because they saw that they had not sufficient strength to oppose them. In order, therefore, to yield comfort to the godly, he shows what will be the future condition of the kingdom of *Israel*

By *Jacob* and *Israel* he means the same thing; but the diversity of expression is elegant, and is intended to show that the wicked gain nothing by their opposition, when they endeavor either to turn away from them, or to alter the judgment of God. He alludes to the speech of those who think that they can escape by means of their witticisms, and who turn into jest and sport all that is threatened by the Prophets; just as if one were to attempt to drive away a storm by the breath of his mouth. It is, therefore, an ironical admission, as if he had said, "In your opinion, what God pronounces against you will fall on others; but all the threatenings which he utters against *Jacob* will *light upon Israel*."

To *send* means to appoint. The preposition ב (*beth*) means in *Jacob himself*. The word of God must dwell and rest *in him*, for it cannot vanish away without producing any effect. This is what he afterwards lays down in other words, "*My word shall not return to me void*; that is, because it is an effectual publication of that which I have once decreed." (Isaiah 55:11.) By the word, *it hath fallen*, [148] he points out the certainty of the effect and result; as if he had said, "I do not conjecture these things, nor do I contrive them out of my own head; but God hath spoken, who cannot be deceived, and cannot change."

[148] And join his enemies together. Margin, Heb. mingle. — Eng. Ver. — Calvin, in his version placed at the beginning of this Chapter, renders the clause, and will join his enemies together; but when he comes to explain it, he translates the Hebrew word literally, he will mingle. In both renderings the exact coincidence with our ordinary version deserves notice. — Ed.

9. *And the people shall know.* By the word *people* I understand, not the Jews, but rather the Israelites; and, indeed, the Prophet removes doubt by expressly naming *Ephraim.* He likewise adds *Samaria*, which was the metropolis of that *people*, or of the ten tribes; for fortified cities, conceiving themselves to be placed beyond the reach of danger, are much more insolent in their pretensions. They think that they will always have the remedy in their hands by capitulating with the enemy, though the whole country were laid waste. On this account Isaiah threatens that they will not be exempted from the general calamity. He says that all will feel that the predictions which were uttered by the mouth of God will not be without effect. By the word *know*, which relates to actual experience, he indirectly reproves their unbelief; as if he had said, "Since I speak to the deaf, and you set no value on the warnings which I now address to you, the actual event will teach you, but too late."

Who say. Here the Prophet attacks the obstinacy and rebellion of that people, because, though they had once and again been chastised by God's scourges, and that sharply, they were so far from repentance that they reckoned their losses to be gain, and became more hardened. Assuredly they who thus insolently mock at God are not brought to obedience without being reduced to utter weakness. Now, such an insult openly and avowedly provokes God's anger, and therefore the Prophet says that it proceeds from *the haughtiness and pride of the heart.* Hence it follows that it is right to apply to knotty timber chisels that are harder still.

10. *The bricks are fallen down.* These are the words of men who were obstinate, and who despised the calamity which they had sustained, as if it had been of advantage to them, because it afforded them an opportunity of adorning with greater splendor both their houses and their fields. "*We shall build*," they say, "*more magnificently.* The brick houses have been thrown down that we may dwell in splendid palaces; and since the trees have been cut down, we shall plant more fruitful ones." This was not the fault of a single age, for at this day we see the same obstinacy in the world. How many are the distresses with which Europe has been afflicted for thirty or forty years? How many are the chastisements by which she has been called to repentance? And yet it does not appear that those numerous chastisements have done any good. On the contrary, luxury increases every day, lawless passions are inflamed, and men go on in crimes and profligacy more shamelessly than ever. In short, those very calamities appear to have been so many excitements to luxury and splendor. What then should we expect but to be bruised with heavier blows?

11. *But the Lord will set up the adversaries of Rezin against him.* The Israelites having been proud of their alliance with the king of Syria, and hoping that everything would succeed to their wish, Isaiah threatens a new change which will take away all their hope and utterly frustrate their designs, for the Assyrians afterwards took arms and waged war with the Syrians.

Accordingly, when *Rezin* had been slain, (2 Kings 16:9,) that country was entirely ruined. Still more does he heighten this, by adding, *he shall mingle*; [149] for he means that the Lord will gather together and *mingle* various enemies whom he will commission to destroy the king of Syria, as the soldiers who composed the army of that vast monarchy were collected out of various nations.

12. *Syria in front.* [150] The Prophet shows what will be the nature of this change, and what will happen after the death of *Rezin*, (2 Kings 16:9,) who had allied himself with Israel against Judah; namely, that *the Syrians*, after the death of their king, from being allies will suddenly become enemies, and will make war against Israel, which took place. (2 Kings 17:3.) This is what he means when he says that *Syria* will be *in front*; for I do not agree with those expositors who make *Syria* to mean "those on the East," and *the Philistines* "those on the West." A more natural meaning is, that the enemies will invade them on every side; because on all sides they who had been regarded as faithful friends will rise up to destroy them. The phrases *in front* and *behind* agree with the ordinary modes of speaking, so that we ought not to seek an interpretation that is new and foreign to the purpose.

From this example we ought to learn what it is to rely on human power and the alliances of kings, and especially when, in consequence of being entangled by unlawful covenants, we become careless and fall asleep; for as soon as the Lord pleases, they who were formerly on our side will, in the smallest portion of time, be turned against us to our ruin; and remedies, which we thought would be useful to us will prove to be our destruction, and will assist us both *before* and *behind*. We ought also to observe that God does not all at once expend all his scourges, but when we proceed obstinately, and provoke him more and more, he increases and multiplies the chastisements, and still inflicts a new kind of punishment, till at length he subdues our obstinacy and rebellion.

And will devour Israel with the whole mouth. [151] The phrase *with the whole mouth*, [152] is equivalent to an ordinary idiom of our own, (*a pleine bouche*,) *with full mouth*. As if he had said, "Israel will be exposed as a prey to her enemies, so that on every hand she will be devoured *with open mouth*, both by the Syrians and by the Philistines."

His anger is not turned away. This is the severest of all, and beyond everything else ought to have terrified the ungodly, that if they had suffered much, they have more to endure; that new punishments continually await them, because by going on in their obstinacy they inflame still more the wrath of God. Men take this as an incentive to more obstinate and determined wickedness, that, having suffered some punishment, they think that

[149] The Syrians before. — Eng. Ver.

[150] With open mouth. Margin, Heb., with whole mouth. — Eng. Ver.

[151] פה, בכל (bechol peh,) ὁλῷ τῷ στόματι, toto ore, plenis faucibus; a metaphor from beasts of prey eagerly devouring their food. --- Rosenmuller

[152] For the people turneth not. — Eng. Ver.

they have nothing more to suffer, and become more hardened. They do not even believe that they are any longer exposed to the judgment of God, who has already spent his rods; and as if they were altogether out of his power, they give themselves greater indulgence, and shake off every yoke.

But his hand is stretched out still. What we have now stated is the reason why Isaiah threatens that *the hand of the Lord is still stretched out*, that they may not think that they have escaped that *hand*. Now, this is said not for the purpose of instructing, but of accusing, though the threatenings have also a tendency to make doctrine better understood; but as he had to do with obstinate men, on whom no chastisement produced any good effect, he therefore announces that the chastisements are not yet at an end; and that, although God has for a time discontinued those chastisements, still he has not dispensed with them, but has *his hand lifted up* to inflict a new wound.

13. *But the people hath not turned.* [153] The copulative ו (*vau*) is rendered by some interpreters *for*, as if the Prophet were assigning a reason why the Lord does not cease to employ his scourges in the continual infliction of chastisements; that is, because *the people* are so hardened and obstinate that they will not repent. When there is no repentance, it is unreasonable to expect that God will yield to obstinate men, as if he were vanquished; and the consequence is, that he prepares himself for inflicting severer punishment. Since, therefore, no chastisements had produced any amendment in Israel, he must perish; for when they had been so frequently struck and punished, and did not at all repent, this was a proof of the most desperate wickedness.

This is a very severe rebuke, that although the Lord not only admonishes us by words, but actually pushes us forward, and constrains us by various chastisements, still we grow hardened, and do not suffer ourselves to be drawn away from our crimes and our lusts. Desperate wickedness is thus evinced, and nothing more heinous could be spoken or conceived. It is a heinous offense, when men do not receive instruction as soon as it is delivered to them; it is more heinous, when they are not affected by rebukes; it is the most heinous of all, when, in spite even of chastisements, they grow hardened, and even kick, or by their headstrong behavior inflame still more the indignation of the Judge, and do not consider why they were punished, or what it is to which the Lord calls them. Accordingly, when no remedies produce any good effect, what must we think but that the disease is incurable and utterly desperate?

This rebuke applies not to the Israelites only but to us also. Already hath the Lord chastised the whole world by various afflictions, so that hardly any part could be exempted from distresses and calamities. And yet all appear to have obstinately conspired against God, so that, whatever He does, they cease not to retain their former character, and to carry on their wicked courses. Justly, therefore, might the Lord address to us the same expostulation, and assuredly he addresses us by the mouth of Isaiah; and we

[153] Branch and rush. — Eng. Ver.

ought not to look for another Prophet to threaten new chastisements, seeing that our case is not different from that of the Israelites, and we are involved in the same blame with them.

Nor have they sought the Lord of hosts. This is immediately added as an explanation, for the reason why God inflicts punishment is, to bring back the wanderers to himself. By this method, indeed, he appears to drive men to a greater distance from him; but as it belongs to him to bring out of the grave those whom he appeared to have wounded and slain, by terrifying sinners he only humbles them, in order that they may return to him. And indeed the beginning of conversion is to *seek God*, or rather it is the only rule of living well; if we turn aside from it we have no rest for the sole of our foot. But we must now inquire what it is to *seek God*, or in what manner we ought to *seek him*; for hypocrites will always be ready to plead, that by prayers and fastings, and tears, and a sorrowful countenance, they earnestly entreat God and implore forgiveness. But God chooses to be *sought* in another manner; that is, when the sinner truly subdued, willingly takes the yoke which he had shaken off, and yields obedience to him whom he had despised.

14. *Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel.* He intimates that God's vengeance will be universal, and will involve all ranks; for the whole nation was corrupted, and the contagion had spread over the whole country, to such an extent that no part was left whole or sound. Now, when iniquity thus abounds, every one flatters himself, and they think that they have concealed themselves by an admirable veil, because they have many who are like them; and when they compare themselves with others, they think that they have pleaded their excuse. This is the reason why he threatens that vengeance generally against all; for not one was free from the general disease.

Head and tail, branch and reed. [154] By *branch* he means the stronger and more powerful; by *reed* or *rush* he means the feebler, that is, men of the lowest rank, and who had scarcely any wealth. He therefore means that the vengeance of God hangs over them, and spares neither the strong nor the weak, neither the highest nor the lowest, because no part is sound or uninfected by the general disease.

15. *The ancient and honorable, he is the head.* What he had spoken allegorically about *the head* and *the tail* he explains more plainly and without a figure. He says that the *heads* are the princes and nobles who had the charge of public affairs, and sat at the helm of the commonwealth. To these he adds the *false prophets*, and says that they are meant by *the tail*. But he explains only the first part of the verse, and says nothing about the *branch and reed*. The reason why he omitted them is easily explained. It is, because he intended to press hardest on those who were more heinous transgressors, and who led others to commit sin, in consequence of the influence which they obtained from their high rank. He gives to the prophets the name

[154] For the leaders of this people (margin, they that call them blessed) cause them to err. — Eng. Ver.

of *the tail*, not because they were mean and contemptible, as some think; but he intended to denote the lowest parts of the whole body. By *the head* he means magistrates and judges, and by *the tail* he means *false prophets*, because they deceive and impose upon men by falsehoods and hypocrisy, as if he had compared the one to lions or bears, and the other to foxes.

This passage warns us that we ought not to slumber in our sins, because wickedness and profligacy abound in all ranks, and no class of men is sound or uninfected; for the more that vices abound, so much the more will the wrath of God be kindled against the highest and the lowest. We ought, especially in the present day, amidst that pestilence of every kind of evils, to fear lest, when the wrath of God hath begun to burn, it may consume everything, high and low.

16. *For the rulers of this people are seducers.* [155] Some render it, *they who make thee blessed*, or, *they who call thee blessed*; as if he had said that nothing was more hurtful or destructive to a nation than flatteries, which gave encouragement to unbounded licentiousness. But I shall follow the reading which I approved on a former occasion, when the same word occurred. [156] (Isaiah 3:12.) He means that the rulers and magistrates, whose duty it was to restrain the people within the limits of decent behavior, allowed all to indulge freely in crimes and wickedness. On this account they ought justly to be reckoned *seducers* and corrupters, for corruption flows from them to the whole body of the people, as from the head to the members. Magistrates and pastors are appointed in order to restrain the waywardness of the people, to enjoin what is good and right, and especially to defend the honor of God. If they neglect these duties they ought to be reckoned impostors and not *rulers*, for they give rise to miserable confusion. Now, when every one does what he pleases, and the reins of government are nowhere to be found, can there be anything but the most terrible result? When the common people are thus punished on account of their faults, no lighter vengeance awaits the *rulers*, because they have neglected the duty entrusted to them, and have occasioned so many evils.

And they who are governed are destroyed. By this clause he means that wicked princes, and those who rule according to their own caprice, are destructive; and in like manner teachers who rather deceive and impose on men than point out the way of salvation, because through their fault the people are ruined. But at the same time he shows that this affords no excuse to any one for seeking to make bad rulers a cloak for their own transgressions, as is commonly done, for *if the blind lead the blind,* as Christ says, *both will fall into the ditch.* It is certain that none are ruined by wicked and treacherous *leaders*, but those who of their own accord wish to be led astray.

17. *Therefore the LORD will not delight in their young men.* Isaiah describes more clearly how dreadful will be that vengeance of God against

[155] See the author's explanation of this phrase at page 140. — Ed.

[156] And every mouth speaketh folly (margin, or, villany). — Eng. Ver.

all ranks; for so far will more flagrant transgressors be from escaping, that neither boys nor youths, nor widows, will be exempted, who are usually spared even amidst dreadful slaughter; which was usually done even among heathens at the sacking of towns, as we learn from history. But here the Lord threatens that he will pay no regard either to sex or to age. Yet the following view will not be unsuitable. "Although the carnage will rob many women of their husbands, and will deprive many children of their parents, still God will not shrink from punishing women by making them widows, and children by making them orphans." But as it does not greatly affect the general meaning, I do not dwell upon it. Again, that they may not accuse God of cruelty, he at the same time shows that there are good reasons why he is so severe, because they are all wicked, and therefore that they deserve to be cast headlong to ruin without any distinction.

For all are hypocrites and evil-doers. As to this word, I was unwilling to depart from the opinion commonly entertained, though חנף (*chaneph*) means an ungodly, deceitful, or treacherous and wicked man. He appears to point out the source of all the evils, that there was no true fear of God among them. By this he does not mean any slight dissimulation, but inward contempt seated in the heart, by which consciences are stupified, so that no instructions produce any effect on them; as if he had said that they were deeply sunk in their depravity. But as wickedness, when it has taken possession of the mind, drags the hands and feet, and the rest of the members of the body along with it, so the Prophet adds, that they are all *evil-doers*

And every mouth speaketh villany. [157] Thirdly, he adds that they have proceeded to such a pitch of open wickedness, that they boast of their crimes without shame. The Hebrew word נבלה (*niblah*), which is translated *folly*, has frequently a more extensive meaning; for it denotes baseness, villany, and madness. (Genesis 34:7; Joshua 7:15; Judges 19:24.) Here, in my opinion, the Prophet means that they are so entirely abandoned to wicked courses, that we need not seek any other proof of it than from their tongues.

His anger will not be turned away. He again repeats this statement, which ought to be frequently repeated; for it is not enough to have been once informed how dreadful are the judgments of the Lord against the wicked; so easily and quickly will there steal upon us that forgetfulness of them which banishes uneasiness, as well as fear, about the future. Besides, we are led astray and blinded by that deception, for we think that the infliction of a single punishment has exhausted the power of God. There can be nothing better, therefore, than to hold by this principle, that whenever God chastises us he threatens something more dreadful, if we do not quickly repent. (Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28.)

But his hand is stretched out still. since the Prophet repeats this warning, let us unceasingly call to our remembrance, that the indignation of God is

[157] The prescribers. — Stock. "Not the scribes, who write vexatious decrees, but the judges, who cause them to be written." — Rosenmuller.

not yet appeased, though we may think that he has already punished us severely for our sins. What then ought we to conclude, when he has given us but a light chastisement? At the present day, for instance, we have endured some punishment; but what is it as compared with those dreadfully severe calamities which that nation had suffered, when Isaiah foretold that new chastisements were still awaiting them? What then will become of us? The Lord will undoubtedly continue to perform what belongs to him, and will always be like himself. If this dread do not arouse us, our insensibility is evidently beyond endurance. I have translated the verb שב (*shab*) in the future sense, *will not be turned away*, to make the meaning more clear; for though he speaks as if it had been a past transaction, still he threatens a continuance of punishments against the rebellious.

18. *For wickedness burneth as the fire.* The Prophet attacks the wicked, who are accustomed to defend themselves by laying the blame on God. Either they practice evasions, in order to convince themselves that they are innocent, or, when they have been convicted, they still extenuate their guilt, as if the severity of God were beyond proper bounds. Never, certainly, do they acknowledge that God is just in punishing them, till they are compelled to acknowledge it; and even though they do not venture to excuse themselves publicly, still they fret and murmur. With the view of repressing such insolence, the Prophet compares the calamities to *burning*, but shows that the wickedness of men is the wood and fuel, by which the anger of God is kindled: as if he had said, "All exclaim and make loud complaints that the wrath of God *burns* violently, and yet they do not consider that their own sins are the fans by which it is inflamed, and that those sins supply the fuel, and that even themselves are consumed by the inward fire of their crimes."

It shall devour the briers and thorns. The meaning is, that this flame will seize every part of Judea. Two things are here expressed, that the punishment of sin proceeds from the judgment of God, and yet that the blame lies with the sinners themselves, that they may not remonstrate with God as if he had dealt cruelly with them. There is a beautiful gradation; for we perceive that it usually happens that a fire, kindled in the lowest part of any place, gathers strength by degrees, spreads wider and wider, and ascends to the higher parts. Such will the wrath of God be; for Isaiah shows that it does not all at once seize the wicked, but is gradually kindled, till it utterly destroy them. At first the Lord proceeds gently, but if a light chastisement produce no good effect, he increases and doubles the punishment. If he see that we are obstinate, his wrath burns to the uttermost, so as to destroy us altogether, and consume us like a thick forest. Lastly, as the Prophets elsewhere declare, we must be like chaff and straw as soon as the wrath of God is kindled. (Psalm 83:14; Isaiah 5:24; 33:11; 40:24; 41:2; 47:14)

19. *Through the anger of the* Lord *of hosts is the land darkened.* After having shown that the cause of all our evils proceeds from ourselves, and that therefore the blame of it should be laid upon us, he at the same time

shows that God is a most righteous avenger. When men draw down upon themselves calamities and distresses, God does not suffer them to escape his hand; not that he is inclined to cruelty, for he is *gracious and merciful*, (Exodus 34:6,) but because he is just, and cannot endure the wicked. The dreadful nature of God's vengeance is described by the metaphor of *darkness*, than which nothing can be more dismal; for without figures of speech a judgment so revolting cannot be expressed. And yet he appears to allude to *smoke*, of which he spoke in the former verse; for when a conflagration extends, and rages with such violence, the light must be overpowered by the thick *smoke*

No man shall spare his brother. In this last clause and in the following verse, the Prophet describes the methods and means, as they are called, by which the Lord will execute his vengeance, when his wrath has been thus kindled. When no enemies shall be seen whom we have cause to dread, he will arm ourselves for our destruction. As if he had said, "The Lord will find no difficulty in executing the vengeance which he threatens; for though there be none to give us any annoyance from without, he will ruin us by intestine broils and civil wars." It is shocking and monstrous to relate, *No man shall spare his brother*, "every man shall devour his own flesh;" for *no man ever hated his own flesh.* (Ephesians 5:29.) But when the Lord hath blinded us, what remains but that we mutually destroy each other? And though it is monstrous, yet it happens almost every day.

We are not restrained by any relationship either of blood, or of religion, or of the image of God, which we all bear; though even the heathen, on the contrary, were prevented, by sharing in this common nature, from injuring each other, because they perceived that the beasts themselves are restrained by similarity of nature from cruelty against their own kind; for a wolf does not devour a wolf, and a bear does not devour a bear. That *human* beings, from whom the name of *humanity* is derived, should fight with such cruelty and fierceness against one another as to exceed the rage of wild beasts, is monstrous; and this evil can arise from no other source than that God hath blinded them, and *given them up to a reprobate sense.* (Romans 1:28.) Justly hath Isaiah described this kind of revenge; for when men enjoy peace, they think that they are placed beyond the reach of danger, and dread nothing. But the Lord laughs at this indifference, and shows that he will execute his vengeance by their own hand, which he will arm and direct against them.

20. *Every one shall snatch on the right hand.* It is equivalent to a phrase in common use, *prendre et ravir a toutes mains*, *to take and seize at all hands.* This mode of expression denotes either insatiable covetousness or insatiable cruelty; for the eagerness to *snatch* excites to savage cruelty. That they will be insatiable he expresses more emphatically, by saying that, in consequence of being impelled by blind fierceness and inconceivable rage, they will suck their brother's blood as freely as they would devour the flesh which was their own property. The bitterness of the vengeance is greatly heightened by this

circumstance, that the children of Abraham, and the holy posterity of the chosen race, break out into such beastly fury. Let us therefore remember that it is a dreadful proof of heavenly punishment, when brothers are hurried on, with irreconcilable eagerness, to inflict mutual wounds.

21. *Manasseh, Ephraim.* These tribes were closely related to each other; for besides their being descended from the same ancestor, Abraham, a close relationship arose out of their being descended from one patriarch, his grandson, Joseph. (Genesis 41:50-52.) But though they were closely allied, still God threatens that he will cause them to destroy themselves by mutual conflict, as if they were devouring the flesh of their own arm, and, consequently, that there will be no need of foreign enemies. He likewise adds that, after having wearied themselves out by mutual wounds, both will unite against Judah, in order to destroy it.

And for all this his anger shall not be turned away. If any one take into consideration those calamities which Isaiah threatened, he will be amazed and greatly astonished that still more severe chastisements are foretold. But in this manner God acts towards the wicked, and does not cease to afflict till he utterly overwhelm and destroy them, when, after having been frequently invited, they refuse to be reconciled to him. We need not wonder, therefore, that he inflicts stroke after stroke, as he also foretold by Moses that he would *punish seven times more* (Leviticus 26:18), and *bring seven times more plagues upon* (Leviticus 26:21) those who would not repent; lest they should think that, when they had been punished once or twice, they would not be punished again.

But his hand is stretched out still. By this he means that rods are prepared, that he may immediately strike with them; for it is not with a woman's passion that the Lord is angry, but his wrath is immediately followed by revenge.

Chapter 10

CHAPTER 10

Isaiah Chapter 10:1-34

1. Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed;

1. Vae decernentibus decreta iniqua, et qui dictantes dictant injuriam,

2. To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!

2. Ut arceant pauperes a judicio, et eripiant jus pauperibus populi mei, viduas spolient, et pupillos praedentur.

3. And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

3. Et quid facietis in die visitationis? Et cum desolatio venerit e longinquo, ad quem confugietis auxilii causa, et ubi deponetis (vel, munietis) gloriam vestram?

4. Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

4. Nisi (vel, sine me) corruent inter vinctos, et inter occisos cadent. In hoc toto non erit aversus furor ejus, et adhuc manus ejus extenta.

5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

5. O Assur virga furoris mei, et baculus ipse in manu eorum ira mea.

6. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

6. Ad gentem simulatricem mittam eum, et contra populum indignationis meae praecipiam ei, ut praedetur praedam; ut rapiat spolia, et ponat eum in conculcationem, quasi lutum platearum.

7. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.

7. Atqui ipse non sic arbitrabitur, nec cor ejus sic cogitabit; quia in corde ejus erit ad extirpandum et succidendum gentes non paucas.

8. For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings?

8. Dicet enim, Annon Principes mei pariter Reges?

9. Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?

9. Annon, ut Carchemis, sic Calno? annon Hamath, sicut Arphad? annon Samaria ut Damascus?

10. As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;

10. Sicut invenit manus mea regnum idolorum, cum simulachra eorum sint prae Ierusalem et Samaria.

11. Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

11. Annon sicut feci Samariae et idolis ejus, ita faciam Ierusalem et idolis ejus?

12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

12. Sed accidet, Cum perfecerit Dominus totum opus suum in monte Sion et Ierusalem, visitabo super fructum magnificentiae cordis regis Assur, et super gloriam altitudinis oculorum ejus.

13. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man

13. Quia dixit: In fortitudine manus meae feci, et in sapientia mea; quia perspicax fui; et ideo abstuli terminos populorum, et recondita eorum diripui, et detraxi tanquam fortis sedentes.

14. And my hand hath found, as a nest, the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.

14. Et invenit quasi nidum manus mea opes populorum; et ut colliguntur ova derelicta, sic ego universam terram collegi; nec fuit qui abigeret ala, et aperiret os, et sibilaret.

15. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

15. An gloriabitur securis adversus secantem ipsa? An magnificabitur serra adversus eum qui ipsum agitat? quasi elevatio virgae contra elevantem ipsam, quasi elevationes baculi, non ligni.

16. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.

16. Propterea mittet Dominator Dominus exercituum in pingues ejus maciem, et subtus gloriam ejus succendet incendium, quasi incendium ignis.

17. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day;

17. Et erit lux Israel in ignem, et Sanctus ejus in flammam; comburetque et devorabit vepres ejus et spinas die uno.

18. And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.

18. Gloriam sylvae ejus, et frugiferi campi ejus, ab anima usque ad carnem consumet; et erit quasi dissolutio signiferi.

19. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.

19. Et reliquiae ligni sylvae ejus ad numerum erunt, ut puer eas numeret.

20. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

20. Erit in die illo. Non adjicient amplius reliquiae Israel, et superstites e domo Iacob inniti percussori suo; nam innitentur super Iehovam sanctum Israel, in veritate.

21. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

21. Reliquiae revertentur, reliquiae Iacob ad Deum fortem.

22. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

22. Nam si fuerit populus tuus Israel instar arenae maris, reliquiae ejus revertentur. Consumptio decreta inundans justitiam, (vel, justitia.)

23. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in themidst of all the land.

23. Quia consumptionem et finitionem Dominus Iehova exercituum facit in medio totius terrae.

24. Therefore thus said the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

24. Propterea sic dicit Iehova exercituum: Ne timeas, populе mi, incolae Sion, ab Assur. In virga percutiet te, et baculum suum levabit contra te in via AEgypti.

25. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger, in their destruction.

25. Sed adhuc paululum, et consumabitur (vel, consumetur) furor et indignatio mea, in abolitione eorum.

26. And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him, according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

26. Et excitabit Iehova exercituum contra eum flagellum, secundum caedem Madian in rupe Oreb; et virga ejus super mare, levabitque eam in via AEgypti.

27. And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the annointing.

27. Et accidet in die illa, ut auferatur onus ejus ab humero tuo, et jugum ejus a cervice tua; et dissipabitur jugum a facie unctionis.

28. He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages:

28. Venit in Aiath, transiit in Migron, in Michmas reponet vasa tua.

29. They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled.

29. Transierunt vadum, in Gaeba pernoctaverunt hospitio; territa est Rama; Gibaea Saulis fugit.

30. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim; cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth.

30. Hinni voce tua filia Gallim, fac audire Laisam paupercula Anathoth.

31. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.

31. Mota est Madmena; incolae Gebim collegerunt se.

32. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

32. Adhuc dies: cum in Nob interquiescet, agitabit manum suam versus montem filiae Sion, collem Ierusalem.

33. Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.

33. Ecce, Dominus Iehova exercituum amputabit ramum cum terrore, (vel, potenter,) et procerae staturae excidentur, et sublimia humiliabunter.

34. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forests with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

34. Et resecabit condensa sylvae ferro, et Libanus violenter cadet.

1. *Woe to them that decree.* He now attacks the people more closely, as he did in the first and second chapters, to make them feel that they are justly afflicted; for men never acknowledge that they are justly punished till

they have been manifestly convicted and constrained. Though they were sufficiently convicted by former proofs, still he found it necessary to come to particulars, that by means of them their hypocrisy might be exposed; for men are so brazen-faced as to think that any excuse shields them, and openly to accuse God. When they had become so shameless, it was impossible for him to rebuke them too sharply, or to carry his accusations beyond proper limits, so as to shut their mouths, whether they would or not.

עמל (*gnamal*) and און (*aven*) are often joined together in Scripture, as in Psalm 7:14 און signifies *vanity* and *iniquity*, but the latter meaning agrees better with this passage. עמל, (*gnamal*,) on the other hand, denotes vexation, and often the very cause of the vexation, that is, the oppression inflicted by the stronger on the weaker, when they abuse their authority and power. Having formerly shown that the wickedness originated from the governors themselves, (Isaiah 1:10,23,) he places them in the first rank, that they may undergo the punishment of the crimes which they had occasioned. This ought to be carefully observed, for they who are elevated to the highest rank imagine that they are exempted from the ordinary lot of other men, and that they are not bound to give account to God; and therefore he threatens that they will have this privilege, that they will be the first that are punished.

Some think that two classes are here described, and draw a distinction between חקקים, (*chokekim*,) *those who decree*, and מכתבים, (*mechattebim*,) *those who write* [158] But I do not approve of this, for he attacks generally, and without distinction, princes and magistrates, who oppressed the people by unjust and tyrannical decrees, in such a manner that they approached to absolute robbery; and therefore he includes every class of magistrates and governors.

2. *To keep back.* [159] Others render it, *to cause them to turn aside*; but the true meaning is, *to keep back the poor from judgment*, or make them lose their cause. This is the iniquity and oppression which he had mentioned in the former verse, that *the poor are deprived of their rights*, and are robbed for the sake of the rich, and go away mocked from the judgment-seat, while everything is laid open to plunder. He chiefly mentions *the poor*, because for the most part they are destitute of help and assistance. While magistrates and judges ought to have assisted them more than others, they allow themselves greater liberty, and indulge more contemptuously in oppressing them. Those who have wealth, or friends, or favor, are less liable to be oppressed; for they have arms in their hands to defend, and even to revenge themselves. But the Lord says that he takes peculiar care of the poor, (Exodus 22:23; Deuteronomy 15:9, 24:15,) though they are commonly despised; and that he takes such care of them that he does not allow oppression inflicted on them to pass unpunished; for it is not without good ground that he calls himself the protector and defender of such persons. (Psalm 68:5.) From this

[158] To turn aside. — Eng. Ver.

[159] Where will ye leave your glory? — Eng. Ver. And where will ye deposit your things of value? — Stock.

consideration, therefore, the poor and weak ought to derive consolation, and more calmly to endure distresses and afflictions, because they learn that God takes care of them, and will not permit any injustice done to them to pass unpunished. The powerful and wealthy are at the same time warned not to take it as an incentive to sin that they have not been punished; for though no avenger be now seen, still the Lord will avenge, and will undertake the cause of those whom they imagined to be destitute of all assistance.

3. *And what will you do?* Here the Prophet severely threatens princes, who were careless and indolent amidst their distresses, as men intoxicated by prosperity are wont to despise haughtily every danger. He therefore warns them that, though God delay, still he has fixed a time for judgment, and already it is close at hand. In consequence of having vanquished the neighboring nations in war, and fortified themselves by an alliance with a very powerful nation, they had no longer any fear; and therefore he expressly declares that their calamity will *come from afar*

In the day of visitation. By *visitation* is here meant *judgment*, for God *visits* us in two ways, that is, in mercy and in judgment. In both ways he reveals himself and his power to us, both when, in compassion on us, he rescues us from dangers, and when he punishes those who are ungodly and who despise the word. Both kinds of *visitation* have the same object in view, for we do not see the Lord but in his works; and we think that he is absent unless he give us a token of his presence. This *visitation*, therefore, the Scripture accommodates to our capacity; for when we are pressed down by afflictions, and when the ungodly freely give themselves up to wickedness, we suppose that God is at a great distance, and takes no interest in our affairs.

Accordingly, *visitation* must here be understood to mean the *judgment* by which God, in opposition to the waywardness and insolence of the ungodly, will bring them back like deserters. But if the judgments of God be so dreadful in this life, how dreadful will he be when he shall come at last to judge the world! All the instances of punishment that now produce fear or terror, are nothing more than preparations for that final vengeance with which he will thunder against the reprobate, and many things which he appears to pass by, he purposely reserves and delays till that last day. And if the ungodly are not able to bear these chastisements, how much less will they be capable of enduring his glorious and inconceivable majesty, when he shall ascend that awful tribunal, before which the angels themselves tremble!

And when the desolation shall come from afar. When he says *from afar*, it is proper to observe that we must not allow the prosperity which we now enjoy to bereave us of our senses; for they who carelessly sleep amidst their vices, and by this wicked indifference call in question the power of God, will quickly feel that in a moment, whenever he pleases, he can shake heaven and earth from east to west.

To whom will you flee? He declares that it is in vain for them to rely on their resources, for, in opposition to the hand of God, they will be fruitless

and of no avail whatever. At the same time he likewise shows that this will be a most righteous reward; for when they are cruel towards others, they will justly be made to feel that they have now no help either from God or from men.

They will have judgment without mercy who have showed no mercy. (James 2:13.)

This applies especially to the judges, who ought to have been a protection to the whole people; for they have been appointed for the purpose of defending the poor and wretched. But if they shall neglect and betray, and even plunder them, it is right that they should be made to feel, by their own destitute condition, how greatly this cruelty offends God.

Where will you deposit your glory? This is understood by commentators to mean that they will be thrown down from their high rank. They suppose it to be an ironical and contemptuous question put by the Prophet, "What will become of that illustrious rank of which the nobles cruelly and foolishly vaunt, whenever God spares them for a little?" But as this was a forced rendering, I rather think that Isaiah asks, "Where will they find a safe hiding-place in which they may *deposit their glory*?" Thus I consider the meaning to be, *to leave*, [160] for the sake of being preserved; and the two clauses correspond to each other, *To whom will you flee*? and, "Where will you find a refuge for your glory in order to preserve it?" But perhaps a preference will be given to a different view, which I have noted in the margin; [161] for the verb עזב (*gnazab*) signifies also to *strengthen*. Again, if God thus devotes to destruction princes who are thrown down from an elevated position, what will become of the lowest? No one, therefore, has any reason to flatter himself; for we shall all be *like stubble* when the wrath of the Lord has been kindled against us. (Psalm 83:13.)

4. *If they shall not fall down.* As the meaning of the particle בלתי (*bilti*) is ambiguous, various interpretations of it have been given by commentators. Some take it in an exclusive sense, as in many other passages of Scripture; as if he had said, *Only he shall fall down among the bound and slain*; that is, because all will be condemned and given up either to captivity or to death. Others render it, *Without me they shall fall.* If this rendering be preferred, the Prophet shows that the cause of their destruction is, that they have revolted from God; and unquestionably the cause of all our distresses is, to forsake the fountain of life and of salvation, and of all blessings. In this manner he sharply reproves the madness of the ungodly, who vaunt of having been forsaken by God, as if nothing were more desirable or pleasant than to withdraw to the greatest distance from him; and thus it will be an ironical reproof, that their calamity will arise from no other source than from the absence of God, in whom, without any good ground, they had rejoiced.

Others consider it to be an elliptical expression, that they will have no

[160] This clause is rendered in Calvin's version, Where will you deposit your glory? and, in the margin, Where will you secure your glory? — Ed.

[161] For this form of an oath, See page 173, n. 1.— Ed.

hiding-place but by throwing themselves down under the captives and the slain. It might also be a form of an oath, *If they shall not*; [162] and the meaning would be highly appropriate, that God swears in wrath that he will spare none of them, but will abandon some to captivity, and will deliver up others to be put to death. In a word, this declaration shows what are the consequences that await all those who, after having been warned by the word of God, do not repent. From what immediately follows, we learn that a dreadful and alarming destruction is threatened; for he repeats what he had already said frequently, that *the wrath of the Lord is not yet apparent,* that he will find out more frightful punishments for avenging himself. This teaches us that nothing is more truly desirable than to be moved by a sincere feeling of repentance, and to acknowledge our fault, that we may obtain pardon from the Lord.

5. *O Assyrian.* What now follows relates to the threatening of punishment, but at the same time mingles some consolation for alleviating the distresses of the godly. Indeed, the greater part of the discourse is occupied with this doctrine, that all the afflictions which shall be brought upon them by the *Assyrians* are a temporary scourge inflicted by God, but that unbelievers, after having too freely indulged themselves, will at length be brought to submission. הוי (*hoi*) is sometimes an interjection expressive of lamentation, *Ah!* Sometimes it denotes addressing, *O!* Sometimes it means, as the old translator rendered it, *Wo to.* But here it cannot be explained in any other way than that God calls the *Assyrians*, or assumes the character of one who sighs, because he is compelled to inflict punishment on his people by means of the *Assyrians*

But when I more closely examine the whole matter, I rather come to this opinion, that here the Lord calls on the *Assyrians*, as if he armed them by his authority to carry on war. He had formerly said that they would come; but hypocrites are so careless that they are never moved by the fear of God, till his scourges are not only seen but felt. This is the reason why he now addresses them, *Come*; as if a judge called an officer and ordered him to put a malefactor in chains, or delivered him to the hangman to inflict capital punishment upon him. Thus the Lord calls the Assyrians to execute his vengeance by their hands.

And the staff in their hand is mine indignation. This may be viewed as referring to the *Assyrian*, and may be explained so as to be a repetition of the same statement, with a slight change of the words. But I distinguish between them in this manner, that the *Assyrians* are called *the rod of God's indignation*; and next, that the swords and weapons with which they are furnished are nothing else than *God's anger*; as if the Prophet had said, that God, according to his pleasure, made use of the Assyrians in the same manner as swords for the execution of *his anger*; and further, that although they bear swords, still there will be no reason to be afraid of them, except

[162] In their hand. — Eng. Ver.

so far as the wrath of God shall be displayed against the Jews.

The general meaning is, "All the strength which the enemy shall possess proceeds from the wrath of God, and they are moved by his secret impulse to destroy the people, for otherwise he would not move a finger." God declares that *the staff* which is carried *in their hand* is his *anger*, in order to inform the Jews that the blind attacks of the enemies are regulated by a heavenly providence. The phrase בידם (*beyadam*) [163] is rendered by some, *in place of them*, or, *into their country*; but I do not approve of this, and it is too far-fetched. In a word, the Lord calls the Assyrians, as the ministers of his wrath, to punish the sins of his people by their hand, and declares that everything that is in their hand is *his wrath*

This doctrine has two objects in view; first, to terrify the ungodly, and to inform them that not in vain does the Lord threaten their destruction; next, he points out the reason why he punishes them. This was of the greatest importance for shaking off the sluggishness of the ungodly, who laughed to scorn all the discourses and threatenings of the Prophet. Secondly, this doctrine was of great importance when the people themselves began to be afflicted by the Assyrians; for then they actually saw that what the Prophets had foretold was not without foundation, and that these things did not happen by chance.

It will be objected, Why does he afterwards call *the staff* his *anger*, since he formerly said that the Assyrian is *the rod of his indignation*; for he ought rather to have spoken thus: "The Assyrian is my wrath, and the staff which he carries is the staff of my indignation." But we need not solicitously detain ourselves with the words, when we understand the Prophet's meaning. He calls men *the staff of his anger*, because he uses them like a *staff*. He calls men's weapons *the wrath of God*, because they are not regulated by their own choice, but are proofs of the wrath of God. The Prophet therefore spoke appropriately, that we might not think that the wicked rush forward, without control, wherever their lawless passions lead them; but, on the contrary, that a bridle restrains and keeps them back from doing anything without the will of God.

Hence we ought to learn that the Lord acts even by the hand of the wicked. But here we must think and speak soberly; for it is proper to make a wise and judicious distinction between the work of God and the work of men. There are three ways in which God acts by men. First, *all of us move and exist by him.* (Acts 17:28.) Hence it follows that all actions proceed from his power. Secondly, in a peculiar manner he impells and directs the wicked according as he thinks fit; and although nothing is farther from their thoughts, still he makes use of their agency that they may kill and destroy one another, or that by their hand he may chastise his people. Of this method the Prophet speaks in this passage. Thirdly, when he guides by his Spirit of sanctification, which is peculiar to the elect. Whether, therefore, we are

[163] Howbeit he meaneth not so. — Eng. Ver.

attacked by tyrants or robbers, or any other person, or foreign nations rise up against us, let us always plainly see the hand of God amidst the greatest agitation and confusion, and let us not suppose that anything happens by chance.

6. *To a hypocritical nation.* He proceeds with the former statement, by which he called *the Assyrian the rod of God's indignation*; for as the father does not in vain take up the *rod*, but has this object in view, to chastise his son, so he declares that the Lord's *rod* has no uncertain destination, but is appointed for the chastisement of the unthankful and wicked. He calls it a *hypocritical* or wicked nation, because it has no uprightness or sincerity. Uprightness is contrasted with hypocritical conduct, because uprightness is the chief of all the virtues; and in like manner hypocrisy is the mother of all the vices. It is therefore no light accusation which he brings against the Israelites; but he charges them with what is most of all to be abhorred, and therefore immediately afterwards he calls them *the people of his indignation*, as he elsewhere calls the Edomites *the people of his curse.* (Isaiah 34:5.) Though he means that he is displeased with the Jews, yet the Hebrew phraseology is much more emphatic; for it conveys the idea that the reason why this nation is devoted to destruction is, that nothing is to be found in it but grounds of anger. Indeed, God is never angry with us unless we have provoked him by our sins; but when wickedness has come to its greatest height, his indignation is kindled, and cannot be appeased. Thus he cuts off the hope of reconciliation from hypocrites and wicked men, who ceased not continually to add sin to sin.

I will command him to take the spoil and to take the prey. He says that he has given a loose rein to the fierceness of enemies, that they may indulge without control in every kind of violence and injustice. Now, this must not be understood as if the Assyrians had a *command* from God by which they could excuse themselves. There are two ways in which God *commands*; by his secret decree, of which men are not conscious; and by his law, in which he demands from us voluntary obedience. This must be carefully observed, that we may reply to fanatics, who argue in an irreligious manner about the decree of God, when they wish to excuse their own wickedness and that of others. It is of importance, I say, to make a judicious distinction between these two ways of *commanding.* When the Lord reveals his will in the law, I must not ascend to his secret decree, which he intended should not be known to me, but must yield implicit obedience.

Now, if any one allege that he obeys God, when he complies with his sinful passions, he is guilty of falsehood, by vainly attempting to involve God in the guilt of his crimes, to which he knows that he is led by the failings of his own heart; for on this point no other witness or judge is needed but a man's own conscience. God does indeed make use of the agency of a wicked man, but the man has no such intention. It is therefore accidental, so far as relates to men, that he acts by the wicked and reprobate; for they neither

know that they serve God, nor wish to do so. Accordingly if they seize on this pretext, it is easy to prove that, when they yield obedience to their own sinful passion, they are at the greatest possible distance from obeying God. They have the will of God declared in his law, so that it is in vain for them to seek it anywhere else. So far as they are concerned, they do not perform the work of God, but the work of the devil; for they serve their own lusts. (Ephesians 2:2.) Nothing certainly was farther from the intention of the Assyrians than to give their services to God, but they were hurried along by their lust and ambition and covetousness. Yet the Lord directed their exertions and plans to an object which was totally different, and which was unknown to themselves.

This passage may be thus summed up. "It will be an uncommon and extraordinary instance of God's vengeance, when the Assyrians shall attack them with unrestrained liberty of action; for they will be sent by God, not to treat them with gentleness and moderation, but to plunder them in the manner of an invading army." He likewise adds, *to tread them down.* Nothing can go beyond this, for it means that the vanquished are not spared, but that every possible species of abuse has been heaped upon then.

7. *Yet he will not think so.* [164] When wicked men vomit out their rage, they disturb weak minds, as if it were not in the power of God to restrain their pride and fury. The Prophet therefore steps forth beforehand to meet them, and exhorts believers, whatever may be the excess to which wicked men indulge their insolence, still to feel that they are justly chastised by a secret judgment of God. He shows, as we lately noticed, that nothing will be farther from the intention of the Assyrians than to give their services to God, and to be the ministers of his wrath; but we must also consider what is their own motive of action.

Many would be ready to object, "Why dost thou, being God's herald, threaten us with the Assyrian; as if that savage beast would submit to execute the commandments of God?" He therefore replies, that God works with such amazing skill that he brings men to yield obedience to him, even without their knowledge or will. "Although," says he, "their attempts and plans are totally different, yet this will not prevent God from performing and carrying into execution, by means of them, whatever he has decreed."

Many might likewise object, that it was a strange subversion of order, that God should place the elect people in subjection to the heathen nations; and that it was not just, however much the Jews had sinned, that their condition should be worse than that of those robbers who, on account of their wickedness and crimes, deserved the severest punishment. The Prophet therefore threatens that the Assyrians also will have their turn, and in due time will receive just punishment; and yet that it is not unreasonable that they should distress, plunder, devour, and slay other nations, because their own reward is reserved for them. Besides, the Prophet soothes the grief of the

[164] I will punish (margin, Heb. visit upon) the fruit of the stout heart. — Eng. Ver.

godly, and alleviates their solicitude and uneasiness, by declaring that God restrains the presumption of wicked men from carrying into effect whatever they think fit. He therefore shows that, however madly wicked men may rage, God mitigates his own judgments from heaven, so as to provide for the salvation of his Church. And thus, though the Assyrian, like a wild beast, may be eager to seize his prey, he bids them lift up their eyes to God, whose decree is far removed beyond the reach of that blind fury.

8. *For he will say.* He explains the reason why the Assyrian will not think that he is the *rod* of God. It is because, being blinded by pride, he acknowledges no authority superior to his own; for it is impossible for those who rely on their own superiority, and claim ability to do this or that, to submit to the providence of God. The authority which we ought justly to ascribe to God is, to believe that we cannot move even the smallest finger without his permission. On the other hand, whoever imagines that he can do anything, however small, assumes to himself, with blasphemous pride, the power of God.

Are not my princes altogether kings? The Prophet here gives a lively picture of the presumption of a heathen king in boasting that he had everything in his power. This is especially the case with eminent *Princes* who, abounding in wealth, resources, and power, are blinded in such a manner as hardly to know that they are men. The opportunities of learning this are too abundant; for what *Prince* is there at the present day, who knows or remembers that he is a man, and liable to the ordinary calamities of life? Their minds are so entirely intoxicated and deranged, that they believe that whatever they have undertaken they will at once accomplish, and will surmount every obstacle.

9. *Is not Calno as Carchemish?* Here he mentions by name certain cities, though others think that they were countries; but it is more probable that they were cities, or some fortified places. "Shall it not happen," says he, "to those places which I have not yet subdued as it has happened to others that opposed me?" He therefore compares *Calno*, *Arpad*, and *Samaria*, which he afterwards subdued, to *Carchemish*, *Hamath*, and *Damascus*, which he had formerly subdued, and says that those will not be stronger than these. Thus wicked men are wont to boast and talk proudly of their former actions, so as to imagine that they will break through every obstruction, and that nothing can stand in the way of their plans and exertions, and even think that they will accomplish everything without the will or knowledge of God.

When we read this history, let us learn that we ought not to be proud of having been strong, or of having succeeded to our wish; for he who hath exalted us will be able to cast us down. And if he reproves the Assyrian for that haughtiness, how much more ought they to be reproved who ascribe to themselves the praise of righteousness and holiness, as if they could be regenerated by their own power; for it cannot be doubted that they rob God of his honor, and claim for themselves what belongs to him!

10. *As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols.* The Assyrian now breaks out into far more outrageous language; for not only does he insult men, but he insults God himself, and even the very gods whom he worshipped. He boasts that the gods, whose protection the other nations enjoyed, could not prevent him from subduing them; and that the God of Israel, in whom Jerusalem and Samaria trusted, would not prevent him any more than they. Wicked men are so proud that they attribute to their own strength the victories which they achieve, and do not hesitate to exalt themselves against God and all that is worshipped. They allege, indeed, that they pay homage to the objects of their own worship, that is, to the idols which they have contrived for themselves, and bow before them, and offer sacrifices to them, by which they give some indication that they ascribe their victories to the gods; but afterwards, as Habakkuk says of Nebuchadnezzar,

they burn incense to their own net, and sacrifice to their drag, (Habakkuk 1:16;)

that is, by boasting of their exploits, wisdom, sagacity, and perseverance. Their hypocrisy is exposed, and their secret thoughts, which lay concealed under those folds of hypocrisy, are revealed, when they immediately claim for themselves what they appeared to ascribe to the objects of their worship. We need not wonder, therefore, that Sennacherib exalted himself against all that is worshipped, for that is the result of ungodliness.

There are two ways in which his blasphemy is expressed. First, he exalts himself above God, and thinks that he will be stronger than God; and, secondly, he makes no distinction between God and the false gods. He sufficiently displayed his ungodliness, when he exalted himself alone even above idols; for although they are nothing but idols, yet as their worshippers ascribe to them some power and divinity, if they scoff at idols, they show that they despise every object of worship; for they treat idols with the same contempt as if they had had to do with God himself. Their own conscience testifies, therefore, that they carry on war against God, and they have no excuse arising from ignorance; for they think that God dwells in graven images. If that tyrant despised Apollo or Jupiter, he undoubtedly despised them, not as idols, but as having in them something divine. The second blasphemy of the tyrant was, that he placed the living God on the same level with the false gods of the heathen, and dared to scoff at him as well as at the others, and to ridicule the confidence of Israel, as if no greater power belonged to God than to idols.

12. *But it shall come to pass.* Hitherto the Prophet had explained what would be the pride of the Assyrian, after having obtained a victory over Israel; but now he foretells what will happen to the Assyrian himself, and what will be the purpose of God against him. Wicked men do everything in the same manner as if God were not in heaven, and could not frustrate their designs. What else is the meaning of those haughty words, *My hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols*, than this, that he thought that he would

vanquish all the gods? But God opposes his designs, and, after having made use of his agency, punishes himself also.

This verse contains two clauses. First, he declares that God will punish a wicked king. Secondly, he suggests that the time is not yet come, in order to encourage believers to the exercise of patience. He foretells that the time which God regards as fit for doing it will be, when he shall have chastised the sins of his Church; in the same manner as if the master of a house were to settle the disturbances of his own family. The object which he has in view is, that believers may not give way to despondency, when they behold a wicked tyrant in such a state of exultation, and may not abandon the hope of salvation, as if it were impossible to restrain him.

I will visit upon the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria. [165] God promises, in a word, that after having permitted the Assyrian to plume himself beyond measure, he will in his turn be an avenger; for it belongs to him to repress the pride of the flesh, which is connected with sacrilege. Accordingly, the preposition על (*gnal*) [166] is emphatic, as if it declared that the Assyrian will not be protected by his loftiness from undergoing punishment. *Fruit* is here taken in a metaphorical sense, for wicked men think that they are happy and prosperous when they swell with pride, as if they gathered some *fruit*. He places in the foreground *the heart*, which is the seat of pride, and which, when it swells with haughtiness, pours out fierceness and cruelty. Afterwards, he adds *the eyes*, by which the inward feelings of the heart are manifested, and which, by being lifted up, are the heralds of secret vice. To whatever extent the Assyrian, in his pride, may elevate himself, God testifies that he has in his own power the means of suddenly changing his glory into dishonor and reproach. Accordingly, he includes contempt, scorn, disdain, and haughty looks, indicative of excessive confidence, which are usually beheld in proud men.

I will visit. He introduces God as speaking, because that which God utters with his own mouth is more impressive, (ἐμφατικώτερον,) than if he spoke by the mouth of the Prophet. Hence draw a general doctrine. God cannot endure the arrogance of proud men, without suppressing it; for he wages incessant war with the haughty and disdainful. (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5.)

When the Lord shall have finished his whole work. Observe how, in order to repress immoderate haste, the Prophet added this by way of limitation; for as soon as we see a proud man, we wonder that the Lord endures him. Isaiah here shows that God endures that proud tyrant, whatever may be the insolence with which he vaunts and exalts himself, because he chose to make use of his agency, and that the seasonable time for the Lord's destruction of the wicked is not always at hand, but that we ought to wait patiently for it.

[165] Upon.

[166] As if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up. Margin, or, as if a rod should shake them that lift it up. — Eng. Ver. Our translators were uncertain whether את (eth) was the sign of the accusative or a preposition. --- Ed

When he shall have chastised the kingdom of Judah, as if he were bringing the members of the family into a state of submission, he will not be slow or sluggish in punishing a foreign enemy; as a father commonly throws away or breaks the rod with which he chastised his son.

His whole work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem. By a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) *Mount Zion* is here put for the Church, and *Jerusalem* is employed in the same sense, in order that by means of the Temple and the royal city, as the head, he might describe the whole body, and by means of the most important part might describe the whole kingdom. He calls it *the whole work*, because through our foolish haste we would draw away God from his *work*, though it were only begun. More especially, our wrath against wicked men rages so strongly, that it is difficult to restrain our impatience, if God do not instantly comply with our wish in punishing them. To mitigate this fervor, he bids them allow full and ample time for God's fatherly chastisements.

The whole work denotes a proper measure. This is a useful and highly consolatory doctrine; for we see wicked men, in a wonderfully arrogant and seemingly triumphant manner, mocking God, and uttering reproaches and slanders against his doctrine, so that hardly any words can express their insolence. If the Lord would comply with our wish, he would immediately hasten to subdue and destroy them. But he wishes first to humble his Church by means of them.

On Mount Zion and on Jerusalem. He does not now speak of Syrians or Egyptians, but of the Jews, of *Zion*, of the Temple and the habitation which he was pleased to consecrate to himself. Thus, at the present day, there are various diseases of the Church, which the Lord determines to heal and remove. He has indeed begun to do so; but we are mistaken if we think that the *work* is finished; and he will not cease till he has subdued us, so that we may be moved by the true fear of him, and may submit to his yoke with becoming modesty and gentleness. We need not wonder, therefore, that he gives a loose rein to tyrants, and hitherto permits them to rage against the Church. But the consolation is at hand. When he shall have made use of their agency in chastising the Church, *he will visit* their pride and arrogance. And we need not wonder if God, by striking his elect first of all, expresses in this manner his peculiar regard for their salvation. *Judgment must* therefore *begin at the house of God*, and must afterwards extend to those who are without, who will endure chastisements still more severe.

13. *For he hath said, By the strength of my hand I have done it.* The Prophet again repeats the highly blasphemous words which the Assyrian uttered; for he ascribes to his *power* and *wisdom* all the victories which he obtained. By *strength of hand* he means vast armies collected out of various nations. Yet at the same time he boasts of being a warlike king, as those blusterers are wont to claim the praise of everything that was done under their direction, though they were enjoying the luxury and ease of a retired

life. Afterwards he boasts that he was *cautious* and *wary*, to use an ordinary phrase of our own, (*J'ay este bien entendu et expert*,) *I was very skillful and clever*. But there can be no doubt whatever that he bestows this honorable appellation on the tricks and dishonest cunning by which he had gained advantage over his neighbors. For what are the stratagems of kings and princes? To disturb the peace by indirect methods, to invent pretences for quarrels, to sow the seeds of discord, and, in a word, by their artifices to level all distinctions.

I have removed the boundaries of the nations. This means, "I have extended the boundaries of my dominion, and have added other countries to my territories, so as to *remove their boundary* and limit." Just as if we were to say that the King of France *removed the boundaries* of Brittany, Burgundy, Aquitaine, Provence, and other countries, when he united them to his own kingdom. He likewise adds, "that nothing was so secret or concealed as not to become his prey;" as if he had said that by his sagacity he drew the neighboring countries into his nets, fished their treasures, and brought into his possession all that lay concealed.

14. *And my hand hath found as a nest.* He adds, that it cost him no trouble to vanquish kings and amass their wealth; and he illustrates this by a comparison. As if one were to seek *a nest and find one* deserted by the birds, and consequently to take the eggs without difficulty; for if the parent birds were sitting on the eggs, having an instinctive desire to protect their *nest*, they would either fly at the robber, and attack him with their bill, or by loud and unpleasant noises endeavor to drive him away. But this tyrant boasts that there was no one who ventured so much as *to open the mouth* against him, and therefore that he had no difficulty in bringing all the kingdoms under his dominion. Accordingly, he lays claim to all these things, and attributes them to his wisdom, and makes no acknowledgment of the providence of God. These boastful pretensions the Prophet has purposely related as coming from the despot's own mouth, in order to show that they were so many bellows to kindle the judgment of God; for among men this haughtiness could not be endured, and how would not God restrain it?

15. *Shall the axe boast?* He now ridicules more strongly the mad effrontery of the Assyrians in imagining that he could create mountains of gold; for he tells us that the case is the same as if *an axe* or *a hammer* should despise the hand which sets them in motion, and should be proud of their activity, though it is manifest that they have no power of their own to move. But before explaining the subject more fully, I shall touch briefly on the words.

Like the rising up of a rod against him that raiseth it. [167] This second class of the verse is somewhat obscure. The matter is plain enough, but

[167] " ,עף (lo gnetz) `the no-wood;' that which is not wood like itself, but of a quite different and superior nature. The Hebrews have a peculiar way of joining the negative particle לא (lo) to a noun, to signify in a strong manner a total negation of the thing expressed by the noun. ``How hast thou given help כח ללא (lelo choach) to the no-strength? ``And saved the arm, עז לא (lo gnoz), of the no-power? ``How hast thou given counsel חכמה ללא (lelo chochmah) to the no-wisdom? ``That is, to the man totally deprived of strength, power, and wisdom. (Job 26:2, 3.) So here עף לא (lo gnetz) means him who is far from being an inert piece of wood, but is an animated and active being; not an instrument, but an agent.'' --- Lowth

in the form of expression there is some ambiguity, in consequence of which commentators greatly differ. Yet, when I examine the matter closely, the rendering which I have given appears to flow more naturally than the others. "What is this? If a staff rise against the hand of him that raiseth it, and forget that it is wood, what a shocking exhibition will it be!" For it is not uncommon that the particle אֵת, (*eth*) which is the sign of the accusative, should mean *against*; and the copulative ו (*vau*) is often superfluous. We shall thus have a meaning which is not ambiguous, and which agrees with the words of the Prophet. He formerly reproached the Assyrian for ascribing to his schemes and his army the victories which he had gained. He now says, that in this manner he boasts against God, just as if *an axe*, reckoning as nothing the hand of him that cuts, claimed the praise of a workman, or a staff, as if it were not dead wood and without any strength of its own, rose up against him that wielded it.

Hence we learn that men rise up against God, whenever they ascribe to themselves more than is proper, and that in such cases they war not with men but with God himself. Away, then, with those proud and blasphemous expressions, "By my power and wisdom and perseverance I have done and contrived and accomplished these things;"

for the Lord is a jealous God, (Exodus 20:5,)

and does not permit his glory to be given to another!

(Isaiah 42:8;48:11.)

We must attend to those comparisons by which he likens men to instruments; and we must not view it as referring to the universal providence by which all creatures are governed, as some do, who acknowledge that all the creatures are moved by God, because they cannot deny it, but add, that each of them is driven according to its nature, as the sun, the moon, the heavens, and such like. Thus they imagine that man is driven hither and thither by his own choice and by free-will; because God does nothing more than continue that power which he once bestowed at the beginning. Their false explanation amounts to this, that the whole machinery of the world is upheld by the hand of God, but that his providence is not interposed to regulate particular movements. Thus they ascribe to God the rain and the fair weather because he is the Author of nature, but contend that, strictly speaking, God commands nothing, that the rain is produced by vapours, and that fair weather also is produced by its natural causes. But this confused direction, which they leave to God, is hardly the thousandth part of that government which he claims for himself. Justly therefore, does Isaiah show that God presides over individual acts, as they call them, so as to move men, like rods, in whatever way he pleases, to guide their plans, to direct their efforts; and, in a word, to regulate their determinations, in order to inform us that everything depends on his providence, and not on the caprice of wicked men.

It is objected, that it would be absurd to call men *axes* and *swords*, so as

to take away from them will and judgment, and everything that distinguishes them from inanimate creatures, and to make them, not men, but stocks and stones. But the answer is at hand. Though God compares men to stones, it does not follow that they resemble them in all respects. No one thing is exactly like another, but they agree in some points; for as a staff cannot move itself in any direction, and yet is fit for inflicting blows, so wicked men have something which belongs to them by nature, and yet they cannot be moved hither and thither, without being directed by the providence and secret decree of God. This fitness of things, if we may so call it, is no reason why the action should not be ascribed entirely to God alone.

But the question about the will of man is unseasonably introduced on the present occasion. If God controls the purposes of men, and turns their thoughts and exertions to whatever purpose he pleases, men do not therefore cease to form plans and to engage in this or the other undertaking. We must not suppose that there is a violent compulsion, as if God dragged them against their will; but in a wonderful and inconceivable manner he regulates all the movements of men, so that they still have the exercise of their will.

In this passage Isaiah chiefly shows that all the efforts of men are fruitless, if God do not grant them success; and therefore that the Assyrian, even if he had attempted everything, would not have succeeded, if the Lord had not bestowed the victories; and, consequently, that he had no reason for laying claim to the praise of those things in which his success was owing solely to God. This is confirmed by another metaphor, that the lifting up of a staff proceeds from the will of him who moves it, and not from the nature of the wood. [168]

16. *Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness.* He proceeds with the former doctrine, declaring that the Lord will show to the Assyrian how undeservedly he exalts himself, and will throw down his arrogance, in which he foolishly takes delight. As he trusted in his wealth and his forces, Isaiah declares that the Lord will take them away; and he does so under the metaphor of *fatness* and *leanness*. By the word *fatness* he means both riches and warlike power, in which he placed too much confidence; as if he had said, "Everything *fat* and *rich* that he possesses, the Lord will make the whole of it *lean*." It is not uncommon to compare prosperity to *fatness*; for as horses which are too *fat* become refractory, so as to throw the rider or kick when any one comes near them, so among men abundance produces fierceness of disposition, which is subdued by *leanness*

And under his glory he shall kindle a burning. There is great beauty in the comparison, that *a fire will be laid under his glory*; for it means, that the greater the splendor of his prosperity, so much the more abundant will be the fuel for the conflagration. Yet it likewise shows that he will be utterly reduced to nothing; as if one were to cut down a tree from the roots, or overturn a house from the foundation. If nothing more than the branches

[168] Like the burning of a fire. — Eng. Ver.

of a tree be cut down, it quickly sprouts again; or if the roof of a house be consumed by fire, the other parts of it remain uninjured. He therefore leaves him nothing, but asserts that he will be brought down by utter destruction.

As the burning of a fire. [169] The particle *as*, which points out the comparison, does not mean that the language is metaphorical, but rather that the burning will be such as to consume utterly the glory of the Assyrian.

17. *And the light of Israel shall be for a fire.* There is an elegant allusion to that burning by which he threatened that he would consume the Assyrians. In *fire* there are two things, light and heat. As the Lord consumes the enemies by his heat, so he enlightens the godly by his light. It is very customary that God is sometimes called *a devouring fire*, (Deuteronomy 4:24, 9:3; Hebrews 12:29,) and sometimes, in a different point of view, he is called *light*, (Isaiah 60:20; Micah 7:8,) because his power produces contrary effects on the godly and the ungodly. When he shines on the godly, he imparts life and nourishment to them, but he consumes and destroys the ungodly. In a word, while he threatens destruction to the Assyrians, he likewise brings comfort to the godly; and he does so in two ways, first, because they will see that God revenges the injuries which they have received, and, secondly, that they will be cheered by his light, and will thus receive a new life.

And his Holy One for a flame. What that *light* is he states plainly, and without a metaphor, when he adds, *his Holy One,* so that it is unnecessary to make a more lengthened exposition. The meaning is, that he determines to protect that people which he hath chosen, and which he hath separated from the rest of the nations to be a peculiar people to himself.

And it shall devour its thorns and briers in one day. He now shows that the favor of God, which shines in Israel, will be like a fire to consume enemies. *In one day* means, that he will burn them with a sudden and unexpected conflagration. It denotes an uncommon and dreadful burning, which usually overtakes the wicked suddenly, when they think that all is well with them, and that danger is at a great distance. He next shows that, whatever defences they may put forth, they will be like *tow*, which, as soon as it is set on fire, will instantly be consumed.

18. *And shall consume the glory of his forest.* He goes on with the same comparison of a *burning*, and declares that the fire will consume both the highest and the lowest, and will leave nothing uninjured. It is possible that a fire might destroy the higher parts of a building, and might leave the lower parts unaffected.

And of his fruitful field. I do not think that כרמל (*Carmel*) is here a proper name, but rather an appellative, denoting a rich and fertile soil; for to say that *Carmel* was held as belonging to the dominion of the king of Assyria, would have been inadmissible. The meaning therefore is, that not only will destruction overtake his *forests*, but the corn will be consumed by the same fire; for it will not only range over the heights, but will penetrate into the

[169] And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few. (Margin, Heb. number.) — Eng. Ver.

lowest places.

From the soul even to the flesh. This comparison is taken from man. As man consists of a *body* and a *soul*, so each part of him is liable to separate diseases. It frequently happens that, when the *soul* is healthy, the *body* is diseased; and often the reverse takes place; but when both are unhealthy at the same time, the case is most dangerous. By this comparison, therefore, he threatens that the Assyrians will have nothing safe or sound, but that they will be devoted to utter destruction, because they will perish from *the flesh* even to the *soul*; not that *souls* are mortal, but because the vengeance of God will fall upon them also. This is truly dreadful; for the design of chastisements is,

that the spirit may be saved, though the flesh be destroyed,
(1 Corinthians 5:5;)

but when *the spirit* also is involved in the destruction, what can be said or imagined that is more miserable? The flame only scorches the godly, but does not consume them as it consumes the ungodly, in whom it finds nothing but fuel fit for burning.

And it shall be as the fainting of a standard-bearer. There is an allusion in the words of the Prophet, which cannot be conveyed in another language. The meaning is the same as in the other comparisons, that there will be utter destruction, like the complete rout of an army when the standard has been taken. When the ensigns have been taken, it is commonly followed by a great slaughter; and when historians describe a fearful carnage, they tell us that the ensigns were taken. He does not threaten these things against the Assyrians on their own account, that they may receive advantage from the warning or may be led to repentance, but to yield consolation to the godly, that they may not think that the Assyrians will pass unpunished when they raged so fiercely against the people of God, or entertain fears either that the Lord has forgotten his promise, or that he cannot frustrate their designs. If the Prophet had not put them on their guard, many scruples of this kind might have arisen in their minds.

19. *And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be a number.* [170] When he adds that *the remnant of them will be a number*, he employs a Hebrew idiom to express that *they will be few*; and thus he only confirms the former statement, that the devastation produced, after the calamity which God will bring on the Assyrians, will be so great that there will be no difficulty in counting them.

That a child may number them. He goes so far as to say, that they will be so few that those who are left of them may be counted even by *a child*; for *children* have difficulty in counting as far as three or four. Accordingly, the kingdom of the Assyrians was formerly like some vast *forest*; but when *the trees* have been hewn and thrown down, those which are left are few, and

[170] That is, the passage may either be rendered, Though thy people of Israel be as the sand of the sea; or, Though thy people, O Israel, be as the sand of sea. — Ed.

scattered at great distances from each other.

20 *It shall be in that day.* Returning now to the elect people, he describes the result of the chastisement which was at hand. As it is painful and disagreeable to us to endure calamities and afflictions, and as we refuse them so far as lies in our power, the Lord points out to us the result of them, that we may be taught to consider the design of them, and may thus bear more patiently: as if he had said, "You would wish that the Assyrians were driven to a great distance from you, and that you could live in comfort and safety. But consider, that this chastisement is as necessary as medicine would be for curing your diseases; for you do not acknowledge the power of God, and you withdraw your confidence from him to give it to wicked men. It is truly wretched to place the hope of salvation in enemies, and to rely on those who aim at nothing but your destruction." In like manner, Israel relied sometimes on the Assyrians and sometimes on the Egyptians.

But shall stay upon the Lord We ought not to despise this compensation made for the diminished numbers of the people, that the small portion which survived the calamity learned to place their hope in God. Hence we see more clearly how necessary it was that God should chastise Israel. The mitigation which he holds out, that still a remnant is left, among whom the true worship of God is maintained, is fitted to yield very high consolation.

In truth. This phrase is not superfluous; for until the Lord had afflicted them, all wished to be accounted the children of Abraham — all made profession of the faith, and indiscriminately worshipped God; but it was mere pretense. Isaiah therefore reproves this hypocrisy, and says that their hope will afterwards be true and sincere when they shall have been cleansed from impostures; for although they very haughtily boasted of their confidence in God, still they continued to place their confidence in the assistance of the Assyrians. Consequently, when they shall be chastised by their hand, they will learn to trust in God alone, and will withdraw their heart from the assistance of men. Hence infer that we cannot place our confidence in God unless we altogether withhold our heart from creatures; for we ought to rely on God alone in such a manner as not to think it a hardship to renounce all other grounds of confidence. Where this perfect confidence does not exist, there is no room for *truth*; for *the heart is divided and double.* (Psalm 12:2.)

21. *A remnant shall return.* This is a confirmation of the former statement. Yet in the words שאר ישוב, (*Shear Yashub,*) *a remnant shall return*, there appears to be an allusion to that passage in which Isaiah's son was called *Shear-jashub.* (Isaiah 7:3.) In our observations on it, we stated that this peculiar name was given him in reference to the event, that it might be regarded as a pledge of the future deliverance concerning which his father prophesied. It was necessary that the Jews should be confirmed in various ways, that they might be convinced that the Lord would at length bring them back. This is also the design of what he immediately adds —

To the mighty God; that is, to him whom the people, after having returned

from their former apostasy, will acknowledge to be the guardian of their salvation. This attribute, *mighty*, is ascribed to God for the sake of the occasion on which the words were used. He might have thought it sufficient to have expressed *power* by the name אל, (*El*,) *God*, which also signifies *mighty*; but he chose likewise to add to it גבור, (*gibbor*,) that is, *strong* or *mighty*, in order to excite the people to greater confidence. How was it possible for the people to betake themselves to the Assyrians and Egyptians, but because they did not think that God was sufficient for them? This is the source of all evils, when we are not fully convinced that in God is everything that can be desired for our salvation.

22. *For though thy people be.* He casts down hypocrites from foolish confidence; for they reckoned it enough to be the descendants of holy Abraham according to the flesh, and, therefore, on the sole ground of their birth, they wished to be accounted holy. Yet he exhorts the godly to patience, that they may learn to await calmly that calamity and diminution of their number, lest, when it took place, it should be unexpected, and give them uneasiness. He therefore comforts them, that they may not be grieved at so great desolation; for the Lord will at least collect *a remnant* of it.

The consumption decreed. כלה (*chalah*) means *to finish*, and it means also *to consume*. The latter is more appropriate. He calls this diminution of the people a *consumption*, and one that is *completed*; for he employs exaggerated language, the import of which is, that they were not far from utter extermination, there being very few that were saved.

The word *Israel* may be taken either in the genitive case, *of Israel*, or in the vocative case, *O Israel*, [171] so that in this way he addresses the patriarch Jacob, or all the godly under his name. But it is of little importance, for the meaning is the same, in whichsoever of these ways it be taken; and therefore it may be read in the genitive case, *of Israel*. Yet I am more inclined to view it as a proper name, to denote the true, and not the spurious Israelite. The bold address to the patriarch has a striking effect; for God, addressing a dead man, declares to the living that what he had formerly promised, (Genesis 13:16, 22:17,) that the posterity of Abraham would be *like the sand of the sea*, did not apply to a promiscuous multitude, which had apostatized from godliness, but that there would be a kind of interruption in a corrupt nation, till shortly afterwards it should be renewed.

Overflowing with righteousness, or *overflowing righteousness.* [172] Another consolation is added, that this very small company *will overflow righteousness*. When we see the Church distressed by such heavy calamities, that we think that it cannot be far from destruction, we are in danger of giving way to despondency, and of entertaining doubts about the mercy of God. Those whose minds are impressed with just views of the judgment of God, feel that this is the severest of all temptations. It was therefore necessary that godly

[171] Shall overflow with (Heb. in, or, among) righteousness — Eng. Ver.

[172] The Author's version is, because a consumption and consummation will the Lord Jehovah of hosts make. — Ed.

minds should be fortified against it, that they might soothe their grief by pondering the benefit which would result from this calamity. The benefit was, that *righteousness would overflow* the whole world like a river; and he had formerly noticed this, when he said (Isaiah 10:20) that *the remnant would trust in God in truth*

The word *righteousness* is explained in various ways. Some refer it to the preaching of the gospel, because by means of it, as Paul says,

the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, (Romans 1:17;)

and by the agency of the Apostles, who were a small remnant of the Jews, it spread over the whole world. (Mark 16:15.) Others choose rather to view it as meaning that that *consumption* was an evidence and proof of the *righteousness* of God in inflicting punishments so severe on his own people. But I prefer a more general exposition of it, namely, "This *consumption* will be sufficient to fill the whole world with *righteousness*. The *remnant* which shall survive it, though small, will be sufficient to cause such rivers of *righteousness* to flow, that the whole world shall be *overflowed* by them."

23. *For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption.* This repetition again wounds the self-complacency of those who proudly despised God. It was almost incredible that the Jews, to whom so many promises had been given, and with whom God had made *an everlasting covenant*, should perish, as it were, in an instant; and it appeared to be even inconsistent with the unchangeable nature of God. The Prophet therefore declares that *the Lord* is the author of this *consumption*, in order to repress the pride of wicked men, who, relying on their present prosperity, thought that they were beyond all danger, and, swelling with that confidence, ridiculed all threats and warnings. "God," says he, "will reduce your land to a desert, so that in the very midst it will be desolate, and will resemble a wilderness."

In the midst of all the land. By *the midst of the land* he means its very heart, that is, its most fortified and best defended places. Some think that the word נהרצה (*neheratzah*) is an adjective, *determined*; but for my part I view it as a substantive, *consummation*; [173] and in this sense it is used by Daniel and in other passages. (Daniel 9:27.)

Paul quotes this passage, (Romans 9:28,) but in somewhat different words from what the Prophet uses; for he follows the ordinary translation which at that time was generally used. Though Paul wrote correctly and faithfully, and in accordance with the Prophet's real meaning, yet the words which he quotes from the Greek translation have led many to depart from what the Prophet actually meant. The Greek translator having used the word λόγος, (*logos*,) that is, *a discourse*, many have entered into discussions about the Gospel, and have said that it denotes the repeal of the law, because it puts an end to ceremonies and figures, and therefore that it is a short and concise *discourse*, by which we are freed from the burden of the law under which the people groaned. But that has nothing to do with the Prophet's meaning; for

[173] After the manner of Egypt. — Eng. Ver.

here he says that the *consumption* is a *diminution*, by which the people will be almost ruined. Paul's design is not different, and the Greek translators meant nothing else; for by λόγος (*logos*) they meant what is expressed by the Hebrew word דבר, (*dabar*.) Though the Prophet does not make use of the word דבר, (*dabar*,) yet the word which he uses means *a thing consumed*, that is, *consumption*, and the meaning of both words is the same. In short, Paul there repeats (Romans 9:28) what Isaiah had said in this passage about the future *consumption* of the people, and shows that this prediction was chiefly fulfilled in his own time, when the Jews were cut off from the kingdom of God on account of their ingratitude, and but *a small remnant* (Isaiah 1:9, 10:22) was preserved.

24. *Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts.* He goes on with the same consolation, which belongs to the godly alone, who at that time, undoubtedly, were few in number. A great number of persons gloried in the name of God, and wished to be accounted his people; but there were few who actually performed what they professed in words; and, therefore, he does not address all without reserve, but only those who needed consolation. The kingdom having been destroyed, they might entertain fears about themselves and their affairs, and might judge of their own condition from that of others, and therefore it was necessary to comfort them. This distinction ought to be observed, for otherwise it would be inconsistent to address to the same persons statements so different.

And shall lift up his staff against thee in the way of Egypt [174] He adds a ground of consolation, namely, that that calamity will be nothing else than *the lifting up of a rod* to chastise, but not to destroy them. The preposition ב (*beth*) denotes resemblance. דרך (*derech*) means *a pattern*, and therefore I render it, *after the pattern of Egypt*. As if he had said, "Though the Assyrian be cruel, and in many ways aim at thy destruction, yet he shall only wound, he shall not slay thee." He therefore mentioned the pattern of the Egyptian bondage, which was indeed very wretched, but yet was not deadly. (Exodus 1:14, 12:51.) It is customary with the Prophets, amidst perplexity or disorder, to remind the people to contemplate that deliverance by which God miraculously rescued them from the hands of Pharaoh, who was a most cruel tyrant. The meaning therefore is, "As the Lord was at that time victorious, and destroyed the Egyptians who had leagued for your destruction, so now he will quickly vanquish the Assyrians."

Others render it, *in the way of Egypt*, because the Assyrians made war against the Jews on account of the Egyptians. But that exposition cannot be admitted; and if we carefully examine the matter, it will be found that there is none more appropriate than that which I have proposed, and which is also approved by the most learned commentators. There are two clauses which form a contrast; the oppression which the Egyptians laid upon them, and the calamity which should be inflicted soon afterwards by the Assyrians. "As the

[174] The indignation shall cease, and mine anger. — Eng. Ver.

oppression of the Egyptians was not deadly, so neither will the oppression of the Assyrians be. You have had experience of my strength and power against Pharaoh, and so will you find it on Sennacherib." If we did not explain the clauses in this way, they would not agree with each other.

25. *But yet a little while.* He means not only the siege of Jerusalem, when Sennacherib surrounded it with a numerous army, (2 Kings 18:17,) but likewise the rest of the calamities, when Jerusalem was overthrown, (2 Kings 25:4,) the Temple razed, and the inhabitants taken prisoners; for against those dreadful calamities it was necessary that the godly should be fortified by these promises. This ought to be carefully observed; for if we neglect it, as other commentators do, we shall not be able to see how the statements agree. Accordingly, the captivity of the people might be called a *consumption*; for Babylon was like a grave, and banishment was like death. But when the danger was immediate and urgent, and Sennacherib attacked them with his army, and various straits were felt by them in that siege, this consolation was needful; for Judea seemed to be utterly ruined, and to outward appearance no hope of safety was left.

My fury and indignation shall be spent. [175] The consolation corresponds to this state of things. "The Lord will spare thee. For a time, indeed, he will delay, and will keep his assistance as it were concealed; but he will at length rescue thee, and will revenge thy enemies whom he has determined utterly to destroy." If it be thought better to interpret כלה (*chalah*) as meaning to *consume* or *spend*, then he says that *he spends his anger*, in the same way that we speak of *spending* years and our whole life; that is, "I will cherish my anger until I completely destroy the Assyrians." But the word *finish* brings out the meaning more fully; as if he had said, "until I have discharged all my anger." This is the destruction which he also threatens elsewhere (Isaiah 52:1) to the *uncircumcised*; for when the hope of mercy has been taken away, he executes his judgment against the ungodly.

26. *And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge for him.* Here Isaiah makes use of the word *scourge*, and not *rod*, meaning that the Lord will treat the enemies much more harshly and severely than they had treated the Jews. He threatens them with extermination, and makes it more evident by two examples; first, that of the Midianites, (Judges 7:25,) who were cut off by a dreadful slaughter in the valley of *Oreb*, which was so named from their leader, and, secondly, that of the Egyptians, whom the Lord, when they pursued after his people, sank in the Red Sea. (Exodus 14:27, 28.) In the former passage, he refers to a narrative which was somewhat more recent, and in the latter to one that was more ancient.

Hence we infer that the Lord hath displayed his power in defending his Church, in order that, when our affairs are in the most desperate state, we may remain steadfastly in the faith, and, relying on his grace, we still may cherish a pleasing hope. By means and in ways that are unexpected he often

[175] Because of the anointing. — Eng. Ver.

delivers his Church, as he did by the hands of Gideon and Moses. We ought always, therefore, to call to remembrance those benefits, that we may be excited more and more to confidence and perseverance.

Hence we ought also to infer that all the afflictions which we endure are the Lord's rods with which he chastises us; and yet he does not permit Satan or his agents to inflict deadly chastisements upon us. On the other hand, an awful destruction awaits our enemies, as we see in the Midianites and Egyptians. It is therefore no small consolation that, when we compare our condition with theirs, we see them, for a time indeed, in all the madness of joy and of wickedness insulting the children of God, but at the same time learn what a dreadful sentence has been pronounced against them; for they are devoted to deadly and everlasting destruction.

27. *And it shall come to pass in that day.* It is uncertain whether he now speaks of the deliverance which took place under Zerubbabel, (2 Chronicles 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:2,) or of that wonderful overthrow of Sennacherib, (2 Kings 19:35,) when he besieged Jerusalem with a huge army. This latter opinion is almost universally preferred; and indeed it appears to be supported by what follows, for immediately afterwards he gives a description of the country, and enumerates the chief places through which Sennacherib should conduct his army, till he arrived at Jerusalem itself, so that there appeared to be nothing at all to hinder him from taking possession of the city. With this opinion I partly agree, but I extend the prediction farther.

Isaiah intends to comfort the godly who were involved in the present distress. It might be thought that the promise failed, and that the calamities which immediately followed were utterly at variance with it. For instance, if the Lord promise to give me food for next year, and yet leave me altogether destitute of it, what faith can I have in a promise so distant, if the Lord do not rescue me from the present distress? Thus, the Lord's promise, in which he had said that he would deliver his people from Babylon, and would continually assist them, may be thought to have failed, when it was exposed to the jaws of that huge wild beast. With the view of meeting this objection, the Prophet includes both promises, that the Lord will be the guardian of his people, till at length he deliver them from death. Some limit it to the slaughter (2 Kings 19:35) of Sennacherib's army; but as Isaiah promises *the loosing*, or *breaking of the yoke*, I have no doubt that he describes deliverance from captivity. Yet he confirms the promise, that God will not only rescue them from Babylon, but will also aid them against the besieging army of the tyrant, whom he will not suffer to go beyond what has been threatened.

That his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, He describes that tyranny in two ways, in order to illustrate more fully how great was the blessing of deliverance. If it be thought best to refer it to Sennacherib, he had not laid on the Jews so grievous a yoke. The people paid only some tribute, as we learn from sacred history. (2 Kings 23:33; 2 Chronicles 36:3.) Why then has he employed two names

in describing this tyranny? It may be pleaded that he had in his eye the approaching danger; for that tyrant, like a huge beast of prey, had devoured the whole of Judea by his voraciousness, and had oppressed them to such an extent, that it appeared to be almost impossible that his *yoke* could ever be taken off. But I have already explained the view which I prefer, that he describes the uninterrupted course of the favor of God down to the time of redemption.

And the yoke shall be destroyed from the face of the anointing. [176] The phrase, *the face of the anointing*, is explained by some to mean the *fatness* with which *the yoke* is besmeared. But that interpretation is too farfetched. Others more correctly view שמן (*shamen*) as bearing its ordinary signification, and as denoting *anointing* or *oil.* He again reminds them of Christ, and shows that through his kindness they will be delivered from that tyranny. *Anointing* is the name given to that kingdom which the Lord had set apart for himself, and which he therefore wished to keep unspotted and undiminished. When the Prophets intend to applaud the majesty of that kingdom, they speak of the *anointing* which the Lord had bestowed on it as a distinguishing mark, because it was a type of Christ. (Psalm 45:7, 89:20; Isaiah 61:1; Daniel 9:24.) Though God established the rest of the kingdoms, still they were in some respects profane; this ranked above them as holy and sacred, because the Lord reigned over Judea in a peculiar manner, and because under this figure of a kingdom he held up Christ to their view. For this reason, also, it was promised to Solomon that his throne would be everlasting. (2 Samuel 7:13; 1 Chronicles 22:10; Psalm 89:5.) As to the interpretation given by some, that שמן (*shamen*) denotes the king himself, not only is it too farfetched, but it conveys no solid instruction.

The Prophet therefore points out the means of overthrowing that tyranny; for it appeared as if there were no reason to believe that the yoke of so powerful a tyrant would be broken. He shows that this will arise from the heavenly anointing of that kingdom, that all may perceive that this benefit depends on the power of Christ, and not on the ability of man or on chance.

28. *He is come to Aiath.* The siege of the holy city being now at hand, Isaiah sets before their eyes the whole of Sennacherib's march, that the hearts of the godly, by long and careful study of it, may remain steadfast. This delineation was powerfully calculated to allay their fears, when godly men saw that the Assyrians did not move a step but by the appointment of God; for by the mouth of the Prophet he had given a lively description of the whole of that march. [177] It is unnecessary to spend much time in explaining the relative position of the places here named, for it is enough if we understand that Sennacherib marched through those places of which the Jews had been

[176] "Here is a lively description of the march of Sennacherib's army, not that related below in chapter 36:1-22, but in his first invasion of Judea, when he passed Jerusalem to the northward on his way to Egypt; for so the places here mentioned indicate, stretching in order from the north to the west and south of that capital." — Rosenmuller.

[177] They are gone over the passage. — Eng. Ver.

informed.

At Michmash he will lay up his baggage. The words which we render, *He will lay up his baggage* or *armor*, are translated by some, *He hath made a muster*; for פקד (*pakad*) signifies also to *number.* I do not dislike this interpretation, but prefer the former; for I understand the Prophet to mean that the Assyrian *will lay up his armor*, that is, the provisions, and the rest of the implements of war, *in Michmash.* It is the custom of warriors not to lead forward an army without providing the means of support, which they *lay up* in a safe and convenient place, that the army may be supplied out of it with all that is needful. Under the word *baggage* or *arms*, he includes not only *darts* and *swords*, but all the supplies and provisions of war. The meaning of the word כלי (*cheli*) is extensive, and includes every kind of implements, and thus resembles the word (*vasa*) which denotes *vessels* in the Latin language.

29. *They have crossed the ford.* [178] Some understand by this the passage of the Jordan, but I do not know if it could be *crossed* by a *ford* in that quarter. [179] He describes how great will be the terror when they hear of the approach of the Assyrian, that the whole country will be struck with terror and alarm, so that the Assyrian will subdue it without any difficulty. When such dread has seized their hearts, they will freely surrender at the first attack of the enemy, so that the conquerors will be allowed to ravage at their pleasure. He passes from the singular to the plural number, because he speaks sometimes of the king and sometimes of the whole army.

Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. He mentions *Ramah* in preference to the rest, because it was the nearest town; and he describes the flight of the inhabitants of some towns, as if the mere report had terrified them to such a degree that they gave up their country into the enemy's hand. After having spoken of so great dismay, he adds. —

30. *Neigh,* [180] *O daughter of Gallim.* By the word *neigh* he denotes the howling and cries which will be heard at a distance. It is very common, in the Hebrew language, to call cities *daughters.* He says that the howling will be so great that it will be heard even by the neighboring cities; for at *Laish* will be heard the groanings which will be uttered in *Anathoth*

31. *Madmenah is removed.* In exaggerated language he describes that city to have been shaken to such a degree, as if it had been *removed* to another place. This relates to the disorderly movements of a people in flight; as if he had said that the inhabitants of that city were thrown into as great a commotion as if the city had been razed to its foundations.

The inhabitants of Gebim have gathered themselves. This may be ex-

[178] "They have passed the strait. The strait here mentioned is that of Michmas, a very narrow passage between two sharp hills or rocks, (see 1 Samuel 14:4, 5,) where a great army might have been opposed with advantage by a very inferior force. The enemies having passed the strait without opposition, shows that all thoughts of making a stand in the open country were given up, and that their only resource was in the strength of the city." — Lowth.

[179] Lift up thy voice. (Heb. Cry shrill with thy voice.) — Eng. Ver.

[180] "Yet this day. One day longer shall the Assyrian be permitted to remain in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and to affright the daughter of Zion." — Stock.

plained to mean that they are so terrified that they crowd together in a body. Others understand by it, that they rush out in a disorderly manner, as if there were not room for a free passage.

32. *Yet a day.* [181] Some interpret this, that the Assyrian will yet remain *one day in Nob*, which was a village contiguous to Jerusalem, as Jerome and others declare. But I rather agree with those who think that it means, that he will have a great part of the day before him when he halts there, in order to make preparations for besieging Jerusalem on the following day. He intends to describe the rapid march of the Assyrian, and how near Jerusalem was to utter destruction; as if he had said, that he had but a small part of the journey to perform, and that before *the day* was ended, he would arrive at that city.

He shall shake the hand. This contributes still more to show their terror; for Sennacherib, having conquered the whole country, will threaten Jerusalem, as if he could storm it by the slightest expression of his will.

Against the mountain of the daughter of Zion. By a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) he includes the whole city under the name of *the mountain*, because that part was higher, and commanded a view of the other quarters of the city. From this confidence of the tyrant, he shows that Jerusalem was not far from utter destruction; for the whole country, and even the city, was struck with such terror that none ventured to oppose him. By these details, therefore, the Prophet intended to give a more impressive view of the kindness of God, that it ought to be ascribed to the extraordinary favor and goodness of God, and not to human aid, of which there was none, that Jerusalem was preserved, as if a sheep had been rescued from the jaws of a lion.

Behold, the Lord Jehovah of hosts. Almost all explain this passage as referring to the Assyrians. (2 Kings 19:35.) They think that the Prophet threatens against them that slaughter with which the Lord destroyed them, after that they had besieged Jerusalem. As if he had spoken in this manner: The Assyrian will indeed be elated with such pride, that as soon as he has seen Jerusalem, he will think that it is in his power. All being struck with such dismay at his approach, that some shall flee and others shall freely surrender themselves, he will imagine that all are subdued under him; but the Lord will quickly reverse his condition, and *lop off those lofty branches*

But for my own part, when I examine closely the whole passage, and especially what he adds soon afterwards about *Lebanon*, and the consolation which immediately follows, I think that this passage ought to be referred to the Jews themselves. Isaiah therefore proceeds, in my opinion, to threaten the calamities which awaited the people. As if he had said, "Not only will he come to *Nob*, but he will spread devastation far and wide over the whole country. Everything in it that is excellent and lofty, he will completely waste and destroy, in the same manner as if one should cut off branches from a

[181] See page 372.

tree or cut down a tree from the root."

This interpretation is confirmed by the following chapter, in which the Prophet offers consolation against that calamity; for the consolation agrees with this verse, and is added as an appropriate remedy for soothing grief. Nor do I attach any importance to the division of the chapter, which is often very absurd, and which perplexes the whole of the Prophet's meaning. I think, therefore, that we ought to connect that consolation with these verses, as if there had been no such division.

34. *And he will cut down the thick places of the forest with iron.* There is no difficulty in explaining this metaphor, for it is plain enough that by tall and high trees is denoted all that is powerful, excellent, or lofty. Thus he foretells the destruction and ruin of Judea, which he compares to the *cutting down of a forest*; by which he means that there is nothing so valuable that the enemies will not destroy it, till they have stripped the whole land of its ornaments.

And Lebanon will fall violently. He mentions *Lebanon*, because that mountain, as we all know, was highly celebrated for fruitful and highly valuable trees. Now, if he had been speaking of the Assyrians, it would not have been appropriate to introduce the destruction of *Lebanon*. Hence we infer that the Prophet, in this passage, again threatens the Jews; and this agrees well with the introduction of the discourse, for it begins with a word which calls attention, *Behold.*

Chapter 11

CHAPTER 11

Isaiah Chapter 11:1-16

1. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

1. Sed prodibit virga ex trunco Isai; et surculus de radicibus ejus fructus edet.

2. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

2. Et requiescet super eum Spiritus Iehovae, spiritus sapientiae et intelligentiae, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et timoris Iehovae.

3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

3. Et sagacem illum reddet in timore Iehovae; non secundum aspectum oculorum suorum judicabit, neque ex auditu aurium suarum arguet.

4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

4. Nam judicabit in justitia pauperes, et in aequitate arguet mansuetis terrae; et percutiet terram virga oris sui, et spiritu labiorum suorum interficiet impium.

5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

5. Et erit justitia balteus lumborum ejus, et fides balteus renum ejus.

6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and

a little child shall lead them.

6. Habitabit lupus cum agno, et pardus cum hoedo accubabit; vitulus, et leo, et pecus pingue pariter; et puer parvus reget eos.

7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

7. Vacca et ursus pascentur; simul accubabunt foetus eorum. Et leo, quasi bos, comedet paleas.

8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

8. Et oblectabitur infans super foramine aspidis; et super speluncam cerastis qui ablactatus est manum suam mittet.

9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

9. Non nocebunt, neque injuriam inferent in toto monte sanctitatis meae; quoniam impleta erit terra scientia Iehovae, tanquam aquis mare operientibus.

10. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

10. Et erit in die illa, Radix Isai, quae stabit in signum populorum, requiretur a Gentibus, et erit requies ejus gloria.

11. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

11. Et erit in die illa, adjiciet Dominus rursus manum suum ad possidendas reliquias populi sui, quae residuae erunt ab Assur, et ab AEgypto, a Parthia, ab Arabia, ab AEthiopia, a Perside, a Chaldaea, ab Hamath, et ab insulis maris.

12. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

12. Et levabit signum Gentibus, congregabitque ejectos Israel, et dispersiones Iuda congregabit a quatuor plagis terrae.

13. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

13. Et abscedet aemulatio Ephraim, et hostes Iuda excidentur. Ephraim non aemulabitur Iuda, nec Iuda anget Ephraim.

14. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

14. Involabunt autem in humeros Philistinorum ad occidentem; diripient

pariter filios orientis, AEdom et Moab missio manus eorum, et filii Ammon obedientia eorum.

15. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry-shod.

15. Et in nihilum rediget Iehova linguam maris AEgypti; et eriget manum suam super fluvium in fortitudine venti sui; et percutiet illum in septem rivis, et faciet calcari cum calceamentis.

16. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

16. Et erit semita reliquiis populi ejus, quae residuae erunt ab Assur, quemadmodum fuit Israel, in die qua ascendit e terra AEgypti.

1. *But there shall come forth a rod.* As the description of such dreadful calamities might terrify the godly, and give them reason for despair, it was necessary to hold out consolation; for when the kingdom was destroyed, cities thrown down, and desolation spread over the whole country, there might have been nothing left but grief and lamentation; and therefore they might have tottered and fallen, or been greatly discouraged, if the Lord had not provided for them this consolation. He therefore declares what the Lord will afterwards do, and in what manner he will restore that kingdom.

He pursues the metaphor which he employed towards the conclusion of the former chapter; for he had said that Jerusalem would be destroyed, as if *a forest were* consumed by a single conflagration. (Isaiah 10:33,34.) Its future desolation would be like that of a country formerly covered with forests, when the trees had been cut down, and nothing could be seen but ashes. That those things which are contrasted may answer to each other, he says, that *out of the stock will come forth a branch,* which will grow into a tree, and spread its branches and fruits far and wide. I have therefore preferred translating גזע (*gezang*) *a dry stock*, rather than *a root*, though it makes little difference as to the meaning, but the former expresses more fully what the Prophet meant, namely, that though *the stock* be dry, *the branch which shall spring* from it shall be more excellent than all the forests.

Hence we infer that this prediction applies solely to the person of Christ; for till he came no such *branch* arose. It certainly cannot be applied to Hezekiah or Josiah, who, from their very infancy, were brought up in the expectation of occupying a throne. Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:8) did not attain the thousandth part of that elevated rank which the Prophet extols. We see, therefore, that to the wretched and almost ruined Jews, consolation was held out in the Messiah alone, and that their hope was held in suspense till he appeared. At the time of his appearance, there would have been no hope that the kingdom would be erected and restored, if this promise had not been added; for the family of David appeared to be completely extinct.

On this account he does not call him *David*, but *Jesse*; because the rank of that family had sunk so low, that it appeared to be not a royal family, but that of a mean peasant, such as the family of *Jesse* was, when David was unexpectedly called to the government of the kingdom. (1 Samuel 16:1; 2 Samuel 7:8.) So then, having sustained this calamity and lost its ancient renown, it is denominated by the Prophet the family of *Jesse*, because that family had no superiority above any other. Accordingly, I think that here, and not towards the conclusion of the former chapter, the consolation begins.

Amidst such frightful desolation they might doubt who should be their deliverer. He therefore promises that one *will spring* even out of a *dry trunk*; and he continues, as I mentioned a little before, the same metaphor of *a forest*, because it is far more beautiful than if he had said in plain language that the Messiah would come. Having threatened that the forest would be entirely cut down, he adds, that still *a branch* will arise out of it, to restore the abundance and magnificence of the consumed forest; that is, Christ, who should be the deliverer of the people. How low his beginning was, it is unnecessary to explain. Undoubtedly, he was so far from having anything splendid or attractive, that with the exception of his birth, everything, to the view of the flesh, was inconsistent with the character of the Redeemer. Even his birth was almost obscured; for who would have thought that a poor *carpenter* (Mark 6:3) was descended from a royal family? Again, where was Christ born, and how had he been brought up? In short, his whole life having been mean and even contemptible, he suffered a most disgraceful death, with which he had to begin his kingdom. Yet he grew to an immeasurable height, like a large tree from a small and feeble seed, as he himself shows, (Matthew 13:31, 32; Mark 4:32,) and as we see by daily examples; for in the uninterrupted progress of his kingdom the same things must happen as were seen in his person.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. He now begins to speak of Christ plainly and without a figure; for it was enough to have represented the consolation under that figure, in order that the full contrast between the burning of the wood and its springing up anew might be made manifest. Two states of the people are described by him; for, after having explained the calamity, he next added the hope of restoration, though the commencement of it was from a slender *branch*. But now he plainly shows what will be the nature of the redemption, and what will be the condition of Christ and of his kingdom.

Some think that this should rather be viewed as referring to Hezekiah; but how groundless that opinion is we have already shown; [182] for when he was born, David had still a flourishing reputation, and the rank of royalty belonged to his descendants; and Hezekiah was very far from attaining that greatness which is shortly afterwards described. Now, hence we infer that the spiritual kingdom of Christ was formerly promised to the ancient people,

[182] And shall make him of quick understanding. (Heb. scent, or smell.) — Eng. Ver.

because his whole strength, power, and majesty, is here made to consist in the gifts of *the Spirit*. Although Christ was not deficient in gifts of this kind, yet as he took upon him our flesh, it was necessary that he should be enriched with them, that we might afterwards be made partakers of all blessings of which otherwise we are destitute; for *out of his fullness*, as John says, *we must draw as from a fountain*. (John 1:16; 7:37, 38.)

The Spirit of the Lord We must keep in view what I mentioned a little ago, that this refers to Christ's human nature; because he could not be enriched with the gift and grace of the Father, except so far as he became man. Besides, as he came down to us, so he received the gifts of *the Spirit*, that he might bestow them upon us. And this is the *anointing* from which he receives the name of *Christ*, which he imparts to us; for why are we called *Christians*, but because he admits us to his fellowship, by distributing to us out of his fullness *according to the measure* (Ephesians 4:7) of undeserved liberality? And undoubtedly this passage does not so much as teach us what Christ is in himself, as what he received from the Father, that he might enrich us with his wealth.

The spirit of wisdom and understanding. Though it is not necessary to bestow great attention on single words, yet if any person wish to draw a slight distinction between *wisdom* and *understanding*, I consider it to be this, that the word *wisdom* comprehends generally all that relates to the regulation of the life, and that *understanding* is added for the sake of explaining it; for if we are endowed with this *wisdom*, we shall have sagacity enough. *Counsel* means that judgment by which we can thread our way through intricate affairs; for *understanding* would not be sufficient, if there were not also *counsel*, that we might be able to act with caution in doubtful matters. The word *might* is well enough known. *Knowledge* differs little from *understanding*; except that it relates more to the act of knowing, and thus declares what has taken place. *The fear of the Lord* means a sincere desire to worship God.

The Prophet does not here enumerate all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as some have thought. Out of this passage the Papists have foolishly and ignorantly drawn their sevenfold grace, and some of the ancients fell into a similar blunder. He enumerates only six kinds; but they have added a seventh out of their own head. But as one error commonly follows another, they have chosen to limit the gifts of *the Spirit* to the number seven, although in other parts of Scripture (John 14:17; 2 Timothy 1:7) he receives numerous and lofty commendations drawn from the variety of the effects which he produces. Besides, it is very evident that it is through the kindness of Christ (Galatians 5:22, 23) that we are partakers of other blessings than those which are here enumerated, of meekness, chastity, sobriety, truth, and holiness; for these proceed from none else than from Christ. He does not mention, therefore, all the gifts which were bestowed on Christ, for that was unnecessary; but only shows briefly that Christ came not empty-handed, but well supplied with all gifts, that he might enrich us with them.

If these things had not been added, we might have supposed, as the Jews commonly do, that the restoration of this kingdom was carnal, and might have imagined that Christ was poor and destitute of all blessings. Accordingly, the Prophet afterwards shows that the gifts of the Spirit are laid up in him, first, generally, and next, particularly; that we may go to him to obtain whatever we want. He will enlighten us with the light of *wisdom* and *understanding*, will impart to us *counsel* in difficulties, will make us strong and courageous in battles, will bestow on us the true fear of God, that is, godliness, and, in a word, will communicate to us all that is necessary for our life and salvation. All gifts are here included by the Prophet, so that it is excessively foolish to attempt to conceal those which do not belong to the present enumeration.

He shows that they dwell in Christ, in order that they may be communicated to us. We are also called his *fellows*, (Psalms 45:7,) because strength proceeds from him as the head to the individual members, and in like manner Christ causes his heavenly anointing to flow over the whole body of his Church. Hence it follows that those who are altogether barren and dry have no interest in Christ, and falsely glory in his name. Whenever therefore we feel that we are in want of any of these gifts, let us blame our unbelief; for true faith makes us partakers of all Christ's benefits. We ought therefore to pray to the Lord not to permit the lusts of the flesh to rule in us, that Christ may wholly unite us to himself. It should also be observed, that we ought to ask all blessings from Christ alone; for we are mistaken if we imagine that anything can be obtained from the Father in any other way.

3. *And will make him sagacious.* [183] The verb ריח, (*riach*,) which is here put in the Hiphil conjugation, signifies literally *to smell*; but may also be explained in an active sense, as meaning *to give a keen smell*; which agrees better, I think, with this passage, so that this sagacity may be also included among the gifts of the Spirit. And this effect is peculiarly applicable to the person of Christ, namely, that far beyond what the godly are able to conceive, he is endowed with shrewd discernment for governing his people. We ought to attend, first of all, to the metaphor in the verb *smell*, which means that Christ will be so shrewd that he will not need to learn from what he hears, or from what he sees; for by *smelling* alone he will perceive what would otherwise be unknown. [184]

In the fear of the Lord. This phrase is viewed by the greater part of commentators as meaning that all the feelings of the heart will be manifest to Christ, so that he will easily judge who are the sincere worshippers of God. But let the reader inquire if it be not a more appropriate meaning, that *the fear of God* denotes a fixed rule of judging. He expressly distinguishes

[183] "And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah. His delight, הריחו, (haricho,) his snuffing up with pleasure, his pleasurable sensations. So the verb רוח (riach) signifies, when followed by the preposition ב, as in Leviticus 26:31, Amos 5:21. The expression is equivalent to, but stronger than that of David in Psalm 1:2, חפצו, יהוה בתורת (bethorath Yehovah Chephtzo,) in the law of the LORD is his delight." --- Stock

[184] But with righteousness shall he judge the poor. — Eng. Ver.

between the heavenly judgment of Christ and earthly judgments, in order to inform us, that the outward mask of holiness or uprightness is of no avail in his presence.

And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes. The meaning is, "When we come to the judgment-seat of Christ, not only will outward actions be brought to trial after the manner of human governments, but the life of men will be examined by the standard of true godliness. It does not belong to man to penetrate into the hearts; and those whom we suppose to be very excellent men have frequently nothing but a hollow mask; but Christ judges not from outward appearance, (Luke 11:17; John 2:25,) for he thoroughly knows and searches our inmost thoughts. His *judgment*, therefore, is quite different from that of men, who, with all their acuteness and quick sagacity, fall into the most shameful mistakes." Hence it follows that none can be the true worshippers of God but those whom Christ approves. They cannot obtain his approbation, unless they offer a pure and upright mind; for a false and hollow mask cannot deceive him.

4. *For he will judge the poor in righteousness.* [185] Here he shows that Christ will be the guardian of *the poor*, or, he points out the persons to whom the grace of Christ strictly belongs, namely, to the *poor* or *meek*; that is, to those who, humbled by a conviction of their poverty, have laid aside those proud and lofty dispositions which commonly swell the minds of men, till they have learned to be meek through the subduing influence of the word of God. He therefore declares that he will be the protector and guardian, not of all men whatsoever, but of those who know that they are *poor*, and destitute of everything good. This was also declared by Christ to John's disciples, when he said that *the gospel is preached to the poor.* (Matthew 11:5.) Who are they that are capable of receiving this doctrine? Not all men without exception, but those who, having laid aside the glory of the flesh, betake themselves to that heavenly protection.

There is, therefore, an implied contrast, namely, that Christ does not rule over the rich, that is, over those who are swelled with a false opinion of themselves. Though he invites all men to come to him, still the greater part refuse to submit to his government. The *poor* alone allow themselves to be governed by him. This passage teaches us, that if we are desirous to be protected by the power of Christ, we must lay aside all pride, and put on the spirit of *meekness* and modesty. That spiritual poverty which the Prophet recommends to all the members of Christ is, to have no lofty views, but to be truly humbled by a conviction of our poverty and nakedness, so as to depend on Christ alone. When we have been brought to this state of mind, the faithful King and Guardian will undertake to secure our salvation, and will defend us to the last against all our enemies. We also learn whom Christ invites to come to him: *Come to me, all ye that labor and are burdened.* (Matthew 11:28.) We must, therefore, *labor* and be pressed down by the

[185] See page 374.

weight of our *burden*, if we wish to feel and know his assistance.

And will reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. We must attend to the order which is here observed by the Prophet. He places *poverty* first, and then *meekness*; because we must first be *poor* before we become *meek*. So long as we think *that we are somebody*, (Acts 5:36,) and are carried away by a vain confidence in ourselves, our heart is filled with pride and self-conceit, and cannot yield or submit; but when we are convinced of our poverty, we lose courage, and, subdued and overpowered, begin to groan under the burden. The condition of Christ's people, therefore, is here described, as he had formerly illustrated the nature of the king himself. Hence also we ought to learn, that those precious gifts of the Spirit with which we saw a little before that Christ was furnished, [186] are not bestowed by him on all men whatsoever, but on the *poor* and the *meek*; for the word *judge* denotes government, a very important part of which is, that Christ imparts to us the gifts which he received from the Father, that he may live in us, and that we may live in him.

And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth. The Prophet here extols the efficacy of the word, which is Christ's royal scepter. By *the rod of his mouth* is meant a scepter which consists in words, and in the second clause he repeats the same idea by the phrase, *the breath of his lips*; as if he had said, that Christ will have no need to borrow aid from others to cast down his enemies, and to strike down everything that opposes his government; for a mere *breath* or a *word* will be enough. The statement may be general, since believers also must die, so as to be renewed to a spiritual life; and in this sense the gospel is called a sword appropriated for the slaying of sacrifices. (Romans 15:16.) But the latter part of the verse calls for a different interpretation. If any one choose to make a distinction, *the striking of the earth* will apply equally to the reprobate and the elect; as the gospel is

a two-edged sword, piercing even to the most hidden and secret feelings of the heart, and discerning the thoughts and affections. (Hebrews 4:12.)

Yet it wounds the former in a very different manner from that in which it wounds the latter. By mortifying in the elect a sinful nature, it kills their lusts, that they may become a living sacrifice, and a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savor; but it *strikes* the wicked in a manner altogether destructive, for they rot and die, and to them it is even, as Paul says, *a savor of death to death.* (2 Corinthians 2:16.) I should be willing enough to consider both effects as described here at the same time, were it not that it is opposed by the custom of the Hebrew language; for the Hebrew writers often repeat the same sentiment in different words.

And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. Christ is armed *with the breath of his lips to slay the wicked.* But perhaps this second clause

[186] The force of these repeated allusions to Romans 15:16 will be best understood by consulting the Author's Commentary on that remarkable passage. — Ed.

was added by Isaiah for the purpose of amplification; and, indeed, *to slay* is much more than *to strike*. As it belongs to the gospel to cast down all men without exception, its effect on the reprobate may be said to be accidental, *to slay* them with a deadly stroke. In this way the Prophet would add a particular case to the general statement, intimating that the wicked fall under the sword of Christ to their everlasting destruction, because they are not set apart to be sacrifices. [187] However this may be, this latter clause must undoubtedly be limited to the wicked alone; and it is added, because that efficacy does not immediately appear in the preaching of the gospel, but, on the contrary, many ridicule, and jeer, and treat as a fable all that is said about Christ and his word. But though they do not immediately feel its power, yet they will not be able to escape it, and will at length be slain by a deadly wound.

But the Prophet's meaning, I think, is not yet fully explained; for he does not speak only of the inward feeling by which wicked men are moved, whether they will or not, but of the wickedness itself, which will be removed and driven away by the power and efficacy of this scepter, as Paul also explains; for he undoubtedly alludes to this passage when he speaks of the destruction of Antichrist.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:7,8.)

Thus he explains to us the meaning of the Prophet; for he shows that Christ will never be without enemies, who will endeavor to overturn his kingdom, and to hinder or retard the course of the gospel; otherwise these words of the Prophet would have been spoken in vain. But Christ will drive away some of their number, and the whole of them together, and their very head and leader, by the sound of his doctrine.

Thus also Paul recommends a twofold use of doctrine, demanding from a pastor that

he shall be qualified not only to teach, but likewise
to refute those who oppose. (Titus 1:9.)

A pastor ought not only to feed his flock, but also to protect and guard them against every injury. This is what Christ performs, and therefore he is provided with necessary armor, that he may contend successfully against the falsehoods of Satan, and the cruelty of tyrants, and every kind of enemies.

Hence it is evident that wicked doctrines cannot be driven away by any other method than by the gospel. In vain will the magistrate employ the sword, which undoubtedly he must employ, to restrain wicked teachers and false prophets; in vain, I say, will he attempt all these things, unless this sword of the word go before. (Deuteronomy 13:5.) This ought to be carefully observed in opposition to the Papists, who, when the word fails them, betake themselves to new weapons, by the aid of which they think that they will

[187] The girdle. — Eng. Ver.

gain the victory. They are even so impudent as to boast that heretics cannot be refuted by the *word*, though both the Prophet and Paul lay down no other method.

When the Prophet says, *by the breath of his lips*, this must not be limited to the person of Christ; for it refers to the word which is preached by his ministers. Christ acts by them in such a manner that he wishes their *mouth* to be reckoned as his *mouth*, and their *lips* as his *lips*; that is, when they speak from his mouth, and faithfully declare his word. (Luke 10:16.) The Prophet does not now send us to secret revelations, that Christ may reign in us, but openly recommends the outward preaching of doctrine, and shows that the gospel serves the purpose of a scepter in the hand of Christ, so far as it is preached, and so far as it is *oral*, if we may use the expression; otherwise it would have been to no purpose to mention the *mouth* and the *lips*. Hence it follows that all those who reject the outward preaching of the gospel shake off this scepter, as far as lies in their power, or pull it out of the hand of Christ; not that the efficacy which he mentions depends on the voice of men, but so far as Christ acts by his ministers; for he does not wish that their labor should be fruitless, without sacrificing the elect to obedience, (Romans 15:16,) and slaying the reprobate; as Paul in another passage boasts that there will be speedy vengeance against all unbelievers and rebels.

Here we must again call to remembrance what is the nature of Christ's kingdom. As he does not wear a golden crown or employ earthly armor, so he does not rule over the world by the power of arms, or gain authority by gaudy and ostentatious display, or constrain his people by terror and dread; but the doctrine of the gospel is his royal banner, which assembles believers under his dominion. Wherever, therefore, the doctrine of the Gospel is preached in purity, there we are certain that Christ reigns; and where it is rejected, his government is also set aside. Hence it is evident how foolishly the Papists boast that the Church belongs to them, when they order Christ himself to be silent, and cannot endure the sound of his voice, but proclaim aloud, with distended cheeks, their own edicts, laws, decrees, and tyrannical regulations.

5. *And righteousness shall be the belt.* [188] Some translate it *girdle*; but as the Prophet represents Christ to us wearing, as it were, the emblems of royalty, I have rather translated it *belt*, which is also a royal emblem, in the same manner as the scepter, which he had assigned to him a little before. When Job speaks of taking away the authority of kings, he says that the Lord will ungird their *belt*. (Job 12:18.) To be *girded* with a *belt*, therefore, is nothing else than to be exalted to royal authority, as we shall afterwards see in another passage. (Isaiah 14:5.)

The Prophet describes two ornaments belonging to the *belt*. These are *righteousness* and *truth*; unless it be thought that there is a change in the order of construction, as if he had said that Christ will be girded *with true*

[188] "The Targum of Jonathan renders it, and the righteous shall be round about him; that is, 'they shall cleave to him like a girdle.'" — Jarchi.

righteousness; for *truth* is not added as if it were different from *righteousness*, but in order to point out the nature of that *righteousness* with which Christ is *girded*. Some think that *righteousness* here denotes that which Christ imparts to us, that it may dwell, not only in himself, but in his members. *Faith* or *truth* they understand to be that by which we embrace the salvation which he offers to us.

The Chaldee paraphrast explains it thus; "and the righteous shall be round about him, believing worshippers shall approach to him." [189] But I adopt a more simple interpretation, as if he had said, "He shall not appear like kings, clothed with purple and a crown, or girded with a *belt*; but *righteousness* and *truth* shall shine forth in him." I acknowledge, indeed, that *righteousness* is not confined to Christ, but belongs to his members; but we must attend to the mode of expression, that Christ comes forth to govern his people *girded with righteousness*, which he afterwards imparts to them by the secret influence of the Spirit. If we distinguish between the word אמונה (*emunah*) and *righteousness*, I consider it to mean *faithfulness* or *steadfastness*; as if he had said that Christ never disappoints his followers, for he continues always to be like himself.

6. *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb.* He again returns to describe the character and habits of those who have submitted to Christ. As there is a mutual relation between the king and the people, he sometimes ascends from the body to the head, and sometimes descends from the head to the body; and we have already seen that Christ reigns, not for himself, but for those who believe in him. Hence it follows that he forms their minds by his heavenly Spirit. But the Prophet's discourse looks beyond this; for it amounts to a promise that there will be a blessed restoration of the world. He describes the order which was at the beginning, before man's apostasy produced the unhappy and melancholy change under which we groan. Whence comes the cruelty of brutes, which prompts the stronger to seize and rend and devour with dreadful violence the weaker animals? There would certainly have been no discord among the creatures of God, if they had remained in their first and original condition. When they exercise cruelty towards each other, and the weak need to be protected against the strong, it is an evidence of the disorder (ἀταξίας) which has sprung from the sinfulness of man. Christ having come, in order to reconcile the world to God by the removal of the curse, it is not without reason that the restoration of a perfect state is ascribed to him; as if the Prophets had said that that golden age will return in which perfect happiness existed, before the fall of man and the shock and ruin of the world which followed it. Thus, God speaks by Hosea:

I will make a covenant with the beast of the field, with the fowl of the heaven, and with the creeping things.
(Hoseah 2:18.)

[189] "Not islands merely, but all distant regions are comprised in the meaning of this word אי, (iye.)" --- Rosenmuller

As if he had said, "When God shall have been reconciled to the world in Christ, he will also give tokens of fatherly kindness, so that all the corruptions which have arisen from the sinfulness of man will cease."

In a word, under these figures the Prophets teach the same truth which Paul plainly affirms, that Christ came *to gather together* out of a state of disorder *those things which are in heaven and which are on earth.* (Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20.) It may be thus summed up: "Christ will come to drive away everything hurtful out of the world, and to restore to its former beauty the world which lay under the curse." For this reason, he says, that *straw* will be the food of *the lion* as well as of *the ox*; for if the stain of sin had not polluted the world, no animal would have been addicted to prey on blood, but the fruits of the earth would have sufficed for all, according to the method which God had appointed. (Genesis 1:30.)

Though Isaiah says that the wild and the tame beasts will live in harmony, that the blessing of God may be clearly and fully manifested, yet he chiefly means what I have said, that the people of Christ will have no disposition to do injury, no fierceness or cruelty. They were formerly like *lions* or *leopards*, but will now be like *sheep* or *lambs*; for they will have laid aside every cruel and brutish disposition. By these modes of expression he means nothing else than that those who formerly were like savage beasts will be mild and gentle; for he compares violent and ravenous men to *wolves* and *bears* which live on prey and plunder, and declares that they will be tame and gentle, so that they will be satisfied with ordinary food, and will abstain from doing any injury or harm. On this subject it is proper to argue from the less to the greater. "If Christ shall bring brute animals into a state of peace, much more will brotherly harmony exist among men, who will be governed by the same spirit of meekness." And yet Isaiah does not mean that any are mild and peaceful by nature before they are renewed, but yet he promises, that whatever may have been their natural disposition, they will lay aside or conquer their fierceness, and will be like *lambs* and *sheep.*

And a little child shall lead them. This means that beasts which formerly were cruel and untameable, will be ready to yield cheerful obedience, so that there will be no need of violence to restrain their fierceness. Yet we must attend to the spiritual meaning which I noticed, that all who become Christ's followers will obey Christ, though they may formerly have been savage wild beasts, and will obey him in such a manner, that as soon as he lifts his finger, they will follow his footsteps, as it is said that *his people shall be willing.* (Psalm 110:3.) Those who are not endued with this meekness do not deserve to be ranked among the sheep. Let us, therefore, permit ourselves to be ruled and governed by him, and let us willingly submit to those whom he has appointed over us, though they appear to be like *little children.* Besides, I think that the ministers of the word are compared to children, because they have no external power, and exercise no civil government over them.

A question arises, Do we find any persons who are meek, though they

have not been tamed by the gospel? The Prophet appears to insinuate this, when he compares some men to *sheep*, and others to *wolves* and *bears*; and certainly among men who follow the bent of their natural disposition, we shall perceive an astonishing diversity. Some are mild and gentle, others are fierce and violent; but it is certain that all men are untamed till Christ subdues them by the gospel; all are swelled with ambition and pride before they are cured by this medicine. Many will be able to make a false and hollow profession of modesty and humility, but they will swell with inward pride. In short, where the Spirit of Christ is not, there will be no true meekness.

8. *And the child shall play on the hole of the asp.* He continues to illustrate the same sentiment, that when men have been brought into a state of favor with God, and have been cleansed from their depravity by the Spirit of regeneration, they will likewise be free from every hurtful disposition. There is no reason why men dread the danger or poison arising from the bite of serpents, but because they do not deserve that God should place every part of the world under their control. And, indeed, since animals are permitted to do injury even to *children*, this shows that the whole race of Adam has been stained with pollution from the very womb.

We must again observe the comparison which we stated, that those men whom a concealed poison led to deeds of violence will have their disposition changed, and will do no harm even to *little children.* Some men are openly fierce and cruel, (Psalm 140:3,) and others inwardly carry and cherish their malice like poison, (Psalm 55:21,) as David also describes them; for some men are more quick, and others are more slow, to manifest the desire of doing injury. Whatever they may have formerly been, he means that all of them must be cleansed from wickedness, both open and concealed, after having submitted to Christ. He means, also, that henceforth safety, which will reign everywhere, will be enjoyed even by those who have no kind of protection; so that they will freely venture to expose themselves to imminent dangers.

9. *They shall not hurt.* He now declares plainly, that men themselves, having laid aside the depravity which naturally dwells in them, will be inclined, of their own accord, to do what is right. He speaks of believers who have been truly regenerated *to a new life*, (Romans 6:4;) for though in the Church many hypocrites full of wickedness were mixed with the elect of God, yet they are like the Ishmaelites, whom God will cast out at the proper time. We ought also to observe, as we are taught in Psalm 15:1, 24:3, that those only who follow *righteousness* have a settled residence in the temple of God, that they may dwell there for ever. It is, therefore, a distinguishing mark of the genuine members of the Church, that they are free from all desire of doing injury to others. Hence, also, we infer, that it is a remarkable gift of the Spirit of Christ, that men abstain from being evil-doers; for by nature, ambition, pride, cruelty, and avarice, always prompt them freely and voluntarily to commit acts of injustice.

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. With good

reason does the Prophet add, that this invaluable blessing flows from *the knowledge of God*; for it abases all flesh, and teaches men to commit themselves to his trust and guardianship, and brings them into a state of brotherly harmony, when they learn that they have the same Father. (Malachi 2:10.) Although many, who have not yet been renewed by the Spirit of Christ, profess to have humanity, yet it is certain that self-love (φιλαυτίαν) reigns in them; for in all it is natural and so deeply-rooted, that they seek their own advantage and not that of others, think that they are born for themselves and not for others, and would wish to make the whole world subject to them, if they could, as Plato has judiciously observed. Hence arise fraud, perjury, theft, robbery, and innumerable crimes of this sort; and therefore there is no other remedy for subduing this lawless desire than *the knowledge of God.* We see how the Prophet again makes the government of Christ to rest on faith and the doctrine of the gospel, as indeed he does not gather us to himself (Ephesians 1:10) in another way than by enlightening our minds to reveal the heavenly life, which is nothing else, as he himself declares, than

to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. (John 17:3.)

As with waters that cover the sea. There is an implied comparison between the abundance of knowledge and that slender taste which God gave to the ancient people under the law. The Jews having been kept in the rudiments of childhood, (Galatians 3:23,4:3,) the perfect light of wisdom hath fully shone on us by the gospel, as was also foretold by Jeremiah:

They shall not every one teach his neighbor, and a man his brother, to know God; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. (Jeremiah 31:34.)

If this fullness of knowledge take possession of our minds, it will free us from all malice.

This passage also instructs us what is the character of the Church under Popery, where the light of doctrine is choked and almost extinguished, and the highest religion is made to consist in the benumbing influence of brutish stupidity. If we do not immediately possess full knowledge, we must advance from day to day, and make continual progress, (2 Peter 3:18,) and in such a manner that fruit may spring from that root. Hence it is evident how little progress the greater part have made in the school of Christ, seeing that fraud and robbery and acts of violence abound everywhere.

10. *And it shall be in that day the root of Jesse.* He again returns to the person of Christ, and repeats the same comparison which he had introduced at the beginning of the chapter, that of a *root* or a *branch* springing from a decayed trunk, of which no trace appeared; and he foretells that the Gentiles, who formerly abhorred the Jews, will henceforth bow before their King with lowly homage. This might be thought to be altogether incredible, and unquestionably the promise was ridiculed for many centuries, because such a gathering together was to be expected rather when the kingdom remained

and flourished than when it had been cut down. But it was necessary that it should be cut down, so that it might afterwards sprout again, and that the glory and power of God might shine in it more brighter than in its flourishing condition. Who would have seen with the eyes of men that the *branch* would rise to such a height as to be seen by all nations, and to direct the eyes of all men towards it?

Which shall stand for an ensign of the peoples. He compares it to a banner stretched aloft; and we know that this was fulfilled by the preaching of the gospel, and indeed was more illustrious than if Christ had soared above the clouds. To the same purpose is what he says,

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up. (John 3:14; Numbers 21:9.)

Shall be sought by the Gentiles. Christ is said to be *sought*, when men flee to him for the purpose of asking salvation, as to *seek God* means, in every part of Scripture, to cast all our hopes upon him. Accordingly, the Greek translators have rendered it ἐλπιοῦσι, *they shall hope*, looking rather at the meaning than at the word.

And his rest shall be glory. These words are commonly explained as referring to the burial of Christ, and that by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole; for afterwards they apply it also to his death; and indeed the burial of Christ was nothing else than an appendage to his death. They think that the meaning is this, "The death of Christ, which was disgraceful in the eyes of the world, will be *glorious* and splendid." But when I take a closer view of the whole, by *rest* the Prophet means in this passage the Church; as it is also said,

This is my everlasting rest; here will I dwell.
(Psalm 132:14.)

He bestows an honorable appellation on the assembly of the godly, because he chooses to have a continual habitation among them. Accordingly, the Church having been at that time exposed to reproaches and disgrace, he promises that it will be again raised to a more prosperous condition, and will recover its ancient *glory*. Here, therefore, we have a remarkable proof that God is pleased to dwell continually in his Church, though this may not always be seen by men.

11. *And it shall be in that day, the Lord will again set his hand.* The prediction about the future glory of the Church having been incredible, he explains the method of restoring it, namely, that God will display the power of *his hand*, as if for performing a memorable and uncommon exploit. Now, to confirm the hope of the elect people, he recalls to their minds the remembrance of a past deliverance, that they may not doubt that God is as able to deliver them now as their fathers found him to be in Egypt. (Exodus 12:51.) Such is the import of the word שנית, (*shenith*,) that is, *the second time*, or *again*; as if he had said, "*Now also* will God be the deliverer of his Church."

To possess the remnant of his people. He confirms what he has said

by another argument; for though it appeared as if God had disregarded his people, yet he will not allow himself to be deprived of his inheritance. We may sum it up by saying, that God will take care of the salvation of his Church, so as not to be robbed of his right. He expressly calls them a *remnant*, because this deliverance belonged only to a small seed. (Isaiah 1:9,10:22.) In short, he repeats what he formerly said, "Though God disperse and scatter his Church, yet it is impossible that he can ever cast it away altogether; for it is as dear to him as our inheritance is to any of us."

Which shall be left from Assyria and from Egypt. He speaks not only of the *Assyrians*, who had led the people captive, but also of other nations among whom the Jews were scattered; for though the greater part of the people was carried to Babylon, some fled into *Egypt*, some into Ethiopia, and some into other countries. They were afraid lest they should endure the same bondage as had been endured by others. Some think that by *Pathros* is meant *Parthia*, which is highly probable; others think that it is Arabia the Rocky. Under the name *Elam* he includes the Medes, Zocdians, Bactrians, and other eastern nations. *Shinar* belongs to Chaldea. By *Hamath* they mean Cilicia, and the other countries which lie towards Mount Taurus. By the word *islands* the Jews mean all countries that lie beyond the sea; for to them Greece, and Italy, and Spain, were islands, because they were separated from them by the sea. [190]

We see that the Prophet speaks here not only of the deliverance which took place under Zerubbabel, (Ezra 2:2,) but that he looks beyond this; for at that time the Israelites were not brought back from Egypt, Ethiopia, and other countries. These words, therefore, cannot be understood to relate to the deliverance from Babylon, but must be viewed as referring to the kingdom of Christ, under whom this deliverance was obtained through the preaching of the gospel. Besides, it is proper to observe that this work belongs to God, and not to men; for he says, *The Lord shall stretch out his arm*; thus ascribing to his heavenly power this work, which could not have been accomplished by human ability.

It ought also to be observed, that from God's past benefits we ought always to entertain good hopes for the future; so that whenever we call to remembrance the deliverances from Babylon and from *Egypt*, (Ezra 2:2; Exodus 12:51,) we may be convinced that God is equally able, and will equally assist us at the present day, that he may restore the Church to her ancient glory. What he did once and again, he is able to do a third time, and a fourth, and many times. When the Prophet calls those whom he rescues *a remnant*, let us learn that we ought not to desire a vast multitude, and let us be satisfied, though we be few, and let us not be terrified by the smallness of our numbers; for, provided that the righteousness of God abound, we have true and abundant ground of confidence.

[190] "Set up his standard on an eminence, the signal for the soldiery to assemble round their commander. Caesar terms it vexillum proponere, quod erat insigne, cum ad arma concurri oporteret. B. Gall. See Ammian, Hist., 27:10." — Rosenmuller.

12. *And he will lift up an ensign to the nations.* This verse contains nothing more than the explanation of the former verse. The language is metaphorical, and admits of two meanings; either that, *by giving an ensign*, he will terrify adversaries, so that they will not dare to prevent his people from returning, or that he will *give an ensign* to the wretched exiles not to hesitate to make preparations for their return. But even at the present day this doctrine is highly useful among us; for as an *ensign* is lifted up in the army, that the soldiers may assemble, and that every one may follow and may keep his proper place, so a *banner* is here held out to us, that we may assemble to it, namely, the gospel, which the Lord has lifted up among the Gentiles, by which Christ is preached to us. [191]

And will gather together the dispersions of Judah. Hence we ought to conclude, that we cannot be *gathered* by the Lord unless we assemble to this *ensign*, and be joined to him by faith; for there is no other way in which he acknowledges us to be *his sheep*, than when, after having been *scattered*, we are *gathered together*, and meet in the same assembly under this *ensign*; as he says,

My sheep hear my voice and follow me. (John 10:27.)

The word *gather* is repeated. *He will gather together the outcasts of Israel, and will gather together the dispersions of Judah.* He shows how efficacious God's calling will be; for as soon as he shall give the slightest indication that such is his pleasure, he will restore the people. *Dispersion* is a collective noun, for it means the Jews *scattered* in all directions; and he appears to allude, as he often does elsewhere, to similar passages in the writings of Moses, in which the Lord promises that he will gather the people, though they were scattered to the farthest parts of the world, and to the four winds of heaven. (Deuteronomy 30:3, 4.) Now, this was done under the direction of Christ. Under the same leader we ought at the present day to expect the restoration of a wretched and *scattered* Church; for there is no hope of *gathering the remnant* but by the elect looking to this *ensign.* We ought frequently, therefore, to call to remembrance those promises, that by relying on them we may more and more strengthen our hearts.

13. *And the envy of Ephraim shall depart.* Here he promises that the Church will be in such a state of peace, that neither will the Israelites and the Jews contend in civil broils, nor will they suffer any annoyance from their enemies, and that they will not be liable to hatred or *envy*, as they formerly were. Not that there will be no wicked men, but the Lord will at length cut off and destroy them. But we ought chiefly to observe what he adds about allaying domestic quarrels, that henceforth the children of Abraham may not harass each other, but unite in the same religion, and in the pure worship of God; for it was a disgraceful and shocking spectacle that their mutual strife and hostilities had been so long maintained.

[191] They shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab. (Heb. Edom and Moab shall be the laying on of their hand.) — Eng. Ver.

With good reason does he point out the source of quarrels, namely, *envy*, in consequence of which the descendants of Abraham have torn each other, while the tribes of *Judah* and *Ephraim* strive with each other for renown. This horrible torch has always kindled wars in the world, while every man is unwilling to yield. In short, the Lord here promises outward and inward peace, which is a very great and most desirable blessing.

It will be objected that this was never accomplished, and that the very opposite of this took place; for as soon as the gospel began, it was followed by various wars, commotions, and dreadful persecutions, and nearly the whole world was disturbed and shaken. And inwardly what peace did the Church enjoy? Among Christians themselves, Satan, by his *tares*, (Matthew 13:25,) has raised up dreadful disturbances, so that no enemies were more ferocious and destructive than those which were brought up in the bosom of the Church.

I reply, the Prophet here includes the whole of Christ's kingdom, and not merely a single age or century. In this world we taste but the beginning of Christ's kingdom; and while the Church is harassed by enemies both within and without, still the Lord defends and preserves her, and conquers all her enemies. Besides, this prediction properly belongs to the true and lawful children of Abraham, whom the Lord has purified by the cross and by banishment, and has constrained to lay aside ambition and *envy*; as those who have been tamed in the school of Christ cease to be desirous of renown. Thus the promise which Isaiah makes in this passage has already been in part fulfilled, and is fulfilled every day. But we must proceed in these exercises, and must fight earnestly within and without, till we obtain that everlasting peace which it will be our happiness to enjoy in the kingdom of God.

14. *And they shall fly on the shoulders of the Philistines.* He means that there is also another way in which the Lord will assist his people; which is, that he will conquer their enemies, and subdue them under his dominion. Having spoken of the safety of the Church, he now declares that she will be victorious over her enemies. He mentions those nations with which the Jews incessantly carried on wars; for on the one hand the *Philistines*, and on the other the *Ammonites* and *Moabites*, to whom they were bound by the tie of relationship and kindred, were continually molesting and attacking them. On one side also were the *Edomites*, who were not restrained by blood-relationship from being most determined enemies; for they were descended from Esau, (Genesis 25:25, 26, 36:1,8, 9,) the brother of Jacob; and the remembrance of this ought to have dissuaded them from enmity and hatred. The Lord, therefore, promises that the Church, though she is not absolutely without enemies, will gain advantage over them by suffering, and in the end be victorious.

Edom and Moab shall be *the stretching out of the hands.* [192] *The stretching*

[192] And the children of Ammon shall obey them. (Heb. the children of Ammon their obedience.) — Eng. Ver.

out of the hands means the dominion which the Church obtained over her enemies; for by the word *hand* is usually meant power; and the Hebrews use the phrase, *to stretch out the hand*, instead of "to place this or that under subjection." Thus it is said,

I will set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.
(Psalm 89:25.)

The stretching out of the hand, therefore, is full power to rule; and, on the other hand, he adds the *obedience* which the enemies will yield to her: *and the children of Ammon* shall be *their obedience* [193]

The Jews, who dream of an earthly kingdom of Christ, interpret all this in a carnal sense, and apply it to I know not what external power; but they ought rather to judge of it according to the nature of Christ's kingdom. Partly, no doubt, the accomplishment of this prediction was seen, when the Jews returned from captivity, and God brought them into moderate prosperity, contrary to the wish, and in spite of the opposition, of all the neighboring nations; but believers were led to expect a more splendid victory, which they at length obtained through the preaching of the gospel. Although we must continually fight under the cross, yet we vanquish our enemies, when we are rescued from the tyranny of the devil and of wicked men, and are restored to liberty by Christ, that the flesh may be subdued, and our lusts laid low, and that thus we may live to him, and *in patience may possess our souls*, (Luke 21:19,) calmly and patiently enduring everything that happens. And thus we even *heap coals on the head* (Romans 12:20) of enemies, to whose attacks and reproaches we appear to be subject.

15. *And the Lord will utterly destroy.* In this verse he means nothing else than that the Lord, by his amazing power, will open for his people a way, which formerly appeared to be shut up. He speaks figuratively. What he calls a *tongue* is "a bay of the sea;" for when the sea penetrates into the land, and occupies a part of it, there is a resemblance to a person putting out his *tongue*. He therefore means *the Egyptian sea* and *Egypt* itself, as he afterwards more fully explains. But he chiefly mentions *the sea* and the *rivers*, because they protect the countries and shut up every entrance.

And will stretch out the hand over the river in the strength of his wind. He undoubtedly means the Nile, which waters the whole of Egypt, and divides it into many parts, and might thus interrupt the march of the people when returning to their native country. I have no doubt that רוח (*ruach*) here denotes *wind*, though he adds *the Lord's*; for all the *winds* are *the Lord's*, because he regulates and guides according to his pleasure; and more especially this phrase is employed when it is miraculously agitated by a violent whirlwind. He alludes to the former deliverance of his people, by which he brought them out of *Egypt*; for when the Lord was pleased to open up a way for them, he dried up the sea by the force and violence of *the winds*. (Exodus 14:21.)

[193] And make men go over dry-shod. (Heb. in shoes.) — Eng. Ver.

True, the Lord did not need the assistance of *the winds*, for he might have done it by an immediate exertion of his power. But when he makes use of outward means, let us learn, first, that all creatures are ready to yield obedience to him; for though they have a natural course, yet they are in his power, so that he can direct their force and violence in whatever way he pleases. For instance, when a wind arises, its beginning proceeds from a natural cause, and each of the winds has its properties. The south wind is moist, and the north wind is cold, and completely similar are the effects which proceed from them; for the south wind moistens bodies, and the north wind dries them. By extraordinary miracles the Lord shows that he possesses an authority far above these natural causes, so that they are governed, not by nature, (that is, by that succession of events or chain of causes which irreligious men imagine to exist,) but by God alone.

Secondly, he shows that he changes the nature and order of events whenever he pleases, that he may be acknowledged to be their only Lord; because such a change exhibits more clearly his authority and dominion. On this account Isaiah called it not simply *the wind*, but *the wind of the Lord*, that we may perceive that it is not directed or moved by chance, but by the power *of the Lord*.

And shall smite it in the seven streams. Some render it *torrents*, and explain it thus: "he will divide the Nile into *seven* parts." Though this exposition has been universally adopted, yet I do not approve of it; and I think that it has arisen from forgetfulness, rather than from ignorance, on the part of its authors, who are learned men notwithstanding, and deeply skilled in the perusal of the ancient writers. It is well known from history that the Nile had *seven* mouths. There are others which are little mentioned, because they had no names, and are therefore called false mouths. Whatever, then, is the number of the mouths or branches, it appears to form that number of *streams* or rivers; and these might have been so many hinderances to retard their journey. The Prophet expressly mentions them, because the river was highly celebrated.

And shall make them be shod with shoes. [194] The river being deep, he says that he will dry it up, so that it will not be necessary to pull off their *shoes* in crossing it, though this would have been necessary if only a small portion of water had remained.

By these metaphors, therefore, the Prophet means nothing else than that nothing will stand in God's way, when it shall be his pleasure to rescue his people from captivity. He glances at the history of a former deliverance, that they may learn that it will be the same with that which they formerly enjoyed. On this account he wished to place it, as it were, before their eyes; for the means of this deliverance was not seen. If this promise had been stated in plain terms, it might not have produced so deep an impression on their minds as by holding out this remarkable example.

[194] An highway. — Eng. Ver.

16. *And there shall be a path.* [195] This verse contains nothing new, but explains the former verse. The people would perceive the same power of God in the deliverance from Babylon as they had perceived in the deliverance from Egypt. He had opened up a way through seas, (Exodus 14:29; Psalm 77:19,) through untrodden deserts, (Deuteronomy 8:2, 29:5,) and through Jordan; (Joshua 3:16, 17.) In like manner, Isaiah says, that by an unexpected and astonishing method he will again open up a way for his people to go out. Accordingly, what the Lord has once performed let us also expect for the future; and for that purpose let us ponder the ancient histories. This ought also to direct our thoughts to the final deliverance of the Church, by which we shall all be delivered from all troubles and distresses; so that, though what we are told about a resurrection and immortal life may appear to be incredible, and the means of accomplishing them are not seen by us, still the Lord will easily find a way.

[195] Lowth remarks that the Hebrew phrase is exactly the same with what we find in Romans 6:17. But thanks be to God that ye were the slaves of sin, but have obeyed from the heart; that is, that whereas, or though ye were the slaves of sin; yet ye have now obeyed from the heart the doctrine on the model of which ye were formed. "For thou wast angry. That is, whereas thou wast angry, now hast thou forgiven and comforted me." — Stock.

Chapter 12

CHAPTER 12

Isaiah Chapter 12:1-6

1. And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

1. Et dices in die illo: Cantabo tibi Iehova, Tametsi iratus es mihi, aversus est furor tuus, et consolatus es me.

2. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

2. Ecce Deus salus mea: confidam, et non pavebo. Quoniam fortitudo mea et canticum Deus Iehova; factusque est (vel erit) mihi in salutem.

3. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

3. Haurietis aquas cum gaudio, de fontibus salvatoris (vel, salutis).

4. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

4. Et dicetis in die illa: Canite Iehovae; invocate nomen ejus; celebrate in populis opera ejus; commemorate, quia nomen ejus exaltatum est.

5. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

5. Psallite Iehovae, quoniam magnifica gessit; et hoc vulgatum est per totam terram.

6. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

6. Jubila et canta habitatrix Sion; quia magnus in medio tui Sanctus Israel.

1. *And thou shalt say in that day.* Isaiah now exhorts all the godly to thanksgiving. Yet the exhortation has also this object, that the promise may

be more fully believed; for he seals it with that exhortation, that they may be convinced that it is certain, and may not think that they are deluded by unfounded hope, when a form of thanksgiving is now given, and, as it were, put into their mouth; and this would not have been the case, if there had not been just and solid grounds. At the same time, he points out the purpose which the Lord has in view in doing good in his Church. It is, that the remembrance of his name may be extolled; not that he needs our praise, but it is profitable to ourselves. We ought also to consider the honor which he bestows upon us, when he condescends to make use of our services for extolling and spreading the glory of his name, though we are altogether useless and of no value.

Thou shalt say. He addresses the whole people as if he were addressing one man, because it was their duty to be so united as to be one. We also are taught by the same example that we ought to be united together, that there may be *one soul and one mouth*, (Romans 15:6,) if we desire to have our prayers and thanksgivings accepted by God.

Though thou wast angry with me. The leading thought of this song is, that God, though he was justly offended at his people, yet was satisfied with inflicting a moderate chastisement, and showed that he was willing to be pacified. The particle כי (*ki*) being sometimes expressive of a cause, some render it, *I will praise thee, O Lord, because, having been angry with me, still thou art immediately reconciled*; but as it sometimes signifies *though*, [196] I have adopted the rendering which I considered to agree best with this passage.

Believers, therefore, first acknowledge their guilt, and next ascribe it to the mercy of God that they have been freed from their distresses. The words being in the future tense, the following interpretation might also be adopted: — "The temporal chastisement will not prevent thee from having at length compassion on me, and from giving me ground of joy and comfort." Whichsoever of these views be taken, this sentiment ought to be carefully observed; for as soon as a conviction of God's anger seizes our minds, it prompts us to despair, and if it be not seasonably counteracted, it will speedily overwhelm us. Satan also tempts us by all methods, and employs every expedient to compel us to despair. We ought, therefore, to be fortified by this doctrine, that, though we feel the anger of the Lord, we may know that it is of short duration, (Psalm 30:5,) and that we shall be comforted as soon as he has chastened us.

When we have been relieved from distresses, let us call to remembrance that our punishment is ended, not because we have paid to the justice of God what we had deserved, but because through his fatherly love he spares our weakness. This confession belongs properly to the godly and elect; for though the chastisements of the godly and ungodly appear to be the same, yet the reasons of them are exceedingly different. The wrath of the Lord against

[196] He also is become my salvation. — Eng. Ver.

the ungodly is perpetual, and the chastisements which are inflicted on them are forerunners of everlasting destruction: no alleviation or consolation is promised to them. But the godly feel that the wrath of God is of short duration, and encourage their hearts by hope and confidence; for they know that God will be gracious to them, since he has declared that he punishes their sins for no other reason than to train them to repentance, *that they may not perish along with the world.* (1 Corinthians 11:32.)

2. *Behold, God is my salvation.* Though it is proper to behold by faith the salvation of God in the midst of our afflictions, yet here Isaiah speaks of knowledge derived from experience; for he lays down a form of a joyful song, in which God shows by outward signs that he is pacified towards his Church. Such is also the import of the phrase הנה, (*hinneh*,) *Behold*; for now the brightness of God's countenance, which had been hidden for a time, shines forth, so that they can point to it as with the finger. Since, therefore, our punishments fill us with dread, and it is impossible for our minds not to be overclouded by our sins, as if we had no interest in God's salvation, or as if it were withdrawn from us, the Prophet describes here a change of feeling, when God is reconciled to us. But this prediction relates chiefly to the coming of Christ, which first exhibited fully the salvation of God.

I will trust and not be afraid. He adds, that when we are fully convinced that salvation is laid up for us in God, this is a solid foundation of full confidence, and the best remedy for allaying fears. But for this we must have trembled, and been uneasy and distressed, and tortured by painful emotions. Hence, we conclude, that confidence proceeds from faith, as an effect from its cause. By faith we perceive that salvation is laid up for us in God, and a calm and peaceful state of mind arises from it; but when faith is wanting there can be no peace of conscience. Let us therefore know that we have made good progress in faith, when we have been endued with such confidence as the Prophet describes.

Besides, this confidence ought to have *the chief place in our hearts*, (Colossians 3:15,) so as to banish all fear and dread; not that we are free from all distress and uneasiness, but that assurance will at length be victorious. Yet we must keep in mind what I said, that the Prophet here speaks of the cheerfulness which believers, who had formerly been almost overwhelmed under the load of temptations, obtain, when God is reconciled to them.

For the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength. He states more clearly and more expressly that believers will have good reason to sing, because they will have known by experience that they are *strong* in their God, as indeed redemption was an illustrious display of the power of God. Since Isaiah does not describe the benefit of a single day, but that which God had determined to carry forward till the coming of Christ, it follows that there are none who sincerely and heartily sing the praises of God, but those who, convinced of their weakness, seek to obtain strength from God alone in answer to prayer.

Nor is he here called a part or an aid of our strength, but our complete *strength*; for we are strong, so far as he supplies us with strength.

And my song. The reason why he is called *The song of the godly* is, that he bestows on them so much kindness for the purpose of exciting them to perform the duty of thankfulness. Hence we conclude that the beginning of joy springs from the favor of God, and that the end of it is *the sacrifice of praise.* (Psalm 50:23; Hoseah 14:2; Hebrew 13:15.) Thus, the hearts of the godly ought to be trained to patience, that they may not cease to bless God; but in a state of joy and prosperity their mouth is opened, so that they loudly proclaim God's benefits. But since the ungodly freely indulge in despising God, and, having laid their consciences asleep, riot like brutes in drunken mirth, and never awake to praise God, Christ justly curses their joy.

Wo to you that laugh, for ye shall mourn; your joy shall be turned into grief, and your laughter into qnashing of teeth.
(Luke 6:25.)

And he hath become my salvation. [197] If it be thought better to take this clause in the past tense, the meaning will be, that believers sing joyfully, *because God hath saved them.* But it will be most appropriate to take it in the future tense, *and he will become my salvation*; that is, God not only *hath been salvation* to his people, but will be so to the end; for believers ought not to confine their attention to the present benefit, but to extend their hope to the uninterrupted progress of his favor.

3. *You shall draw waters with joy.* In this verse he confirms what we have already noticed, that this chapter may be regarded as a seal to confirm the promise which he gave about the redemption of his people. As if he had said, "The salvation of God hath been set before you, as if it were a constant running *fountain*, from which you can *draw waters* in abundance." This is a very beautiful metaphor; for in this life nothing is more necessary than *water*, so that there is no kind of scarcity that gives us more uneasiness or more distress than a scarcity of *water.* Thus, by a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole, he declares that everything necessary for supporting life flows to us from the undeserved goodness of God. And since we are empty and destitute of everything good, he appropriately compares the mercy of God to a *fountain*, which satisfies those who are thirsty and dry, refreshes those who are parched with heat, and revives those who are worn out with fatigue.

From the fountains of the Savior. [198] This word is more appropriate to this passage than if he had said, "*from the fountains* of God;" for it yields more consolation when we know that he is the author of our salvation, and therefore the Prophet has skilfully adapted this term to the situation in which it is placed. Now, if this promise includes the whole of Christ's reign,

[197] In the margin he adds, "or, of salvation."

[198] Call upon his name, (or, Proclaim his name.) — Eng Ver.

we ought constantly to apply it to our use. Let us therefore know that the goodness of God is held out to us, that we may be satisfied with it; for we ought to be like *a dry and thirsty land*, as the Psalmist says, (Psalm 143:6,) that we may desire the waters of the Lord. This goodness of God is wonderful and beyond what could have been believed, that he does not suffer us to burn with unsatisfied desire, but presents *a fountain* from which we may *draw* abundantly. That *fountain* is Christ, in whom all God's benefits are imparted to us; *for out of his fullness*, as John says, *we all draw.* (John 1:16.) It remains, therefore, that whenever we feel our want we go directly to him.

4. *And in that day shall ye say.* He now exhorts them not only to sing praise and give thanks to God individually, but to excite others to do the same. As he had formerly said, *Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up into the mountain of the Lord,* (Isaiah 2:3,) that is, exciting each other by mutual exhortation to embrace the pure worship of God; so after having enjoined them individually to be thankful to God, he now also commands them mutually to excite each other to thanksgiving. He means that they ought to speak not to one, but to all, and not at one time only, but during their whole life.

Call upon his name. [199] He now gives a short description of the manner in which praise is properly rendered to God, when he enjoins us to

call upon him, that we may not glory in any other.

(Jeremiah 9:23,24.)

Hence also, by taking a part for the whole, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) Scripture frequently describes the whole of worship under the designation of *calling upon God.* In this way we show that our confidence is placed in God; and this is also what he chiefly demands from us. In like manner, I think that here the Prophet connects *calling upon* God with praises, in order to include the whole of the worship of God.

Make known his works among the peoples. [200] He means that the work of this deliverance will be so excellent, that it ought to be proclaimed, not in one corner only, but throughout the whole world. He wished, indeed, that it should be first *made known* to the Jews, but that it should afterwards spread abroad to all men. This exhortation, by which the Jews testified their gratitude, might be regarded as a forerunner of the preaching of the gospel, which afterwards followed in the proper order. As the Jews proclaimed among the Medes and Persians, and other neighboring nations, the favor which had been showed to them, so, when Christ was manifested, they ought to have been heralds to sound aloud the name of God through every country in the world. Hence it is evident what is the desire which ought to be cherished among all the godly. It is, that the goodness of God may be *made known* to all, that all may join in the same worship of God. We ought

[199] Declare his doings among the people. — Eng. Ver.

[200] "My appointed ones." קדש (kadash) is to select and set apart for a work, particularly for one of God's appointment. See Jeremiah 22:7, Zephaniah 1:7. --- Stock

especially to be inflamed with this desire, after having been delivered from some alarming danger, and most of all after having been delivered from the tyranny of the devil and from everlasting death.

5. *Sing unto the Lord* He continues his exhortation, showing what is the feeling from which this thanksgiving ought to proceed; for he shows that it is our duty to proclaim the goodness of God to every nation. While we exhort and encourage others, we must not at the same time sit down in indolence, but it is proper that we set an example before others; for nothing can be more absurd than to see lazy and slothful men who are exciting other men to praise God.

For he hath done glorious things. When he asserts that God *hath done gloriously*, he means that there is abundant ground for singing. The Lord does not wish that his praises should be proclaimed without any reason, but holds out a very rich and very abundant subject of praise, when he frees his people from very hard bondage. We have said that this song is not limited to a short period, but, on the contrary, extends to the whole of Christ's reign. This work therefore is truly glorious, that *God sent his Son* to reconcile us to himself, (John 3:16, 17,) and to destroy the dominion of death and the devil. (Hebrews 2:14.) If, therefore, we consider the work of our deliverance as we ought to do, we shall have very abundant ground for praising God.

And this hath been made known through all the earth. When he says that this *hath been made known*, he glances at the calling of the Gentiles, and confirms what has been already stated, that the work is such as ought not to be concealed in a corner, but to be everywhere proclaimed.

6. *Shout and sing.* He again exhorts the godly to rejoice in the Lord, at the same time reminding them what is the nature of true joy, and on what it is founded. We have no other happiness than to have God dwelling *in the midst of us.* But for this, our life would be wretched and unhappy, though we should have abundance of other blessings and of every kind of riches. Now, if our heart be set on our *treasure*, (Matthew 6:21,) this happiness will attract all our feelings.

The Holy One of Israel. He calls him *the Holy One*, in order to inform us what he intends to prove himself to be to us, while he dwells with us; that is, that not only his majesty may fill our minds with reverence towards him, for it would at the same time overwhelm us with terror; but that he may vouchsafe to make us the objects of his peculiar care, though separated from the rest of the world. He calls him *the Holy One*, from the effect produced; for, by gathering us to himself, (Ephesians 1:10,) and saving us by his grace, he may be said to *sanctify* us to be his own property. Accordingly, if God is with us, the conviction of his presence will fill us with inconceivable joy. Hence it follows that, when he is absent, we continue to be exposed to grief and sadness.

By the words, *Shout and sing*, he means that when God magnifies his power *in the midst of us*, he gives us occasion for no ordinary joy. Again,

by directly addressing *the inhabitants of Zion*, he intimates that all are not capable of so great a blessing, and at the same time indirectly exhorts them to maintain unity of faith, that, by being united to the Church, we may partake of this blessed joy.

Chapter 13

CHAPTER 13

Isaiah Chapter 13:1-22

1. The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

1. Onus Babylonis, quod vidit Isaias, filius Amoz.

2. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.

2. Super montem excelsum levate signum; attollite vocem ad eos; agitate manum, ut ingrediantur portas munificorum.

3. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.

3. Ego praecepi sanctificatis meis; adeoque vocavi fortes meos ad iram meam, laetantes gloria mea.

4. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.

4. Vox multitudinis in montibus instar populi multi. Vox sonitus regnorum, gentium congregatarum; Iehova exercituum recenset exercitum belli.

5. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

5. Venientes e terra longinqua, ab extremo coelorum, Iehova et vasa furoris ejus, ad vastandam universam terram.

6. Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

6. Ululate; quoniam propinquus est dies Iehovae; quasi vastitas a robusto (vel, a vastatore robusto) veniet.

7. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:

7. Propterea omnes manus dissolventur, et omne cor hominis liquefiet.

8. And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.

8. Et terrebuntur; angustiae et dolores apprehendent; instar parturientis dolebunt; quisque ad proximum suum obstupescet; facies flammarum, facies eorum.

9. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

9. Ecce dies Iehovae veniet saevus; et indignatio, et aestus irae, ut redigat terram in solitudinem, et sceleratos ejus deleat ex ea.

10. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

10. Itaque stellae coelorum et sidera non expandent lumen suum; obtenebratus erit Sol in egressu suo, et Luna non emittet fulgorem suum.

11. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

11. Et visitabo super orbem malitiam, et super impios iniquitatem eorum; et cessare faciam arrogantiam superborum, et altitudinem tyrannorum dejiciam.

12. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

12. Pretiosiorem reddam mortalem auro puro, et hominem massa auri ex Ophir.

13. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

13. Propterea concutiam coelos, et movebitur terra loco suo, in indignatione Iehovae exercituum, et in die aestus irae ejus.

14. And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.

14. Eritque quasi damula impulsa, et ovis quam nemo colligit; quisque ad populum suum respiciet, et quisque ad terram suam confugiet.

15. Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword.

15. Quisque deprehensus fuerit confodietur; et omnis aggregatus cadet in gladio.

16. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

16. Parvuli eorum allidentur coram ipsis, diripientur domus ipsorum, et uxores eorum violabuntur.

17. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.

17. Ecce, ego contra vos suscito Medos, qui de argento non cogitabunt, nec aurum ipsum appetent.

18. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

18. Et arcubus pueros allident, fructus ventris non miserebuntur, nec parcet filiis oculus eorum.

19. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

19. Et erit Babel, decor regnorum et ornamentum splendoris Chaldaeorum, instar subversionis Dei in Sodoma et Gomorrha.

20. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there:

20. Nunquam amplius sedebit, neque habitabit in generationem et generationem; neque figet illic tabernaculum Arabs, neque pastores illic accubare facient gregem.

21. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

21. Sed ibi cubabunt Ziim, et domus eorum implebunt Ohim; illic habitabunt filiae Struthionis, et illic Satyri saltabunt.

22. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

22. Et clamabunt Iim in magnificis aedibus eorum, et dracones in palatiis voluptuosis; ac tempus quidem ejus prope est, neque protrahentur dies ejus.

1. The burden of Babylon From this chapter down to the twenty-fourth, the Prophet foretells what dreadful and shocking calamities awaited the Gentiles and those countries which were best known to the Jews, either on account of their being contiguous to them, or on account of the transactions of commerce and alliances; and he does so not without weighty reasons. When various changes are taking place, some think that God sports with the affairs of men, and others, that everything is directed by the blind violence of fortune, as profane history sufficiently testifies; very few are aware that these things are appointed and regulated by the purpose of God. There is nothing of which it is more difficult to convince men than that the providence of God governs this world. Many indeed acknowledge it in words, but very few have it actually engraven on their heart. We tremble and shudder at the very smallest change, and we inquire into the causes, as if it depended on the decision of men. What then shall be done, when the whole world is thrown into commotion, and the face of affairs is so completely changed in

various places, that it appears as if everything were going to ruin?

It was therefore highly useful that Isaiah and other prophets should discourse about calamities of this nature, that all might understand that those calamities did not take place but by the secret and wonderful purpose of God. If they had uttered no prediction on those subjects, such a disordered state of affairs might have shaken and disturbed the minds of the godly; but when they knew long beforehand that this would happen, they had in the event itself a mirror of the providence of God. When *Babylon* was taken, which they had previously learned from the mouth of the Prophet, their own experience taught them that the prediction had not been made in vain, or without solid grounds.

But there was also another reason why the Lord commanded that the destruction of *Babylon* and other nations should be foretold. These predictions were of no advantage to *Babylon* or the other nations, and these writings did not reach them; but by this consolation he intended to alleviate the grief of the godly, that they might not be discouraged, as if their condition were worse than that of the Gentiles; which they would have had good reason to conclude, if they had seen them unpunished escape the hand of God. If the monarchy of Babylon had remained unshaken, the Jews would not only have thought that it was in vain for them to worship God, and that his covenant which he had made with Abraham had not been fulfilled, since it fared better with strangers and wicked men than with the elect people; but a worse suspicion might have crept into their minds, that God showed favor to accursed robbers, who gave themselves up to deeds of dishonesty and violence, and despised all law both human and divine. Indeed, they might soon have come to think that God did not care for his people, or could not assist them, or that everything was directed by the blind violence of fortune. Accordingly, that they might not faint or be thrown into despair, the Prophet meets them with the consoling influence of this prediction, showing that the *Babylonians* also will be punished.

Besides, the comparison taught them how severe was the punishment that awaited them, which they had knowingly and willingly brought upon themselves. For if God pronounces such dreadful threatenings against the unbelieving and irreligious Gentiles, who wandered in darkness, how much greater will be his rigour and severity against a rebellious people who have intentionally sinned against him!

The servant who knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, is justly beaten with many stripes. (Luke 12:47.)

Thus when God threatened such dreadful punishment against the blind Gentiles, the Jews, who had been instructed in the law, might behold as in a mirror what they had deserved.

But the chief design which Isaiah had in view in these predictions was, to point out to the Jews how dear and valuable their salvation was in the sight of God, when they saw that he undertook their cause and revenged the

injuries which had been done to them. He spoke first of the desolation and ruin that would befall the kingdom of Judah and of Israel, because *judgment must begin* at the house of God. (1 Peter 4:17.) God takes a peculiar care of his own people, and gives his chief attention to them. Whenever therefore we read these predictions, let us learn to apply them to our use. The Lord does not indeed, at the present day, foretell the precise nature of those events which shall befall kingdoms and nations; but yet the government of the world, which he undertook, is not abandoned by him. Whenever therefore we behold the destruction of cities, the calamities of nations, and the overturning of kingdoms, let us call those predictions to remembrance, that we may be humbled under God's chastisements, may learn to gather wisdom from the affliction of others, and may pray for an alleviation of our own grief.

The burden. As to the word *burden*, which frequently occurs, I shall state briefly in what sense it ought to be understood. It was generally employed by the prophets of God, whenever they threatened any afflictive event, in order to inform the people that no afflictive event happened which the Lord himself did not lay as a burden on men's shoulders. The wickedness and obstinacy of the people having constrained the prophets to preach incessantly about God's chastisements, the consequence was, that as a matter of ordinary jesting they called all the prophecies by the name of *a burden*; as is evident from Jeremiah 23:36, where the Lord kindles into fierce indignation, because they not only spoke of his word contemptuously, but also held it up to dislike. This word makes known to the godly, that the Lord appoints all calamities and afflictions, that every one may suffer the punishment of his own sin.

Which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw. He expressly states that what he is about to utter was revealed to him by a heavenly *vision*, that the weight which is thus given to it may render it victorious over all the judgments pronounced by the flesh. It was difficult to believe that a monarchy so flourishing, and so prodigiously rich, could be overturned in any way. Their eyes being dazzled by beholding such vast power, the Prophet draws away their attention from it to believe the heavenly revelation, that they may expect by faith the judgment of God which they could not comprehend by the unaided exercise of their own minds.

2. *Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain.* The word *mountain* contains a metaphor; for the discourse relates to *Babylon*, which, we know, was situated on a plain; but with a view to its extensive dominion, he has assigned to it an elevated situation, like a fortress set on high above all nations. But perhaps it will be thought better to take the word *mountain* as used indefinitely; as if he had said, "When a signal is given there will be a vast assemblage from very distant countries, because all men will be attracted towards it by the wide and extensive influence of the sight;" and, indeed, I consider this opinion to be more probable, but I chose to mention at first the opinion which had been commonly received. Yet it might be thought absurd that the Prophet here enjoins the creatures to yield, as it were, obedience to

him, if God had not fortified the Prophet by his instructions and authority. A private man here commands the Medes and Persians, assembles armies, orders *a banner to be lifted up*, and sounds the trumpet for battle.

This should therefore lead us to consider the majesty of God, in whose name he spoke, and likewise the power and efficacy which is always joined with the word. Such modes of expression are frequently found in the Prophets, that, by placing the events as it were before our eyes, he may enable us to see that God threatens nothing by his servants which he is not ready immediately to execute. Isaiah might indeed have threatened in plain and direct terms, "The Persians and Medes will come, and will burst through the gates of *Babylon*, notwithstanding the prodigious strength of its fortifications." But those exclamations are far more energetic, when he not only assumes the character of a herald and proclaims war, but, as if he exercised the highest authority, orders the Medes and Persians to assemble like hired soldiers. Not only does he show that they will be ready at the bidding of God, because they are moved by his secret influence; but, having been sent by God to announce the ruin of Babylon, he claims for his own voice the accomplishment of what appeared to be beyond belief. It amounts to this, "When God hath spoken about what shall happen, we ought to entertain no doubt concerning it." It deserves our notice also, that he describes the Persians and Medes, without mentioning their names; for that threatening is more emphatic, when he points them out, as it were, with the finger, as when we say, "This and that man." This contributes to the certainty of the prophecy, when he points out such distant events as if they were at hand.

Shake the hand, that they may enter within the gates of the nobles. When he says, *Shake the hand, and they shall enter*, he means that the Persians and Medes shall no sooner begin to advance at the command of God than their road shall be plain and easy in spite of every obstruction. Though the Hebrews call Princes נדיבים, (*Nedibim*,) that is, *generous and bountiful*, on which is also founded that saying of Christ, εὐεργέται καλοῦνται, *they are called benefactors*, (Luke 22:25,) yet I think that the Prophet draws our attention to the splendor of power in which the Babylonians gloried. They were furnished above others with forces and warlike armaments, so that it appeared to be incredible that they could ever be vanquished. But the Prophet threatens that nothing shall hinder God from opening up a way and entrance to the enemies.

3. *I have commanded my sanctified ones.* [201] Here the Prophet introduces the Lord as speaking and issuing his commands. He calls the Medes and Persians *sanctified ones*, that is, those whom he has *prepared*. The verb קדש (*kadash*) is used in various senses; for sometimes it refers to the spirit of regeneration, and this belongs peculiarly to the elect of God. But sometimes it means to *wish* or *prepare*, and that meaning is more appropriate to this

[201] The LORD and the weapons of his indignation. — Eng. Ver.

passage. All who are created by the Lord are likewise *appointed* by him for a fixed purpose. He does not throw down men at random on the earth, to go wherever they please, but guides all by his secret purpose, and regulates and controls the violent passions of the reprobate, so as to drive them in whatever manner he thinks fit, and to check and restrain them according to his pleasure. He therefore calls them *sanctified ones*, "set apart and prepared to execute his will," though they had no such intention. Hence also we are taught to ascribe to the secret judgment of God all violent commotions, and this yields wonderful consolation; for whatever attempts may be made by wicked men, yet they will accomplish nothing but what the Lord has decreed.

I have also called my mighty ones. The phrase, *I have called*, conveys more than the phrase, *I have commanded*, which he had used in the former clause. It means that they will be roused to action, not only at the bidding of God, but by the very sound of his voice; as if I were to *call* a person to me, and he were immediately to follow. He threatens, therefore, that *Babylon* shall be destroyed by the Medes and Persians, in the same manner as if they obeyed the call of God; for though they were prompted to battle by their own ambition, pride, and cruelty, yet God directed them, without knowing it, to execute his judgment.

4. *The noise of a multitude in the mountains.* He adds a still more lively representation, (ὑποτύπωσιν,) that is, a description by which he places the event as it were before our eyes. The prophets are not satisfied with speaking, without also giving a bold picture of the events themselves. Words uttered plainly, and in the ordinary manner, do not strike us so powerfully or move our hearts so much as those figures which delineate a lively resemblance of the events. As if he had said, "Now, indeed, you hear a man speaking, but know that this voice will be so powerful that at the sound of it *nations* shall be roused, *peoples* shall make a *noise*, and in vast crowds shall shout and roar to bring destruction on the inhabitants of *Babylon*. This proclamation, therefore, will be as efficacious, even after that I am dead, as if you now saw what I foretell to you."

In this event, therefore, we see how great is the efficacy of the word, which all the creatures both in heaven and in earth obey. We ought to be more strongly confirmed in the belief of this doctrine, by perceiving that every one of the events which had been predicted many centuries before has taken place. For this reason he declares that *the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle,* that the various nations are moved by God's direction, and that, although nothing was farther from their intention than to inflict the punishment which he had appointed, still they do nothing but according to his command, as if some earthly general were to draw up his forces.

5. *Coming from a distant country.* He repeats and confirms more fully what I stated a little before, that the operations of war do not spring up at random from the earth; for though everything disorderly is vomited out

by the passions of men, yet God rules on high; and therefore Isaiah justly ascribes sovereignty to God. Next, he adds, that armed men are nothing else than *the weapons of his indignation.* He says that they will come *from a distant country*, to overturn the monarchy of *Babylon*, because we are not afraid of dangers unless when they are close at hand. *Babylon* was so strongly fortified, and was surrounded by so many kingdoms and provinces which were subject to it, that it seemed as if there were no way by which an enemy could approach. In short, as if she had been situated in the clouds, she dreaded no danger.

From the end of heaven. There being no trouble all around that threatened them, he gives warning that the calamity will come from a distance. Though everything appears to be calm and peaceful, and though we are not at variance with our neighbors, God can bring enemies *from the end of heaven.* There is no reason, therefore, why we should promise to ourselves a lasting and prosperous condition, though we are not threatened with any immediate danger. If this prediction had reached the inhabitants of *Babylon*, they would undoubtedly have laughed at it as a fable. Even if we should suppose that they paid some respect to the Prophet, yet, having so strong a conviction of their safety, they would have despised those threatenings as idle and groundless. An example may be easily found. When we preach at the present day about the Turk, all think that it is a fable, because they think that he is still at a great distance from us. But we see how quickly he overtook those who were at a greater distance and more powerful. So great is the insensibility of men that they cannot be aroused, unless they are chastised and made to feel the blows. Let the inhabitants of Babylon, therefore, be a warning to us, to dread, before it is too late, the threatenings which the prophets utter, that the same thing may not happen to us as happens to those wicked men, who, relying on their prosperous condition, are so terrified when the hand of God attacks and strikes them, that they can no longer stand, but sink down bewildered.

To destroy the whole land. When he puts *the whole land* for *Babylon*, he looks to the extent of the kingdom; that they may not think that the great number of provinces, by which they were surrounded on all sides, could ward off the attacks of enemies. But at the same time he intimates that it will be no slight calamity affecting a single spot, but will be like a deluge overwhelming a large portion of the world.

Jehovah and the vessels of his anger. [202] The Persians and Medes are called *vessels of anger* in a different sense from that in which Paul gives that appellation to all the reprobate; for, by contrasting *the vessels of wrath* with *the vessels of mercy*, (Romans 9:22,23,) he shows that the undeserved goodness of God shines in the elect, but that the reprobate are monuments of severe judgment. But Isaiah means that the Medes and Persians may be regarded as darts in the hand of God, that by means of them he may execute

[202] From the Almighty. — Eng. Ver.

his vengeance.

6. *Howl ye.* He continues the same argument, and bids the inhabitants of Babylon *howl*. Not that he directs instruction to them, as if he hoped that it would be of any advantage, but, in foretelling what shall be their condition, he emphatically employs this form of direct address.

For the day of the Lord is at hand. He calls it *the day of the Lord*, according to the usual custom of Scripture, because when the Lord delays his judgment, he appears to cease from the discharge of his office, like judges when they do not ascend the judgment-seat. This mode of expression deserves notice, for we would gladly subject God to our disposal, that he might immediately pass sentence against the wicked. But he has his own appointed time, and knows the seasons when it is proper both to punish the bad and to assist the good.

It shall come as destruction from the Strong One. [203] He threatens that the severity of judgment will be such that the inhabitants of *Babylon* will have good reason not only to *cry* but to *howl*; because God displays his power to waste and destroy them. שדד (*shadad*) signifies to *lay waste* and *plunder*. From this verb is derived שדי, (*Shaddai*,) one of the names of God, which some render *Almighty*. There is therefore an elegant allusion to the derivation of the word; as if he had said, that the inhabitants of Babylon shall learn by their own destruction how appropriately God is called שדי, (*Shaddai*,) that is, *strong* and *powerful* to destroy. [204]

7. *Therefore all hands shall be weakened.* He shows that the power of the Lord to destroy the inhabitants of Babylon will be so great, that they shall have no means of withstanding his anger. Though they stood high in wealth and in power, yet their *hearts* would be so *faint*, and their *hands* so *weak*, that they would have neither disposition nor ability to resist. And thus he indirectly ridicules the cruelty which boiled in the hearts of the Babylonians; for it is in the power of God to soften *hearts*, and to crush, loosen, or enfeeble *hands* or *arms*, so that suddenly all their courage shall fall down, and all their strength shall vanish away. When the heart quakes, what will be the use of fortifications, or armies, or wealth, or bulwarks? What avails a well-stocked workshop without a workman? We see this every day exemplified in those to whom in other respects the Lord had communicated large resources. Hence we see how vain is that confidence which we place in outward resources; for they would be of no use to us, if the Lord should strike our hearts with any alarm.

8. *Pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them.* The word צירים (*tzirim*) being ambiguous, the Greek translators render it *ambassadors*. But the comparison of *a woman that travaileth*, which is added immediately afterwards,

[203] " משדי (shod mishshaddai). This title of God is here employed for the sake of the alliteration, destruction from the destroyer, from him who is all-powerful to destroy (שדד) (shadad) as well as to save." --- Rosenmuller

[204] By a happy coincidence, the English word panic conveys exactly the meaning of the Latin adjective Panicus, which is here said to be derived from the name of the heathen God Pan, the god of the mountains, cattle, &c. — Ed

sufficiently proves that it denotes *pangs*; for here, as if by a single word, he explains what he had previously said, that their *hearts* shall be *melted* and their *hands* shall be *weakened*; because, he says, they shall be struck with terror and dismay. Whence comes this terror? From God. This kind of terror, for which there was no apparent cause, the ancients called a *panic*; [205] for they gave the name *panes* to apparitions and objects of this sort, by which men were terrified, even when there was no outward object that ought to have excited the terror. It was not without reason that they did so; but still they erred through gross ignorance, because they did not understand that it proceeded from God.

As a woman that travaileth. So far as relates to the inhabitants of Babylon, there was, indeed, just ground of fear, when they saw that they were attacked by valiant and warlike nations; but yet the Prophet threatens that, though they were able to resist, still they would be like men who were half dead, because through the secret operation of God they fainted and fell down. To the same purpose is what he adds, *Every one shall be amazed at his neighbor;* as when men are agitated and stare around them in every direction; and not only so, but when no hope of safety is to be seen, they are like men who have lost their senses, and abandon themselves to indolence.

Faces of flames their faces. [206] This clause, in which he attributes to them *faces of flames*, expresses still more strongly the violence of the terror. Some think that it denotes *shame*, as if he had said in a single word, *They shall blush*; but this is too feeble. Isaiah intended to express something greater and more dreadful; for when we are in agony the *face* glows, and the pressure of grief makes us burn. And, indeed, it would be treating the matter too lightly, when the calamity was so severe, to interpret these words as denoting *shame*; for he describes a calamity so distressing, that, on account of its severity, *flames* burst forth from the countenance, which usually happens when men are agonized by intense grief.

The comparison of *a travailing woman* denotes not only the intensity of the grief, but likewise the suddenness with which it seized them. As the calamity would be severe and violent, so Isaiah threatens that it will be sudden, and not without good reason; for the inhabitants of Babylon, protected by such strong defences, would never have thought that it was possible for any annoyance to reach or distress them.

9. *Behold the day of the Lord will come cruel.* He repeats what he had slightly noticed a little before, that though the inhabitants of Babylon are now at ease, and rely on their wealth, *the day of the Lord* is at hand, to terrify those who are at ease.

But a question might here be raised, Why is *the day of the Lord* called *cruel*, since nothing is more desirable than to have God present with us; for his presence alone makes us truly happy? I answer, we ought always to

[205] Their faces shall be as flames. (Heb. faces of the flames.) — Eng. Ver. "Faces of flames shall be their faces." — Stock

[206] See Xen. Cyr., book 7, chapter 5.

consider who they are that are addressed by the Prophet; for it is customary with the prophets to give various descriptions of God corresponding to the diversity of the hearers. In like manner, David also declares that God is

merciful to the merciful, and cruel and severe to the ungodly. (Psalm 18:25,26.)

What could wicked men imagine to be in God but the utmost severity? And therefore the slightest mention of God fills them with terror.

The godly, on the other hand, whenever the name of God is mentioned, derive the greatest delight and joy from hearing it; so that nothing can be more highly gratifying. Thus, when the prophets address the godly, as soon as they have mentioned God, they speak of joy and gladness, because the godly will feel that he is gracious and merciful to them; but when they address the ungodly, they hold out the judgment of God, and speak of grief and mourning. As the godly are cheered by the presence of God, because by faith they behold his goodness; so the ungodly are terrified, because the testimony of their conscience reproves and convinces them that he comes as a severe Judge. Since even hypocrites pretend that they eagerly long for *the day of the Lord,* and boast that he will assist them, the prophets tear off from them this disguise, and show that to them *the day of the Lord* will be dreadful and alarming. (Amos 5:18,20.)

Isaiah applies the usual description to this prophecy, in order to show more fully how much we ought to dread the wrath of God; for, being by nature slow, or rather stupid, we would not be powerfully affected if the Lord spoke in plain terms about his judgments. Since, therefore, an unadorned style would be too cold, he contrived new modes of expression, that by means of them he might shake off our sluggishness. When he says*, and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it,* he means by *sinners* not all men without distinction, but the ungodly and wicked men who inhabited Babylon.

10. *For the stars of heaven.* In order to strike our minds with a stronger and more distressing fear of the judgment of God, the prophets are accustomed to add to their threatenings extravagant modes of speaking, which place the anger of God, as it were, before their eyes, and affect all our senses, as if all the elements were now arising to execute his vengeance. And yet the expressions, though unusually strong, do not go beyond the dreadful nature of what took place; for it is impossible to exhibit an image of the judgment of God so alarming that the reality shall not be felt to be more revolting and terrible.

The sun, and *the moon*, and *the stars* are mentioned, because they are striking proofs of God's fatherly kindness towards us. Hence also Christ shows that it is an eminent proof of the goodness of God that

he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good. (Matthew 5:45.)

Accordingly, when the *sun* and *moon* and *stars* shine in heaven, God may be said to cheer us by his bright and gracious countenance. Since therefore in the brightness of heaven God shows a cheerful and friendly countenance,

as if he might be said to smile upon us, the darkness which the Prophet describes conveys the thought, that God, by hiding his face, cast the men with whom he was angry into the darkness of sorrow.

A similar description is given by the Prophet Joel.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood, before it comes — the day of Jehovah, great and terrible.
(Joel 2:31.)

We have already said that this mode of expression is frequently employed by the prophets, in order to inform us that everything will tend to our destruction, when God is against us. Sometimes indeed God gives tokens of his anger by means of *the stars*; but that is out of the usual course of events, and the *darkness* which the Prophet now describes will not take place till the second coming of Christ. But we ought to be satisfied with knowing that all the creatures, which by discharging their duties to us are proofs and instruments of God's fatherly kindness, not only cease to be useful to us, when God arises to judgment, but in some measure are armed for vengeance.

11. *And I will visit upon the world wickedness.* Here the Prophet does not speak of the whole *world*; but as Babylon was the seat of the most powerful of all monarchies, he gives to it on that account the name of *the world*, and he does so emphatically, (ἐμφατικῶς,) for Babylon was a kind of *world*, because it appeared to occupy nearly the whole earth. And yet he means that there is nothing in this world so lofty that God cannot easily seize it with one of his fingers. At the same time he gives warning that God will punish the cruelty which was exercised by the Chaldeans. Yet we ought also to learn that the wickedness and crimes of Babylon are brought forward, in order to inform us that the Lord will not be cruel in punishing her so severely, because he inflicts the punishment which that people deserved on account of their transgressions and crimes. Every ground of calumny is therefore taken away, that we may not think that God delights in the afflictions of men; for when he thus deals with men according as they deserve, *the mouths of all must be stopped*, (Romans 3:19,) since the severity of the afflictions does not proceed from God, but finds its cause in men themselves.

And will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease. We must keep in mind what I have already noticed, that the Prophet yields no small consolation to the godly by assuring them that God, though he spares the inhabitants of Babylon for a time, will at length punish them for their injustice and cruelty. He expresses this still more clearly by taking notice of a particular vice, namely, *pride*, in consequence of which they loosed the reins, and gave unbounded freedom to their lawless desires to oppress the wretched. For this reason also he reproves their *tyranny.* But we ought also to draw from it a profitable doctrine, that it is impossible for us to escape punishment from the Lord, if we are puffed up with vain confidence and flatter ourselves. The Prophet here includes every kind of *pride*; whether men think that they are something, or admire their riches, and despise others in comparison of

themselves. God cannot endure any arrogancy, or suffer it to pass unpunished. Seeing therefore, that among a great variety of other crimes with which Babylon abounded, this was the greatest and most remarkable, it was chiefly by their pride that the wrath of God was kindled.

And will lay low the loftiness of tyrants. Arrogance was joined, as it usually is, to violence and cruelty; and therefore he adds *the loftiness of tyrants*; for when men despise others, this is followed by deeds of violence and injustice and oppression; and it is impossible for men to abstain from doing harm to others, if they do not lay aside all conceit and high estimation of themselves. Let us willingly, therefore, bring down our minds to true humility, if we do not wish to be cast down and laid low to our destruction.

12. *I will make a man more precious than pure gold.* Here he describes in a particular manner how cruel and savage will be the war that is carried on against Babylon. In like manner believers, instructed by these predictions, implore in the spirit of prophecy what is the utmost exertion of the cruelty exercised in wars, that the Persians and Medes may tear the infants from their mothers' breasts, *and dash them against the stones.* (Psalm 137:9.) The general meaning is, that Babylon will not only be destroyed, but will be devoted to utter extermination; for when he says that the life of *a man shall be more precious than gold*, he asserts that the enemies will be so eager to shed blood, that it will be impossible to rescue a man out of their hands at any price, because they will choose rather to kill than to accept a ransom.

It may be asked, Was this destruction as cruel as Isaiah here describes it to be? For history gives a different account, and Daniel himself, who was an eye-witness of this destruction, relates that the city was only taken, for the Medes and Persians spared the citizens and inhabitants. This argument has constrained some commentators to apply allegorically to all the reprobate what is here related of Babylon; but in doing so they have overstrained the passage, for shortly afterwards (verse. 17) the Prophet names the Medes and Persians. Besides, those threatenings which will afterwards follow in their proper order, against the Edomites, Moabites, the inhabitants of Tyre and of Egypt, and other nations, sufficiently show that the present discourse is directed literally against the Chaldeans, to whom the Prophet assigns the first rank; not that their destruction was as close at hand as that of other nations, but because none of the enemies of the Church were more dangerous.

It ought to be observed that Isaiah did not utter this prediction while the monarchy of Nineveh was still flourishing; but all that he predicted against heathen nations, during the whole course of his ministry, was collected into one book. Thus the order of events was not observed, but a similarity of subject was the reason why all these prophecies were put into one place. How comes it that Isaiah takes no notice of Nineveh, since he afterwards mentions that the Assyrians alone attacked the Jews, (for the Babylonians lived at peace with them,) but because he does not relate the history of his own time till the twenty-third chapter, but prophesies about the judgments

of God which happened after his death?

Now, when he declares that Babylon will be utterly destroyed, it is certain that he does not merely describe a single calamity, but includes the destruction which followed long afterwards. After having been subdued by the Persians, Babylon continued to flourish, and held the name and rank of a very celebrated city. And although the city Ctesiphon was founded for the purpose of attracting a portion of its splendor and wealth, yet the convenience of its situation, the costly buildings, and the fortifications of the city, rendered it, with the exception of royal rank, not inferior to Persis. Even after the death of Alexander the Great, when Seleucia was built at no great distance, still it could not obliterate the name and reputation of the ancient city. Hence we conclude that those events which are here foretold cannot be limited to a single period.

It is not without reason, however, that the Prophet pronounces such fearful threatening against them, since the revolution of the empire was the forerunner of the various calamities which followed afterwards. Though the people were not entirely slain, yet as the city was taken by storm, and by a sudden assault at the hour of midnight, while the whole court was carousing in drunken revels, it was impossible but that the Medes and Persians must have slain all that came in their way. There can be no doubt, therefore, that there was a great slaughter before the conquerors extended their protection to the whole of the people as having surrendered at discretion. Who can doubt that this haughty nation was roughly handled by barbarian conquerors, for in no other way could it have been reduced to obedience?

Having been gradually weakened, not long afterwards, Babylon again changed its master, and, after having been governed for a short period by Alexander, king of Macedon, immediately passed under the dominion of Seleucus, who endeavored by every method to degrade it till it was completely ruined. Thus, so long as God permitted the city to remain in existence, it presented a shameful and revolting spectacle to the whole world, that the accomplishment of the prophecy might be more evident and more impressive. Hence the Prophet Isaiah has good reason for asserting that the anger of God will not be appeased till that den of robbers be utterly destroyed.

A mortal and a man. So far as relates to the words, some translators render אנוש (*enosh*) a *warlike* or *eminent* man, and אדם (*adam*) an *ordinary* man. But as the etymology does not correspond to this view, and as I do not think that it occurred to the Prophet's mind, I consider it to be rather a repetition of the same sentiment, such as we know to have been customary among the Hebrews. The word פז, (*paz*,) which, in common with other translators, I have rendered *pure gold*, is supposed by some to mean *a pearl*; but from many passages of Scripture we conclude that it is *the purest and finest gold*

13. *Therefore I will shake the heavens.* This is another figure of speech which contributes in a similar manner to heighten the picture. God cannot

too earnestly urge this doctrine, not only to terrify the wicked, but to afford consolation to the godly, who are often distressed when it is well with the wicked, and when everything succeeds to their wish. David acknowledges that this happened to himself; for he says,

Surely in vain have I purified my heart,
and washed any hands in innocency. (Psalm 73:13.)

Properly, therefore, are these pictures set before our eyes, that they may plainly declare to us the destruction of the wicked. Thus it is as if Isaiah had said, "Though *heaven* and *earth* be *moved*, that the ungodly may be *shaken* and destroyed, nevertheless this will take place." They think that they are out of all danger, and that they have struck their roots so deep that they cannot be rooted out; but he shows that they are greatly deceived, for the Lord will *move both heaven and earth* rather than not cast them down headlong. Hence it follows that, though the world present to us a thousand supports both above and below, still there will be no permanency but through the favor of God. And if this is made known in judgments of God relating to particular cases, how much more in the universal judgment, when Christ will ascend his magnificent judgment-seat, to destroy the ungodly!

14. *And it shall be as the chased roe.* He shows that auxiliary troops will be of no avail to the Babylonians, and by these comparisons he describes the fear which shall seize the soldiers. Babylon employed not only her own soldiers, but likewise foreign and hired soldiers. He says that they will all be like *roes*, which are timorous creatures, and like scattered *sheep*, so that they will neither repair to their *standards* or their *post*, nor preserve any order.

Every one to his own land. Hence it is easily seen that the Prophet speaks, not only of the natives, or even of the strangers who had formerly dwelt there, but of foreigners who had been brought for the protection of the city. We have formerly said that the hearts of men are in the hand of God in such a manner that, according to his pleasure, either those who formerly were timid or cowardly persons suddenly acquire fresh courage, or those who formerly boasted loudly of being bold and daring lose their fierceness and become effeminate.

15. *Every one that is found shall be thrust through.* Here he confirms what he had formerly said, that none shall escape from Babylon, and that all who shall be there shall perish. Xenophon also relates that, by the command of Cyrus, they slew every one that they met in the beginning of the night, and next day all that had not laid down their arms. [207] But we have already said that the prediction extends farther; for that slaughter was only the forerunner of others, for which Babylon was purposely preserved, that it might frequently be ruined.

And every one that is joined to them shall fall by the sword. Some transla-

[207] Jarchi quotes the words, to add the drunken to the thirsty, (Deuteronomy 29:19,) add year to year, (Isaiah 29:1,) and add burnt-offerings to your sacrifices, (Jeremiah 7:21,) and his annotator Breithaupt translates the verb ספה (saphah) by a word in his native French, accueillir, which means to gather, or flock together. --- Ed

tors render this clause differently from what I have done; because the Hebrew verb ספה (*saphah*) signifies to *destroy* or *consume*, they read it, *Whosoever shall be destroyed*, and explain it as relating to the old men, who were already worn out with age, and could not otherwise live longer; as if he had said, "Not even the men of advanced age, who are sinking into the grave, shall be spared, even though they are half-dead, and appear to be already giving up the ghost." But because that is a feeble interpretation, and the verb ספה (*saphah*) signifies likewise *to add*, I rather agree with Jonathan [208] and others, who think that it denotes *companies of soldiers*, as in taking a city the soldiers are collected together in the form of a wedge, to ward off the attacks of the enemy. But it will perhaps be thought better to understand by it the *confederates* or *allies* who were *joined* to Babylon, and might be said to be united in the same body, in order to show more fully the shocking nature of this calamity.

16. *Their children shall be dashed in pieces.* He draws a picture of extreme cruelty. It is the utmost pitch of ferocity exercised by an invading army, when no age is spared, and infants, whose age makes it impossible for them to defend themselves, are slain. He represents it as still more shocking, when he adds, "*in the sight of* their parents." To the same purpose is what follows about *plundering houses* and *ravishing wives*; for these things happen when the enemies have forgotten all humanity, and are inflamed to cruelty, and wish that those whom they have subdued, and even their very name, should be rooted out.

17. *Behold I raise up against them the Medes.* The Prophet, having predicted the destruction of the Babylonians, describes also the authors, or says that God will be the author; and at the same time he explains in what manner, and by means of whom, it will be accomplished; for he says that *he will raise up the Medes*. He certainly could not have conjectured this by human reason, for there were no jealousies and no quarrels between the Babylonians and the Medes; and if there had been any such, what power did the Medes at that time possess that they could do the Babylonians any harm? Seeing, therefore, that no preparations had been made for the Medes carrying on war against them, it is very certain that this was spoken by divine inspiration, and more especially since he foretold these events more than a hundred years before they took place.

Who shall not think of silver, nor desire gold. [209] When he says that they shall not be covetous of *silver and gold*, he does not mean that the Medes were not guilty of plundering and covetousness, as if they were so generous that they despised *gold and silver*; but, on the contrary, he means that the battle will be cruel and bloody, that they will aim at nothing but a general slaughter. For example, the Spaniards of the present day, making it their chief object in war to plunder, more readily spare the life of men, and are

[208] Which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. — Eng. Ver.
[209] Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces. — Eng. Ver.

not so bloodthirsty as the Germans or the English, who think of nothing but slaying the enemy.

We ought not to think it strange that the Lord, though he is not cruel, yet makes use of agents who are so cruel, for he acts righteously even by the agency of wicked men, and is not stained with their wickedness. It would therefore be improper to form our judgment of the work of God from the executioners of it, for they are prompted either by ambition, or by covetousness, or by cruelty; but we ought to consider God's righteous punishment which the Babylonians deserved on account of their transgressions.

18. *And with bows they shall dash in pieces the children.* [210] Some render it, *they shall cut.* They think that the language is exaggerated, as if they made use of the children of the Babylonians in place of *arrows*, and afterwards dashed them to the ground, that they might be broken with greater violence. But I choose rather to take a more simple view of the words, that the cruelty of the Medes will be so great, that they will not spare even infant children, on whom men do not commonly lay hands unless where there is the utmost barbarity; and, in short, that no allowance will be made for age, as we have formerly said.

But we do not read that the Medes exercised so great cruelty, and Babylon stood and flourished for a very long period after that calamity; and although the seat of the empire was removed from it, still it retained its name and reputation. Besides, after the dawn of the following day, no cruelty was exercised but against those who bore arms. Though it was the Prophet's design to include other judgments of God which awaited the Babylonians, and by which the first calamity was followed long afterwards, yet it is not improperly or unseasonably that he describes the barbarous manners of the nation, that the Jews may be more fully aware that a just reward is prepared for the tyranny of Babylon. Nor can it be doubted that it was in reliance on this promise that believers afterwards presented that prayer;

Blessed is he who shall dash thy little ones against the stones.
(Psalm 137:9.)

19. *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms.* Here the Prophet intended to give a brief summary of his prophecy about the Babylonians, but enlarges it by some additions tending to show more fully that it will be completely destroyed. In this manner do the prophets speak of the punishment of the wicked, so as to leave no room for compassion by which they may relieve their minds. But the godly, though they may sometimes think that they are severely chastised, are yet supported by the confident hope that the Lord will have compassion on them, and will not altogether destroy them. Hence we may conclude that we ought not always to judge from outward appearances; for we would often think that the children of God are ruined when their salvation is at hand even in the midst of death.

Of Sodom and Gomorrah. This example is frequently employed by the

[210] Shall be as when God overthrew. (Heb. as the overthrowing.)–Eng. Ver.

Prophets, in order to inform us that, though the mode of punishment be not the same, yet, since the judgment of God is impartial, that memorable display which he gave in *Sodom* (Genesis 19:24) has a reference to all the reprobate, and that not less dreadful punishment awaits those who are hardened by similar obstinacy in their sins. They distinguish between the punishment of the elect people and the punishment of the wicked by this circumstance, that God reserves some *seed* for the Israelites, but none for the ungodly, which agrees with the words which we formerly met with,

Unless the Lord of hosts had left us a seed,
we should have been like Sodom. (Isaiah 1:9.)

But he pursues the wicked with vengeance that cannot be appeased, and therefore he threatens against them the same destruction which was executed against the inhabitants of *Sodom*, that is, utter perdition without any hope of escape.

Shall be like God's overthrowing. [211] He says that it is *God's overthrowing*, that we may not think that it happens by chance, or that it has proceeded from the will of men. As it was not at random that the thunderbolt fell from heaven on *Sodom*, so it was not at random that *Babylon* fell down, but by the righteous vengeance *of God*, who, being always like himself, executed righteous judgment on them; and in like manner will execute the same judgment on all the reprobate till the end.

When *Babylon* is called *the glory of kingdoms and splendid brightness,* this is added for the sake of amplification, (πρὸς αὔξησιν,) in order to inform us, that no glory or splendor can hinder God from bringing the wicked to nought; for that overturn, having been incredible, afforded a more remarkable proof of Divine power.

20. *It shall never be inhabited any more.* By the verb תשב, (*thesheb,*) *shall sit*, he means continuance; as if he had said, "There is no hope of restoring Babylon." All these forms of expression have precisely the same object, that the Babylonians will be destroyed with such a destruction that their ruin shall be perpetual. The picture is still further heightened by adding, that the desolation will be so great that *in that place neither will the Arabians pitch their tents, nor the shepherds their folds* That place must have been marvellously forsaken and uncultivated, when it was disregarded by those roving tribes; for the *Arabians* were a wandering and unsettled nation, and had no fixed abode. Having left their native country, because it was barren, and is therefore called Arabia *Deserta*, (for it is of that country that we speak,) they devoted themselves to feeding flocks and to hunting, and wandered without any fixed residence; for which reason also the Greeks called them σκηνήται, (*skenetai,*) *dwellers in tents.* Now the country around Babylon was exceedingly fertile before that calamity, which rendered this change the more astonishing and almost miraculous, either because the place lost its former fertility, or because the constant slaughter made all men

[211] But wild beasts of the desert (Heb. Ziim) shall lie there. — Eng. Ver.

abhor the sight of it. Undoubtedly the Prophet means that not only will the buildings be thrown down, but the very soil will be accursed.

21. *But the Ziim shall lie there.* [212] He continues the description of a desert place, and alludes to what he had formerly said, that Babylon will be destitute of inhabitants. In what way ציים (*tziim*) ought to be translated I cannot easily say, on account of the diversity in the opinions of translators, who differ in this, as in various names of animals and herbs. The use of these things did not continue among them; and the Jews, who are themselves ignorant and unskilful, do not retain the knowledge of these things, though there are some of them who know nothing about either herbs or animals, and yet have the impudence to boast of being physicians. Of those who think that ציים (*tziim*) is the name of a wild animal, some will have it to be a quadruped, and others, a bird; but that is a matter of little importance. For my own part, I have no doubt that the Prophet means either wild beasts which cannot be tamed, or birds which build their nests in distant forests.

It will not be amiss to explain what follows about *Satyrs* or *Pans*, who are called by the French, according to the various dialects of the provinces, sometimes *Luittons*, sometimes *Follets*, and sometimes *Loups-garouz* [213] As Satan deludes men by various tricks, so he gives to them various names. It is certain that ציים (*tziim*) is often used in Scripture for devils; and it is derived from ציה, (*tziyah*,) which means *dryness*, or, *a desert*, as איים (*iyim*) is derived from אים, (*ayam*,) which means *to terrify.* The Devil performs strange tricks by means of *Fauns* and *Satyrs*, and on that account their names are given to him.

The design of the Prophet is to show that the solitude will be so great, that not only will the place be deserted by men, but even the devils will there deceive by their tricks; for the devils avail themselves of the tendency of solitary places to produce terror. As enemies and robbers, by sallying forth from concealed lurking-places, frighten men the more, so devils take advantage of the night and the darkness, and of places distant from the view of men, that they may be able to excite greater terror in those who are naturally timorous.

22. *And Iim shall cry* [214] He expresses the same thing as had been formerly said, and shows how dreadful that change will be, in order to make it manifest that it proceeds from the judgment of God, and not from chance. The picture is even heightened by adding that this will take place, not in

[212] It is a gratifying proof of the progress of knowledge and of the decay of superstition, that such words as Hobgoblins, Hob-thrushes, Robin-goodfellows, and even Fairies, answering to the grotesque names which Calvin has brought from his own vernacular, have grown antiquated, and are not likely to be replaced by terms of modern date. Howell's definition of Loup-garou is a curious record of superstitious belief. "A mankind Wolfe, such a one as once being flesht on men, and children, will rather starve than feed on any thing else; also, one that, possessed with an extream and strange melancholy, beleeves he is turned Wolfe, and as a Wolfe behaves himselfe," etc. — Ed

[213] And the wild beasts of the islands (Heb. Iim) shall cry. — Eng. Ver.

[214] And hyoenas shall cry in their palaces, and jackals in their tabernacles of delight. — Stock

ordinary buildings, but in *delightful palaces* [215] While the shortness of time which is here laid down refers to the approaching calamity, it was at the same time necessary that the hope of believers should be held longer in suspense. I have said that Babylon was not so speedily overturned, and that the Medes did not inflict such a calamity upon it that it could be compared to a desert. He therefore said that it would quickly happen, because the beginnings of it were soon afterwards seen; for the Jews ought to have been satisfied with knowing that the punishment had not been threatened without good grounds.

And her time is near. The Holy Spirit also keeps in view our ardor and rashness. We would choose that God should immediately execute his judgments, and punish wicked men whenever we wish. But God knows what is the proper time, for which our eagerness does not allow us to wait. Yet if we would take into consideration his eternity, we should quickly find that by patience we laid the bridle on excessive haste; but as our eagerness can hardly be restrained in any other manner, God sometimes deals with us gently to some extent, by declaring that *He will soon come.* Again, let us not judge of the shortness of time according to our own views, but, disregarding the *days* of this life, let us raise our hearts to heaven. Especially let us learn to bow, whenever we are made to feel, even in a small degree, the judgments of God, though he delay their full accomplishment for a longer period.

And her days shall not be prolonged. This second clause is added for confirmation; as if he had said that the Lord hath appointed a day, and that none shall be admitted to obtain a truce.

[215] That thou shalt take up this proverb, (or, taunting speech.) — Eng. Ver.

Chapter 14

CHAPTER 14

Isaiah Chapter 14:1-32

1. For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

1. Jam miserebitur Iehova Iacob, et eliget adhuc Israelem, et faciet eos quiescere super terram suam; adjungeturque illis advena; sociabuntur, inquam, domui Iacob.

2. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

2. Et assument eos populi, inducentque eos in locum suum, possidebitque eos domus Israel in terra Iehovae, in servos et ancillas; et capient eos quorum fuerant captivi, imperabuntque oppressoribus suis.

3. And it shall come to pass, in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,

3. Et erit in die quo tibi requiem dederit Iehova a labore tuo, et a tremore tuo, et a servitudine dura quae imposita fuerat tibi:

4. That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! The golden city ceased!

4. Tunc sumes dictum hoc super Regem Babylonis, et dices: Quomodo cessavit exactor? Cessavit cupida auri?

5. The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.

5. Confregit Iehova baculum impiorum, sceptrum dominantium.

6. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

6. Quod percutiebat populos in ira plaga perpetua; dominabatur in iracundia Gentibus; si quis persequutionem patiebatur, non prohibuit.

7. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

7. Quievit, tranquilla est omnis terra, cecinerant laudem.

8. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

8. Etiam abietes laetatae sunt super te, cedri Libani; ex quo quievisti non ascendit succisor contra nos.

9. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth: it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

9. Infernus subtus commotus est propter te, in occursum adventus tui excitavit tibi mortuos, et omnes duces terrae suscitavit de soliis suis, omnes Reges gentium.

10. All they shall speak and say untothee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?

10. Omnes loquentur, et dicent tibi: Tu quoque infirmitate affectus es sicut nos? et similis factus es nobis?

11. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

11. Deposita est in sepulchrum magnificentia tua, et strepitus musicorum instrumentorum tuorum; subter te stratus est vermis, et operiunt te vermiculi.

12. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

12. Quomodo cecidisti e coelo Lucifer fili Aurorae? Quomodo in terram detractus es, sortem projiciens super Gentes (vel, debilitans gentes)?

13. For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

13. Atqui tu dicebas in corde tuo, Ascendam in coelum: in supernis juxta sidera Dei collocabo solium meum, et sedebo in monte testimonii, in lateribus Aquilonis.

14. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

14. Ascendam super excelsa nubium, et ero similis Altissimo.

15. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

15. Tu vero in sepulchrum detractus es, ad latera foveae.

16. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

16. Videntes te inclinabunt se, et attente intuebuntur. Anne hic est vir

ille tremefaciens terram, concutiens regna?

17. That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

17. Posuit orbem quasi desertum, urbes ejus excidit, vinctis suis non aperuit domum.

18. All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house:

18. Omnes Reges gentium, ipsi, inquam, omnes jacent cum gloria; quisque domi suae.

19. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

19. Tu autem projectus es e sepulchro tuo, tanquam surculus detestandus, tanquam vestes interfectorum, qui gladio caesi sunt, descendentes in foveam; ut cadaver proculcatum.

20. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evil doers shall never be renowned.

20. Non conjunges te cum eis in sepultura; quoniam terram tuam vastasti, populum tuum occidisti, non memorabitur perpetuo semen impiorum.

21. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

21. Praeparate filiis ejus mactationem, in iniquitate patrum suorum; ne consurgant et possideant terram, atque impleant superficiem orbis urbibus.

22. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord.

22. Nam consurgam super eos dicit Iehova exercituum, et exterminabo e Babylone nomen et reliquias, filium et nepotem, dicit Iehova.

23. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts.

23. Et ponam eam in possessionem erinacei, et in stagna aquarum, et scopabo eam scopa evacuans, dicit Iehova exercituum.

24. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand;

24. Juravit Iehova exercituum, dicendo: Si non quemadmodum cogitavi, sic factum est; et quemadmodum consultavi, ita stabit;

25. That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

25. Ut conteram Assur in terra mea, et in montibus meis conculcem eum; et recedat ab eis jugum illius, et onus illius ab humero ejus auferatur.

26. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

26. Hoc consilium quod consultatum est super totam terram; et haec manus extenta super omnes gentes.

27. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

27. Quoniam Iehova exercituum decrevit, et quis dissolvet? Manus ejus extenta, et quis avertet eam?

28. In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.

28. Anno quo mortuus est Rex Achaz, fuit hoc onus.

29. Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.

29. Ne laeteris universa tu Philistaea; quoniam confracta sit virga percutientis te. Nam de radice colubri nascetur regulus, et fructus ejus serpens ignitus.

30. And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety; and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.

30. Et pascentur primogeniti pauperum, et inopes secure accubabunt; et fame interire faciam radicem tuam, et reliquias tuas occidet.

31. Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times.

31. Ulula porta, clama civitas, liquefacta es Palestina, universa tu. Quoniam ab Aquilone venit fumus; nec quisquam solus praefixo ejus die.

32. What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

32. Quid autem respondebitur nuntiis gentis? Nempe quod Iehova fundavit Sion, et in ea fiduciam habebunt pauperes populi ejus.

1. *For the LORD will have compassion on Jacob.* The particle כי (*ki*) having various significations, we might take it as signifying *But*, and might connect this verse with the former verse in the following manner: *But* (or, *yet*) *the Lord will have compassion on Jacob.* But I consider it to be better and more appropriate to view the particle כי (*ki*), in this as well as in many other passages, as used for assigning a reason; and thus the meaning will be, "God will destroy Babylon, *because he will have compassion on Israel*, whom he cannot despise or reject." Hence we see that the Prophet had hitherto endeavored to soothe the grief of a wretched people, in order to inform them that they ought to entertain good hopes in the midst of their afflictions, of which *God would be the avenger.* (Psalm 94:1.) Here, therefore, as in a picture, Babylon is contrasted with the Church of God; Babylon, I say, elevated to the highest power, which had plunged the Church into such a miserable and afflicted condition, that it was not probable that she could ever be raised up again. But the Lord casts down Babylon from her lofty situation, and thus testifies that he cares for his people, however mean and

despicable they may be. It yields very great consolation to us to learn that the whole world is governed by God for our salvation. All things are directed to this object, that those whom he has elected may be saved, and may not be overwhelmed by any changes, however numerous, that shall befall them.

It will be asked, Was there a period during which God *had no compassion*? Undoubtedly, he always *had compassion*; but while the people were distressed by heavy calamities, it was not perceived; for, having their minds previously occupied with a view of God's anger, and, judging from outward appearances, they could not perceive *God's compassion*. Yet the Lord was always like himself, and never laid aside his nature. Thus it is proper to distinguish between the knowledge which springs from faith and the knowledge which springs from experience; for when the tokens of God's anger are visible all around, and when the judgment of the flesh leads us to believe that he is angry, his favor is concealed from us; but faith raises our hearts above this darkness, to behold God in heaven as reconciled towards us. What follows is somewhat more startling.

And will yet choose Israel, or, *will again choose Israel.* God's election is eternal. He does not *choose* us as if this had never before come into his mind; and as we were *chosen before the foundation of the world*, (Ephesians 1:4,) so he never *repents of his choice*. (Romans 11:29.) But when the Lord chastises his people, this has the appearance of rejecting them; as we learn from the frequent complaints of the saints, *Lord, why hast thou cast us off*? (Psalm 74:1.) We look at God's rejection or election according to our weakness, and judge of his feelings toward us by the outward action. (I speak of the knowledge which is derived from experience, and which is corrected by the light of faith.) Accordingly, when the Lord calls us, that is, confirms his election, he is said to *choose* us; and when he gives evidence that he is displeased, he is said to reject us. The meaning, therefore, is, "Though the Lord has treated his people so severely, as if he had rejected them; yet by the actual event he will at length show and prove that he has adopted them, by giving abundant evidence of his election, and by *having compassion on them* for ever."

We now may readily conclude what we have already said, namely, that the chastisements which the godly endure are widely different from that deadly stroke, however light it may be, which is inflicted on the ungodly. The godly are immediately led to consider their election, the confident belief of which cheers their hearts; but the ungodly see nothing but darkness, bottomless pits, and frightful desolation on all sides. Whenever, therefore, the Lord chastises us, we ought immediately to call to remembrance this distinction, that we may strengthen our hearts by the hope of a happier condition.

And shall cause them to rest in their own land. In their return he holds out an evidence of favor and reconciliation; for to the children of Abraham the *land* of Canaan was a pledge of their adoption.

And the stranger shall be joined to them. The Prophet foretells the calling

of the Gentiles; as if he had said, "Not only will the Lord restore them to the possession of the land of Canaan, but will enlarge them by a great increase; for he will associate the Gentiles with them, that the two peoples may become one and the same body." This benefit, therefore, is not limited to a short period, but extends to the whole Church, which the Lord promises to place in safety; for he speaks, not of the Church in his own time, but of the Church which shall be till the kingdom of Christ, and during his kingdom; otherwise that addition would have been inappropriate.

2. *And the peoples shall take them.* He means that the foreign nations will be willing to become their companions, and in such a manner that they will not scruple to discharge the duties of servants. An instance of this was given, (Ezra 1:6,) when the people were brought back from Babylon; but that was only a slight foretaste of those things which were accomplished by Christ, to whom all these statements must be referred. The Lord softened the hearts of the nations, who regarded that people with deadly hatred, so that by their guidance he brought them back to their native country, and bestowed on them their former liberty. But so far were many of the nations from assisting the Jews, after their return from Babylon, that all the neighbors earnestly entered into a league to distress them. (Ezra 4:4.) They certainly attempted not only to banish them from the land of Canaan, but to drive them entirely out of the world. These things therefore were done in the kingdom of Christ, to whom

has been given all power, not only in earth, but also in heaven, (Matthew 28:18,)

and by whom the Gentiles, who formerly had been strangers, were united to the Jews, so as not only to assist them in keeping their inheritance, but also to submit calmly and willingly to bear the yoke. It is with this view that he adds —

And the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids. The Jews being in some sort the *first-born* (Exodus 4:22) in the house of God, we who are joined to them appear as if we had assembled under their roof; for they go before us, and hold the highest rank above all the nations, and undoubtedly would still hold it, if they did not by their ingratitude deprive themselves of these great privileges. And yet their ingratitude did not hinder the Lord from actually performing these things; for the Apostles, being Jews, subdued foreign nations by the word of God, and even those very nations *by whom they were formerly carried captive*, and to whom they had been tributaries, such as the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Persians, and finally, the Roman empire; so that all the nations might justly be called their inheritance, though they did not wish to rule over them, but to gain them to God, that they might acknowledge the same Lord and Prince as themselves. These statements must therefore be referred to the dominion and yoke of Christ, to whom the Jews subdued the Gentiles, not to a government of an outward nature, such as the Jews falsely imagine.

3. *And it shall be in that day.* He adds a confirmation of the former promises. In this way the Lord provides for our weakness; for we find it difficult to render a full belief to his word, especially when the state of our affairs appears to contradict it. But by this method the Lord chooses to put our faith to the test, when he still promises the salvation of which all hope has been taken away.

From thy sorrow, and from thy trembling, and from thy hard bondage. He confirms what he has said by a variety of expressions, that, by removing all doubt, we may not cease to rely on his promises, even when our affairs are desperate. Yet by the same considerations he at the same time exhorts the Jews to gratitude, that they may never bury in forgetfulness a work of God so excellent and so worthy of remembrance. He expressly intended to mention the *yoke and bondage*, that the Jews might be fully aware that the Lord would take away these obstructions whenever he pleased, and that they could not at all prevent him from immediately delivering his people, when he thought fit. We ought also to apply this to our own use, in the present day, with reference to the wretched bondage and wicked yoke of Antichrist by which Christians are bound. Though they are confined and bound by snares and chains in every direction, they have God for their deliverer, who will quickly remove all difficulties and every kind of annoyances; and this ought to be extended to all sorrows, distresses, and afflictions.

4. *Then thou shalt take up this saying.* [216] By the term *witty saying*, or *parable*, (for the Hebrew word משל (*mashal*) denotes "sayings that are weighty and remarkable, and worthy of being observed,") he shows that the ruin of Babylon will be so great that it will even become *a proverb*, which usually happens in great and astonishing events.

How hath the oppressor ceased? The word *How* throws it into the form of a question expressive of astonishment and ridicule. It might be thought incredible that Babylon, furnished with such abundant wealth and forces, should be overturned and fall into the hands of the enemy. Justly, therefore, does he ridicule their foolish and vain confidence, that, being swelled with haughtiness, they thought that they were invincible, and were placed beyond the reach of all danger.

Yet it may be thought to be inconsistent with the modesty of godly persons to scoff at the misery of others, for they ought rather to have pitied them. But it is not inconsistent with compassion, when our zeal is regulated by the justice of the judgment of God; for in that case we may with human feelings compassionate those who perish through their folly, and at the same time laugh at their insolence and madness. As the Lord scoffs at them, laughing at their senselessness, so he bids us, through zeal for his glory, mock at them; not that we may be swelled with impudence, but that we may praise his goodness and power. By this example, therefore, we may scoff at the enemies of God, when they are vanquished or brought down, as we may scoff

[216] The golden city ceased! — Eng. Ver.

at Antichrist, whose power we daily see diminished and gradually falling into decay.

How hath the city covetous of gold ceased! [217] The word מדהבה, (*madhebah*,) in this clause, might be rendered *golden*, or *ornamented with gold*; but as it is connected with the word *Oppressor* or *Tyrant*, it probably denotes covetousness and insatiable greediness for *gold*, to which the Babylonians were subject. It is usually the case with great empires and states and wealthy nations, that the greater their abundance, the stronger is their greediness to possess more. [218]

5. *The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked.* He answers the question which has just been put; for he did not intend that believers should doubt that it would happen, but rather that they should be amazed at such wonderful works of God; for the question had a tendency to arouse their minds to more earnest attention. It is as if he had said that it did not happen at random or through the blind violence of fortune that they have not been oppressed by continual bondage, but that it ought to be ascribed to the providence of God, who *hath broken* that hard yoke of bondage. Now, the ungodly are amazed at such works, and remain bewildered, because they do not see the reason; but the godly know that this ought to be ascribed to God. Let us therefore learn to admire the works of God, and while we are amazed at them, let us acknowledge him to be the Author; and let us not think that any of them ought to be lightly passed over, especially when he displays his power for redeeming his Church, when by his wonderful power he delivers each of us from the bondage of the devil, from the tyranny of Antichrist, from eternal death. It is no ordinary work, of which any part ought to be ascribed to the power of man or to any other cause.

To *the staff of the wicked* he adds *the sceptre of the rulers;* and by this repetition he means that no imperial power can support unjust tyranny. And immediately afterwards he states more clearly that the monarchy of the Babylonians would be destroyed, because it was unjust and tyrannical, when he says (Isaiah 14:6) that the people had been struck with *an incurable stroke*, [219] and that there was no limit to the violence, because they had rioted with impunity in unbounded licentiousness. This reminds us that at length God will not spare tyrants, though he may wink at them for a time. The same destruction awaits them as, we learn, befell Babylon; for *the Lord is righteous*, (Psalm 11:7,) and is always like himself.

7. and **8.** *They break forth into singing.* Here he shows how greatly tyrants are hated by the whole world. When they are dead or ruined, all men break forth into joy, and express the feelings which they formerly entertained towards the tyrants, and which they dissembled through fear. Then

[217], " (madhebah,) being a Chaldee word, was probably the epithet by which that people distinguished their capital, as the Italians say, Florence the fair, Padua the learned, etc." — Stock

[218] With a continued stroke. (Heb. a stroke without removing.) — Eng Ver. A stroke without intermission. — Stock With a stroke unremitted. — Lowth

[219] Hell from beneath (or, the grave) is moved for thee. — Eng. Ver.

do their hatred and spite burst forth, and not only do men make known their joy, but even the dumb creatures, as the Prophet, for the sake of amplification, adds *the fir-trees and the cedars.* As tyranny overturns everything, so when tyranny is done away, everything appears to be restored to its original condition.

Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. To make the discourse more energetic, he adds a personification, in which he introduces the trees as speaking and congratulating themselves that, since the tyrant is dead, they will now stand gladly and at ease. The design of the Prophet is to show, that the Heavenly Judge cannot endure tyrants, who are abhorred by the whole world. Hence, we ought to conclude that, though under the sway of tyrants unhappy men are silent, and do not venture to open their mouths, yet the Lord listens to their secret groans. Let us not wonder therefore that tyrants come to such a dismal end; for God, who is a witness of the injuries which they have inflicted, must in the exercise of his justice assist the innocent.

9. *Hell from beneath is moved for thee.* [220] As he had formerly attributed gladness to the trees, so now, by a similar figure, he attributes speech to *the dead* [221] He arouses them, as it were, from their *graves*, to mock at the pride of this tyrant. The whole passage is ironical, and full of keen sarcasm. At the approach of kings, the people tremble, and come forth to meet and receive them with pompous display. The Prophet makes a fictitious representation, that when this tyrant shall die and go down to *the grave, the dead* will go forth to meet and honor him, but with such honor as he deserves. As if he had said, "Not only the living, but also *the dead* will rejoice at his death. *The dead* also will treat him respectfully according to his deserts."

10. *All shall speak and say to thee.* These are taunts with which the dead jeer the tyrant who has joined them, as if they asked him what is the reason why he too is dead like other men. Struck with the singularity of the event, Isaiah pretends that they inquire with astonishment about it as something that could not be believed.

Art thou become like unto us? Tyrants are blinded by their greatness, and do not think that they are mortal, and even make themselves to be half-gods and adore themselves. On this account it is made known after their death that they shared in the condition of all mortals, to which they did not think that they were liable. It is in this sense that the dead, not without bitter scorn, reproach him for having *become like unto themselves;* for "death alone," as the poet says, "acknowledges how small are the dimensions of the bodies of men." [222] David also, speaking of princes and their high rank, says,

[220] The dead. — Eng. Ver. The mighty dead. — Stock. "Rephaim, the gigantic spectres. Ghosts are commonly magnified by vulgar terror to a stature superior to the human." — Rosenmuller

[221] The allusion is obviously to a passage from Juvenal which the author, on a former occasion (See page 174), quoted at greater length. — Ed

[222] Son of the morning. — Eng. Ver

I have said, ye are gods; but you shall die like men, and fall like one of the common people. (Psalm 82:6, 7.)

The bodies of princes, like those of the common people, must at length become corrupted and be devoured by worms, even though costly and splendid sepulchres be built for them.

11. *Thy pomp is laid down in the grave.* He mentions royal pomp, that this change may be more attentively considered by comparing the latter with the former; and he shows that that pomp could not prevent him from being reduced to the same level with other men. Under the term *musical instruments*, he includes all the luxuries and enjoyments in which kings are wont to indulge; because not only does the sweetness of music cause them to forget death, but the mad *sound* of them drives away all sadness, and in some respects stupifies the minds of men.

The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. In this second clause, the dead say jestingly, "Thou hast obtained a bed worthy of thee; for *the worms* serve thee for tapestry or a soft couch, and *the worm* serves for a splendid coverlet." In a word, there is here exhibited to us a lively painting of the foolish confidence of men, who, intoxicated with their present enjoyments and prosperity, flatter themselves. This doctrine ought to be carefully pondered; for though men be well aware of their condition, and have death before their eyes, yet overrun by ambition, and soothed by pleasures, and even fascinated by empty show, they forget themselves.

12. *How art thou fallen from heaven!* Isaiah proceeds with the discourse which he had formerly begun as personating the dead, and concludes that the tyrant differs in no respect from other men, though his object was to lead men to believe that he was some god. He employs an elegant metaphor, by comparing him to *Lucifer*, and calls him the *Son of the Dawn*; [223] and that on account of his splendor and brightness with which he shone above others. The exposition of this passage, which some have given, as if it referred to Satan, has arisen from ignorance; for the context plainly shows that these statements must be understood in reference to the king of the Babylonians. But when passages of Scripture are taken up at random, and no attention is paid to the context, we need not wonder that mistakes of this kind frequently arise. Yet it was an instance of very gross ignorance, to imagine that *Lucifer* was the king of devils, and that the Prophet gave him this name. But as these inventions have no probability whatever, let us pass by them as useless fables.

Casting the lot upon the nations, or *weakening the nations.* [224] Translators have mistaken the meaning of this clause, by rendering the participle חולש (*holesh*) passively, *Thou art become weak*, for its signification is active. But as the verb from which it is derived signifies *to cast a lot*, and as the preposition על, (*gnal,*) *upon*, is here added, it is best to take it in this meaning, that, as

[223] Which didst weaken the nations. — Eng. Ver.

[224] For the origin and application of this "proverb," see Com. on the Gospel according to John, vol. 1 p. 223, note 1: — Ed

the ruler and disposer of all countries, he directed them by lot, or held them as his own possessions. And yet I do not reject the other meaning, that he *weakened the nations*

13. *Yet thou saidst in thy heart.* These words must be connected with what goes before. *To say* means here, according to the custom of the Hebrew language, *to resolve in one's own mind.* The Prophet ridicules the pride of the Babylonian monarch, who, relying on his greatness, ventured to promise to himself uninterrupted success, as if he had the power of determining the events of his life. In him there is exhibited to us a mirror of the madness of pride with which ungodly men are swelled, and which sometimes they even vomit out. Nor ought we only to behold here the person of a single tyrant, but the blasphemous rage of all the ungodly, who form their resolutions as if they could dispose of everything according to their pleasure; as their plans are also beautifully described by James,

We shall go into that city, we shall transact business, we shall make gain, though at the same time they know not what to-morrow shall bring. (James 4:13.)

They do not consider that they are in the hands of God, but believe that they will do everything by their own ability.

I will ascend into heaven. In these words, and those which immediately follow, the boasting is so absurd that it is impossible to believe that they proceeded from the lips of a mortal man; but as the Prophet did not intend to quote the very words which Nebuchadnezzar employed, let us be satisfied with examining the subject itself. Undoubtedly, all who claim for themselves more than human nature will allow, may be said to "attack heaven itself after the manner of the giants," as the proverb runs. [225] Hence it follows that whatever they undertake will be destructive to them; more especially every one who goes beyond the limits of his calling provokes the wrath of God against himself by his rashness. Let every one therefore be satisfied with his lot, and learn not to aim at anything higher, but, on the contrary, to remain in his own rank in which God has placed him. If God stretch out his hand, and lift us up higher, we ought to go forward; but no one ought to take it on himself, or to strive for it from his own choice. And even those who are raised to a higher rank of honor ought to conduct themselves humbly and submissively, not with any pretended modesty, but with minds so thoroughly depressed that nothing can lift them up.

I will sit on the mountain of the testimony, [226] *on the sides of the north.* This plainly shows the reason why the Prophet especially accuses the Babylonian tyrant of so great madness, and what the Prophet means by such figures. He desired to *sit on the mountain of the testimony.* By this effrontery he attempted to make himself equal to God. Though he reasoned, after the manner of men, that he could obtain a victory over the Jews, yet, reckoning

[225] Upon the mountain of the congregation. — Eng. Ver.

[226] "In the outer court, that is, in the part which was chosen for the north side; as it is said, (Leviticus 1:11,) on the side of the altar northward." — Jarchi

as nothing the assistance of God, by whom he had often heard that they were protected, it was as if he had endeavored to destroy the very heavens. For Mount Zion he uses the expression *the sides of the north*, according to the description,

Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, [227]
the city of the great King. (Psalm 48:2.)

He had formerly called it *the mountain of the testimony.* This word is derived from יעד, (*yagnad*;), which signifies to *unite*, to *assemble*, and *to be agreed.* On this account מועד (*mogned*) signifies both an *assembly* and an *appointed day*; and, in a word, it may relate to time, place, and persons. But here I prefer to view it as a *Covenant*; for the Lord, speaking by Moses, calls the Tabernacle מועד, (*mogned*,) and says, *I will meet with you there.* (Exodus 25:21, 22, 29:42.) Let us not think, therefore, that it means an assembly of men, as when irreligious persons assemble to their fairs or festivals, but that the Lord intended to give a token of his presence, and there to ratify his covenant. This ought to be carefully observed; for the blasphemy of the wicked king is proved by this, that he attacked heaven itself rather than an earthly place.

14. *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.* [228] It might certainly be thought strange that the Prophet thus accuses the Babylonian monarch, as if he wished to make himself equal to God, since, as we have said, this thought could scarcely enter into the mind of a man without making him absolutely shudder. As there is a seed of religion implanted in us by nature, so we are constrained, even against our will, to entertain the belief of some superior being who excells all things; and no man is so mad as to wish to cast down God from his throne; for we are instructed by nature that we ought to worship and adore God. Hence also the Gentiles, though they were ignorant of God, rendered worship to their idols; and therefore it may be thought improbable that the king of Babylon wished to drive out God, and to reign in heaven.

And yet the Prophet does not accuse him falsely. Though the ungodly do not believe that they ought to reign instead of God, yet, when they exalt themselves more than is proper, they take away a portion of what belongs to him, and claim it for themselves, which is the same as if they wished to pull him down from his throne. And what did Satan say when he deceived our first parent? *Ye shall be as gods.* (Genesis 3:5.) Consequently, all who dare to ascribe more to themselves than God allows are chargeable with exalting themselves against God, as if they declared war against him; for where pride is, contempt of God must be there.

We ought also to observe that argument which we lately noticed, that the tyrant, by assailing the Church, which was God's holy heritage, might be

[227] "I will ascend above the heights of the thick cloud. My lofty rank does not permit me to dwell with men. I will make for me a small cloud in the air, and will dwell in it." — Jarchi

[228] "It is curious that the Welsh language still preserves this meaning of the word beth, a last home; for it is the appropriate term in that language for a grave." — Stock

said intentionally to attack God. Since, therefore, he profaned the heavenly sanctuary, the language ought not to be thought exaggerated. Hence also we obtain a doctrine full of most valuable consolation, for we are taught that the ungodly exalt themselves against God whenever they attack his Church. He is not accused of exalting himself above angels, but of endeavoring to crush the Church of God. The worship of God is not now confined to one place, but is as extensive as the whole world. Whenever, therefore, men call on the name of God, if any tyrant rise up to oppress the godly, let us know that he attacks not men, but God himself, who at length will not endure to be insulted.

We shall afterwards meet with a similar example in Sennacherib, of whom Isaiah declares that, while he threatened and reproached Zion, he threatened and reproached God himself. Let us therefore know that we are under the protection of God in such a manner, that any one who gives us trouble will also have God for his enemy.

He that hurteth you, says he, hurteth the apple of mine eye. (Zechariah 2:8.)

He likewise testifies that he *dwells in the midst of* the Church, (Psalm 46:5,) so that no one can attack the Church without receiving the first strokes; and therefore he will avenge the injuries which the Church endures, though he may permit her to be afflicted for a time.

15. *But thou shalt be brought down to the grave.* He formerly explained the intention of the king of Babylon, which was, that he should place his throne above the clouds; but he now contrasts with it an opposite event, namely, *the sides of the pit* or *ditch*, that is, some corner of a sepulcher into which he shall be thrown. He had formerly said that the king of Babylon wished to be carried up *to Mount Zion, to the sides of the north*, because that was a very lofty situation, and widely seen. He now uses the word *sides* in an opposite sense, as if he had said that he would have an abode in the most contemptible part of a sepulcher, as when one is thrust into a mean and despicable corner. In a wide and large sepulcher they place the dead bodies of honorable men in the middle; but the Prophet means that he will be thrown into a corner, or into the outer edges. Thus the Lord from on high laughs at the pride of the ungodly, so that, when they shall have swallowed up everything by their covetousness, and shall have burst through the clouds and heaven itself by their effrontery, he will at length expose them to the mockery of all, after having, in the twinkling of an eye, overturned their schemes.

16. *They that see thee.* The Prophet again, personating the dead, mocks at that wicked king. It might also be viewed as relating to the living; but it is better to apply the whole of this discourse to the dead, if we would not rather refer it to the grave itself, which amounts nearly to the same thing. We are wont to stretch out our neck when we meet with anything that is strange, or that deserves our attention. Thus, when it was thought to be a

kind of prodigy that this king, who possessed so great power, had died, the Prophet says that the eyes of all men were directed towards him, to look at him earnestly, as if they scarcely believed their own eyes.

Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that shook kingdoms? They first ask, if it be possible that he who, by the slightest expression of his will, *made the earth to tremble*, should be so quickly and easily laid low. Next, he mentions that this man was eager, but is unable, to destroy everything, and shows that tyrants, with all their cruelty, are like clouds, which pour down a sudden shower of rain or hail, as if they would destroy everything, but are scattered in a moment. This comparison was also employed by the good old Athanasius, when some one threatened him with the rage of the Emperor Julian. Isaiah shows that this change proceeds from the hand of God, who, by the slightest expression of his will, can overturn the whole world.

17. *He made the world as a wilderness.* He expresses the cruel and savage disposition of the tyrant, by saying that he *brought desolation on the world*, that he *overthrew cities*, that he *did not release prisoners.* It is sometimes the custom of conquerors to release prisoners, in order to win their hearts by kindness; but tyrants choose rather to be feared than to be loved. They think that the only way to reign is to strike terror into all by inexorable cruelty. There is no reason to wonder, therefore, that their end is so wretched and dismal; for it is impossible that the Lord should not, after having chastised his Church by their cruelty, give them like for like, and withhold all compassion from those who failed to exercise compassion to others. He therefore shows how wretched tyrants are, for they have God for their enemy, and are hated by men.

18. *All the kings of the nations.* He contrasts the king of Babylon with other kings, in order to show that, after his death, he will be more wretched than all the rest. And thus by comparison he gives a more enlarged view of the judgment of God, by which he would avenge the injuries done to his Church. This passage is the reason why I do not venture to limit, what Isaiah here foretells about the king of Babylon, to the person of Nebuchadnezzar alone; because it does not appear from history that he was denied burial. The Jews, indeed, relate that Evil-merodach gave orders that he should be dug out of his grave, because the nobles of the kingdom would not venture to pay homage to him, unless there were evidence that his father was dead; but Jerome, though otherwise credulous enough, treats this as a fable.

He therefore describes, not a single man, but a whole dynasty; and, in like manner, when Scripture speaks of Antichrist, it includes the whole duration of his reign. Consequently, as if in the person of one man, the Prophet ridicules the pride of all those tyrants, and threatens what shall be their end, namely this, that they shall not have a spot of earth to bury them, though formerly they were insatiable whirlpools, and could not be satisfied with any possessions. They who have scarcely a foot of earth still retain their right to have a grave, which was also highly prized by the patriarchs; for it was

reckoned disgraceful to be deprived of it.

19. *But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch.* He shows that the kings of Babylon will be loaded with such disgrace, that they will even be cast out of the sepulcher which they possessed by inheritance, and will exhibit a disgraceful spectacle. It may be asked, Is it of so great value in the sight of God to be buried with our fathers, that to be deprived of it should be reckoned a punishment and a curse? I answer, he does not here speak of the grave, as if it were necessary for salvation; but it ought justly to be reckoned disgraceful to be denied burial. And first, we ought to consider why burial has been so highly valued among all nations. This undoubtedly arose from the patriarchs, whose bodies the Lord commanded to be buried in the hope of the last resurrection. The carcases of beasts are cast out, because they are only fit for rotting; but ours are laid in the earth, that being kept there, they may await the last day, when they shall rise to enjoy a blessed and immortal life in union with the soul.

Various superstitions have arisen as to the interment of bodies. This has undoubtedly been occasioned by the craftiness of Satan, who usually corrupts and perverts everything that is good and useful, for he devised innumerable contrivances by which he might dazzle the eyes of men. We need not wonder that the Jews had a great variety of ceremonies connected with this subject, and they cannot be blamed on account of it, for Christ had not yet been revealed, and consequently they had not so clear a revelation of the resurrection. But in our time the case is very different, for we plainly see the resurrection in Christ, and, every vail having now been removed, we behold clear promises which were more obscure to the Jews. If any one, therefore, were again to introduce and renew those ancient rites, he would undoubtedly darken the light, and, by putting a vail on Christ who has been revealed to us, would offer to him a high insult. Yet it is not useless to pay attention to burial, for it is the symbol of the last resurrection, which we still look for; but let there be no superstition and ostentatious display in funerals, which all godly persons ought to detest.

Now, if any one has been entirely deprived of burial, we must examine the cause. Many of the prophets, martyrs, and holy men have been deprived of it. We hear the Church bewailing that

the dead bodies of the servants of God have been thrown down to wild beasts and to the fowls of heaven, and that there is none to bury them, (Psalm 79:2, 3;)

and every day we see the servants of Christ burned, or drowned, or hanged; and yet their death is glorious and blessed in the sight of God. As the cross of Christ was blessed, so crosses, chains, prisons, and deaths, which are endured by his members, share in the same blessing, and far exceed the prosperity and trappings and splendor and majesty of kings, so that, following the example of Paul, they boldly venture even to glory in them. (Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 12:5; Galatians 6:14.)

But as to those whom the Lord permits to remain unburied, when we see nothing else than a token of his anger, we must fall back on this statement and others of the same kind. For example, Jeremiah threatened Jehoiakim with *the burial of an ass*, because he deserved to be ranked with beasts rather than with men, who, even after death, are distinguished from beasts by being buried. Thus it was proper that the king of Babylon, who had exalted himself above all men, should be cast down below all men, so as even to be deprived of ordinary burial. Isaiah, therefore, foretells that he will not be buried *in his own house,* that is, in the sepulcher of his fathers, which came to him by inheritance; for we must not suppose that sepulchres were within houses. [229] The comparisons which are added express more strongly the disgrace which was due to that tyrant. As hurtful or useless trees are rooted out, so he shows that the king of Babylon does not deserve to have any place among men.

As the garments of those who are slain. They who fall in the field of battle are not buried in the ordinary way, but their bloody and stinking bodies are trodden down, and are thrown into a ditch along with their rotten *garments*, that they may not infect the air with their offensive smell; and no one deigns to touch the very *garments* defiled by mire and blood, lest he should be polluted by them. Which of the kings of Babylon it was that suffered this we cannot tell; but undoubtedly it was fulfilled.

20. *For thou hast laid thy land desolate.* This is the reason why he says that the king of Babylon did not deserve burial. He who has laid the *earth* desolate does not deserve that *the earth* shall receive him into its bosom and cover him. As *the earth* supports the living, so it covers the dead, and keeps them till the coming of Christ. It is therefore a just punishment of cruelty, when the *earth* refuses to receive into her bosom those who have dishonored her. There is added a threatening still more severe, that the Lord will also inflict on posterity the remainder of the punishment.

The seed of the wicked shall not be continually remembered. There are two ways in which we may explain this clause, either that *the remembrance of the seed of the wicked* will not be of long duration, or that it will be altogether extinguished. The word לעולם [230] (*legnolam*) may be translated in various ways, for it may refer either to the past or to the future. If we refer it to the past, the meaning will be, "Although *the seed of the wicked* be renowned, לעולם, (*legnolam*,) *for a time*, yet the remembrance of it will at length pass away." If we refer it to the future, the meaning will be, "God will extinguish the seed of the wicked, so that it shall never again be mentioned." It usually happens that the Lord curses *the seed of the wicked*, as, on the other hand, he blesses *the seed* of the godly, (Proverbs 10:7;) and as *the righteous shall be held in perpetual remembrance*, (Psalm 112:6,) so *the remembrance of the*

[229] עולם (gnolam) is derived from ,עלם (gnalam,) to hide, and is defined by the lexicographers to mean ``an age, a time hidden from men, either unlimited and eternal or limited.'' Our author treats it as capable of meaning either time past or time to come. --- Ed

[230] For the bittern. — Eng. Ver. , so that hedgehogs shall dwell in it. — Sept

wicked must be destroyed and *cut off.* (Psalm 34:16.) Though we do not always behold these things with our eyes, yet there are abundant and clear proofs of the fact, by which it is fully confirmed.

But we must attend to the reason of this vengeance. The Lord punishes the pride of wicked men, who wish to spread their name, and to leave a perpetual remembrance of them; for all irreligious men have this for the object of their labors and exertions. On the other hand, the Lord blots out their name and remembrance, which appeared to be inscribed on lasting records; and the result is, that they are not only despised but even abhorred by all men. This happens to all tyrants, that though, while they live, they are universally applauded and flattered, yet after they are dead, they and their posterity are universally abhorred. It is therefore evident that they are detested by God, by angels, and by men.

21. *Prepare slaughter for his children.* Here Isaiah prophesies more plainly than before against the king of Babylon. He speaks of the whole of his descendants, to whom he intimates that this destruction extends. We must keep in mind what we formerly said, that hitherto the Prophet has spoken not of a single man, but of a whole dynasty; and now he removes all doubt as to the metaphorical language. The rendering given by the old translation, *Prepare his children for the slaughter,* does not agree well; for the preposition ל, (*lamed,*) which is prefixed, evidently shows that it ought to be translated *to* or *for the children.*

We must see to whom this discourse relates. It must be understood that reference is made, though not directly expressed, to some servants as officers or executioners, whom the Lord orders to be in a state of *preparation* for executing his judgments. And who were they? Partly the Medes and Persians, and partly others by whom Babylon was completely overthrown; for, as we have formerly said, Babylon was not entirely destroyed when the Persians subdued it. He therefore addresses those whom the Lord, by his eternal decree, had appointed to destroy Babylon. This mode of expression is more energetic than if he had merely said that *slaughter was prepared*; for he shows that he not only disposes of wicked men according to his pleasure, but that he has servants at hand to punish their sins.

For the iniquity of their fathers. When he says that in this manner *the iniquity of the fathers* is punished, it may at first sight appear to be excessively harsh to include the children along with the *fathers* in what relates to the infliction of punishment on them, and still more harsh, that the punishment due to the *fathers* should be extended even to their children and grandchildren. This inconsistency may easily be avoided if the word עון (*gnavon*) be translated *misery*; for it denotes the punishment of sin as well as sin itself. (Exodus 20:5, 34:7; Deuteronomy 5:9; Jeremiah 32:18.) But as it is frequently stated in Scripture, that God recompenses the sins of the parents into the bosom of the children, there is no necessity for evading it in this manner.

Nor is this inconsistent with what is said by Ezekiel,

The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.
(Ezekiel 18:20.)

God does not punish any innocent person; and this passage ought not to be understood as if the punishment due to ancestors were transferred by God to children who in other respects deserved no such punishment; for the guilt of the children is connected with the guilt of the fathers. Not to mention the universal curse of the human race, to which all are subject from the womb, let us take the example of some wicked man. When the Lord casts away that man and his posterity, we certainly have no right to remonstrate with him. If his blessing is free and undeserved, we have no right to constrain him, because he does not bestow it equally on all. His grace is free; and each of us ought to reflect, that anything good which we have, does not naturally belong to us, but, on the contrary, comes from another quarter, and has proceeded from the undeserved goodness of God. If, therefore, he cast off any one, must not that man's seed also be accursed? When we are destitute of his grace, what remains but iniquity? And if they are liable to eternal death, much more to temporal punishments; for he who has been condemned to undergo capital punishment, deserves much more to endure imprisonment and scourging.

This ought to be carefully observed. I consider it to be a childish reply that is given by those who think that the Lord inflicts temporal punishments on the children of wicked men for the sins of their parents, and who do not look upon it as unworthy of God to inflict punishments of this nature even on innocent persons; for God never punishes those who do not deserve it, and he is by nature inclined to compassion; and how would he spare wicked men if he exercised his wrath against the innocent? We ought, therefore, to hold it as a settled point, that all who are destitute of the grace of God are involved in the sentence of eternal death. Hence it follows, that the children of the reprobate, whom the curse of God pursues, are liable to the same sentence. Isaiah, therefore, does not speak of innocent children, but of flagitious and unprincipled children, who perhaps even exceeded their parents in wickedness; in consequence of which they were justly associated with their parents, and subjected to the same punishment, seeing that they have followed the same manner of life.

It will be said, that in that case they suffer the punishment of their own sin and not of their parents. This, I acknowledge, is partly true; but it was with their parents that the rejection began, on account of which they also have been forsaken and rejected by God. Their own guilt is not set aside as if they had been innocent; but, having been involved in the same sins as to reprobation, they are also liable to the same punishments and miseries. I am aware that this solution does not satisfy those who never cease to quarrel with God; but I give myself little concern about them, provided that I satisfy godly persons and those who are not fond of disputing; and these, I hope and trust, will be well satisfied with this reply, which is true.

That they may not fill the face of the world with cities. Some render it, *that they may not fill the face of the earth with enemies*; as if the Prophet meant that all wicked men are *enemies* of the human race, or rather of the whole earth; and, therefore, that the Lord provides for the safety of all, when he takes them out of the midst; for the earth would otherwise be choked by them as by thorns and briers. But this signification appears to express something more; for the earth receives us into her bosom, if we do our duty; and if we be despisers of God, the earth, even against her will, nourishes and supports us as enemies.

But I would rather follow another signification, which is more commonly received. I think that the Prophet intimates that wicked men have a numerous progeny, and that they surpass others both in numbers and in display, which we also see taking place every day, and which has originated the proverb, that "a bad reed grows quickly." The Prophet, therefore, insinuates, that wicked men would fill the whole earth not only with men, but also with towns, if the Lord did not beforehand perceive and guard against this evil, and diminish their number. When we everywhere see a vast multitude of wicked men, by whom the earth is almost overwhelmed, it is what we richly deserve; but the Lord never deals so harshly with us as not to leave some remnant of good seed, however small, and likewise to reserve some corners of the earth in which godly men shall have a little breathing. And if the Lord did not cut off a large proportion of wicked men, the earth would undoubtedly be soon overwhelmed by them.

This confirms what we have already said, that the children of the Babylonians who were slain were not innocent, for here the cause is assigned, *that they may not fill the earth with cities.* It follows, therefore, that they were wicked, and are taken away by a righteous judgment, that provision may be made for the salvation of men, and that the Lord cannot be accused of harshness and cruelty.

22. *For I will rise up against them.* The Lord now declares that he will do what he had formerly, by the Prophet, commanded others to do. Both statements ought to be observed, that it is the work of God, when wicked men are ruined, though he may employ the agency of men in executing his judgments. He formerly addressed them, saying, *Prepare.* (Verse. 21.) This should lead us to observe not only the power of God, but likewise the efficacy of prophecy, in consequence of which the prophets, by the appointment of God, command all nations to do this or that; and next, that men are so far from being able to hinder the accomplishment that they are even constrained to yield obedience to God. As we usually rely on men, and, by neglecting God, attribute to them the power of doing everything, we ought to hold by this principle, that since God acts by means of them, he is, strictly speaking, the Author of the work, and that they are only servants or instruments. This is clearly enough shown by the connection of what immediately follows.

I have thought it best to view the particle ו (*vau*) as meaning *for.* He as-

signs the reason why he enjoins the Medes and others to *prepare* destruction to the Babylonians, *For I will rise up against them.* This mode of expression, by which the Lord says that he *riseth up*, is sufficiently common. By means of it, the Prophet accommodates himself to our capacity, for the majesty of God is so high that we cannot conceive of it. We think that God is idle and unoccupied, so long as he winks at men; and therefore he says that he *riseth up*, when he exerts his power, and manifests it by some visible act.

Saith the Lord of hosts. This title serves to confirm the statement; as if he had said that he did not, without good grounds, claim the government over the nations; for God governs all armies by his own hand. Since, therefore, he has been appointed to make known the purpose of God, it belongs to him to command men, that they may yield obedience to him. By the words *saith the Lord*, which he twice repeats in this verse, he affirms that he utters nothing but what has been commanded by God, that this prophecy may carry greater weight.

And I will cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, son and grandson. It has been often enough mentioned before, that this destruction did not overtake Babylon till after the death of Alexander the Great. By the phrase *sons and grandsons*, he means not only the posterity but the remembrance, which wicked men are so desirous to obtain, in order that they may be applauded for many ages after their death. This also the Lord took away from Babylon, that no remembrance of it might remain, but what was accompanied by dishonor and reproach.

23. *And I will make it to be a possession of the hedgehog.* [231] He again confirms the same things which he formerly predicted, namely, that henceforth it will not be a habitation of men, but will resemble a hideous cavern, in which wild beasts shall lurk. קפד (*kippod*) is rendered by some *a beaver*, by some *a tortoise*, and by others *a hedgehog.* From the connection of the passage, it is probable that the Prophet spoke of an animal that is found near the water; for he afterwards mentions *pools of water.* This applies strictly to the situation of the place, for though Babylon did not lie in a marsh, yet it lay in a moist place, the country around it being watered on one side by the Euphrates, and on the other by the Tigris. Hence the Lord threatens to bring a deluge upon it. [232]

24. *The Lord of hosts hath sworn.* For more full confirmation an oath was necessary. There is nothing of which it is more difficult to convince us than that wicked men will immediately be ruined, when we see them flourishing, and furnished with all means of defense, and seemingly placed out of danger, and free from all fear. We are therefore stunned by beholding them, and are dazzled by their brightness, so that we can scarcely believe God when

[231] And I will make it an iheritance for the porcupine. — Lowth. "The porcupine, which grows to a great size in the islands at the mouth of the Euphrates, as Strabo remarks, b. 16." — Rosenmuller

[232] The Hebrew word here used by Isaiah is פלשת (Phelesheth,) from which was derived the word Philistia, afterwards changed to Palestina. An early genealogy informs us that the Philistim, or Philistines, were descendants of Mizraim, a son of Ham. (Genesis 10:14.) --- Ed

he foretells their ruin and destruction. On this account he employs an oath, that he may leave no room for doubt. Hence we learn how great is his forbearance towards us, when he aids our weakness by applying this remedy, for otherwise he might have been satisfied with simply declaring it. This tends to the consolation of the godly, as we shall afterwards see. (Isaiah 22:14.)

If it hath not been as I thought. The elliptical form of an oath which he employs must be well known, for it occurs frequently in Scripture. The Lord purposely used this guarded language, that we might not be too free in the use of oaths, which burst from us daringly and at random. He suppresses the greater part of the oath. "If I shall not do what I have decreed, let men think that I am a liar, and let them not think that I am God;" or something of this kind (which we shudder to express) is left to be supplied. Men ought, therefore, to lay a bridle on themselves, so as not to break out at random into imprecations, or to pronounce shocking curses against themselves; but let them learn from this to restrain their insolence.

25. *That I may bruise the Assyrian in my land.* Some think that this relates to Sennacherib's army, which the hand of God destroyed by means of an angel, when he besieged Jerusalem. (2 Kings 19:35; Isaiah 37:36.) If this interpretation be preferred, the meaning will be, that the Lord will shortly give some evidence of that destruction which he has threatened against the Babylonians. Those who heard these predictions might have brought this objection: "Of what avail will it be to us that Babylon is destroyed, after Babylon has ruined us? Would it not have been better that both Babylon and we had remained uninjured? What consolation will be yielded to us by its destruction, when we, too, shall have been destroyed?" And, indeed, I have no doubt that he holds out a proof of God's favor in destroying their enemies, which either had been already manifested, or would be manifested soon afterwards.

I dare not affirm at what time this prediction was uttered by the Prophet, but it may be conjectured with some probability that the slaughter of Sennacherib's army by the angel had already taken place. In this way, from a striking event which they had known, the Prophet would lead them to expect a future redemption; as if he had said, "You have already perceived how wonderfully God assists his people at the very hour of danger." I am thus prepared to assign a reason for thinking that Sennacherib's army had been already slain. Undoubtedly this instruction must have been of some use.

But Babylon did not begin to give any annoyance to the Jews before she had subdued the Assyrians and renewed the monarchy. So long, therefore, as the Jews had nothing to do with Babylon, why did the Prophet speak of the judgment of God, by which he would avenge his people? There is no absurdity in supposing that the record of a past event is confounded with a prediction. And yet it will not be inadmissible to say that the *Assyrians* are

here put for the *Chaldeans*; for though they had been deprived of the government, yet it is probable that they were always first in a state of readiness whenever there was an opportunity of attacking the Jews, and that, while they fought under foreign leaders, they formed the greater part of the army. Not only were they nearer than the Chaldeans, but those who at that time held the sway were aware that their inveterate hostility against the Jews would make them loyal and obedient in that war. Besides, it was advantageous to the conquerors to weaken the vanquished by continual wars, till they had been accustomed to bear the yoke.

Most appropriately, therefore, by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, Isaiah, though he is speaking of *Babylon*, describes the whole of its forces under the name of *Assyria.* There will thus be no argument which lays us under the necessity of explaining this passage as relating to the slaughter effected by the angel in Sennacherib's army. The Prophet merely affirms, so far as my judgment goes, that the Lord will put an end to the tyranny of the Assyrians, so that they shall not always enjoy their present superiority. As if he had said, "Though for a time God permits wicked men to rule over you, this power will not always last; for one day he will, as it were, *break the yoke*, and deliver this people from this bondage under which they groan." The Assyrians, though they were vanquished by the Chaldeans, did not on that account, as we have said, cease to be enemies of the Church; but Babylon, which had succeeded in the room of Nineveh, began at that time, by a kind of transferred right, to carry on war with the Jews.

And his yoke shall depart from them, and his burden shall be taken from their shoulder. When he says that the Assyrian will be *broken* in Judea, this must not be understood as if they would be slain there, or that they would be instantly crushed by some calamity; but that the chosen people would be delivered from their tyranny, and that their authority would thus be taken away. The *breaking*, therefore, does not refer so much to persons as to the empire. What he says about the *yoke* and the *burden* would not apply strictly to the Assyrians alone, who at least never were masters of the city of Jerusalem; and therefore we must attend to the succession which I mentioned, for the Chaldeans had no right to carry on war except that right which they boasted of as having been conveyed to them by the Assyrians. Thus I think that I am justified in extending this prophecy to that deliverance by which the Lord showed that he would avenge his people against the Chaldeans and Assyrians; for at that time the *yoke* was shaken off by which the Jews were miserably held bound, and it even includes the redemption obtained through Christ, of which that deliverance was a forerunner.

And upon my mountains I will tread him under feet. Some think that the word *mountains* is put in the plural number for Mount Zion; but I prefer a different interpretation. Jerusalem being situated among the *mountains*, the whole country around was despised for that reason. The Prophet therefore speaks contemptuously, as if he admitted that the country was regarded

by the enemies as of little value because it was mountainous. But this very contempt serves to magnify the power of God; for he shakes off from his *mountains* the dominion of this powerful monarchy. This refers to the narrative contained in 1 Kings 20:23, 28

26. *This purpose which is purposed upon the whole earth.* The Lord is not satisfied with one or two confirmations, and can scarcely refrain from proclaiming it more and more abundantly, because he knows well that our minds are naturally prone to distrust. No confirmation suffices for us, even though his promises be frequent and copious and solemn. God therefore wishes to remedy this disease, and that is the design of the repetition, so that we must not think that it is superfluous. They who suppose that the Prophet, or rather the Spirit of God, uses too many words, are not well acquainted with themselves.

He declares, first, the will and purpose of God, and, secondly, his power. How comes it that we have any doubts about the word, but because we do not ascribe to God that power which belongs to him, or because we are not convinced of his power? These are the only two causes of our unbelief, with which, on the other hand, we ought to contrast the two things which Isaiah recommends to our notice, namely, the *purpose* and the *power* of God. We ought to believe, first, that God is *true*, for he declares nothing that is not fixed and unchangeable; and, secondly, that he is *powerful*, and that nothing can withstand his arm. Again, we must not inquire about the secret purpose of God: for the Prophet here enjoins us to rest satisfied with the decree which has been manifested in the word of God. We must not rise any higher, therefore, so as to penetrate into the secrets of God; but we ought to be satisfied with undoubted proofs which he declares by the mouth of the prophets. Let us therefore embrace all the promises of God with our whole heart, and let us also add to them his power; for his hand ought never to be separated from his mouth. We must not imagine his power to be, as philosophers talk, a power that is unemployed, but, as the Scriptures teach us, powerful and active.

A question may here arise, Why does he mention *the whole earth* and *all the nations*, when he is only speaking about Babylon? But we must keep in remembrance what we formerly said, that the Babylonian empire, after having swallowed up Nineveh, extended nearly through the whole of the east, and that various nations were subject to it. The consequence was, that the devastation of that empire was also the destruction of the whole world; for such great monarchies cannot fall without involving many in an extensive ruin. Accordingly, as the extent of that empire might lead men to call in question this prophecy, Isaiah shows that, though it be spread far and wide, and includes a boundless multitude of nations, that does not prevent God from executing his decree.

27. *For the Lord of hosts hath decreed.* Isaiah here employs what may be regarded as a concluding exclamation, to confirm more fully the preceding

statement. Having said that it is the purpose of the Lord, in order to show that it cannot be broken or made void, (Psalm 33:11,) he puts a question as if about a thing impossible, *Who shall disannul his purpose*? or, *who shall turn back his hand*? By this exclamation he speaks disdainfully of all the creatures; for as soon as the Lord has *decreed*, he *stretches out his hand,* and when *his hand is stretched out*, the execution of the work must undoubtedly follow. Nor is it only men whom he declares to be incapable, but he also declares everything else to be incapable of preventing the decree of God; at least if there be anything but man and Satan that opposes his will. In short, he intimates that there can be no repentance or change in God, (Numbers 23:19,) but that whatever may happen, even amidst an endless diversity of events, he continues always to be like himself, and that no occurrence can thwart his purpose.

If it be objected that God sometimes changed his purpose, as when he spared the Ninevites, (Jonah 1:2, 3:10,) Abimelech, (Genesis 20:3, 17,) or Pharaoh, (Genesis 12:17,) the answer is easy. When the Lord sent Jonah to the Ninevites, he did not reveal what had been decreed in his secret purpose, but wished to arouse their minds by the preaching of Jonah, that he might have compassion on them. The same thing might be said, when he threatened Abimelech and Pharaoh, because they wished to lay hands on Abraham's wife; for thus the Lord, by terrifying them, intended to keep them back, that they might not suffer the punishment of their obstinacy.

28. *In the year that King Ahaz died.* Here the fifteenth chapter ought to have begun, for the Prophet enters on a new subject; and this plainly shows how absurdly the chapters are divided, or rather torn asunder. Having spoken of the Babylonians, he passes to the Philistines; [233] or, perhaps, before speaking of the Babylonians, he addressed the Philistines, who, being the near neighbors of the Jews, cherished deadly hostility against them. They were the remainder of those nations whom the Israelites spared, though the Lord had commanded that they should be removed out of the midst of them. (Numbers 33:52; Deuteronomy 7:16.) Their unbelief in this matter was the reason why the Lord left these nations to be *thorns*, that they might *prick their eyes*; as the Scripture shows that the Lord had formerly threatened against them. (Numbers 33:55.) In consequence of the deadly animosities which existed between these two nations, whenever the Jews sustained any defeat, the Philistines reckoned it to be so much gain to themselves; for they wished the ruin of the Jews, and no occurrence could give them greater delight than when the Jews were reduced to the deepest adversity and distress. The Prophet therefore prophesies against them as against the constant enemies of the Church.

It is proper to attend to the time when this vision was exhibited to the Prophet. So long as Ahaz lived, the Philistines were victorious. That wicked hypocrite, who had forsaken God, and eagerly sought the outward assistance

[233] Palestina. — Eng. Ver.

of man, was punished for his treachery. During his reign the Philistines (2 Chronicles 28:18) recovered those towns which Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:6, 7) had taken out of their hands; but after his death, they became still more courageous, for they expected that they would then gain all that they desired, because he who had been left as his heir was still a child; for Hezekiah, the new king, had neither shrewdness, nor authority, nor wisdom. These circumstances, therefore, ought to be carefully observed; for Isaiah has not the Philistines so much in his view, though he speaks to them, as the godly, whom he wishes to comfort and strengthen with good hope by this prophecy, who would otherwise have thought that the condition of Judea was entirely ruined, because they were attacked by enemies on all sides, and no assistance of any kind could be seen. To those persons, therefore, in their distressed and forlorn condition, Isaiah stretches out his hand, and bids them be of good courage, because the Lord would undoubtedly assist them.

This burden. He calls this prophecy a *burden*, because it would be disagreeable and painful to the Philistines, who thought that they had got rid of every annoyance, because the Jews were hard pressed, and had no hope of bettering their condition; and therefore he threatens that the destruction of the Philistines also is at hand.

29. *Rejoice not, thou whole Philistia.* [234] He begins by checking the vain and groundless confidence with which the *Philistines* were puffed up, and, by adding *Thou whole*, he intimates that all of them would feel a portion of this calamity; as if he had said that not only would that country be laid waste in some part, but that there would not be a corner of it exempted from the stroke, and that, in all its length and breadth, it would immediately and universally be visited with destruction.

Because the rod of him that smote thee is broken. Some think that by the *broken rod* is meant King Ahaz, but that view is unfounded; for in all his battles with the *Philistines* he was vanquished. (2 Chronicles 28:18.) It must therefore be referred to Uzziah, (2 Chronicles 26:6,) and yet I would not choose to limit it even to him, but would at the same time refer it to the whole body of the Jewish people. It is as if he had said to *Palestina*, "Thinkest thou that thou art safe, when the Jews, who formerly distressed thee, have been subdued? Thou art greatly deceived; for very soon shalt thou be more severely distressed." For this reason, as I have said, I do not limit it to any one person, but think that in the person of one man is described the whole body of the Jews.

For out of the adder's root shall spring a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery serpent. He now assigns the reason why *Palestina ought not to rejoice*; namely, that the Jews would have more power than ever to do injury; that if the Philistines had formerly sustained damage from them, they would afterwards sustain greater and heavier damage. The metaphor which he employs is highly appropriate; for the *cockatrice* is more hurtful than the

[234] See page 148

adder, and the *fiery serpent* is more hurtful than the *cockatrice*. Through the kindness of God we have no animals so destructive in the countries which we inhabit. But the Prophet means nothing else than that the power of doing them injury has been taken away from the Jews; and therefore I differ from others who view the name of the *adder* and of the *fiery serpent* as applying to Hezekiah only. Though that opinion derives great plausibility from the circumstance that Hezekiah held all that belonged to *the Philistines, as far as Gaza*, (2 Kings 18:8,) yet the Prophet intended that this promise should extend farther. Let us therefore know that the favor of which the Prophet now speaks, though it began with Hezekiah, belongs to the Jews as to one body.

We ought to draw from it a general statement, that when we are weighed down by adversity, and when the ungodly *rejoice* as if we were ruined, and as if they alone were prosperous, God declares that their *joy* is without foundation. The Church will always rise again, and be restored to her former and prosperous condition, though all conclude that she is ruined. The children of God shall acquire new vigor, that they may pierce the eyes of the ungodly; not that they wish this, or have any such intention, but because the decree of God makes it necessary that this shall take place.

The names of *cockatrice* and *fiery serpent* do not imply reproach. In their own nature the godly are not such, but they are so called, because they are hurtful to the wicked, though in themselves harmless; for it is through the fault and the malice of the wicked that what ought to have been useful and profitable is hurtful to them. Such is also the nature of God himself, (Psalm 18:26,) and of the gospel, (2 Corinthians 2:16.)

30. *And the first-born of the poor shall feed.* The Prophet, as has been already said, has not so much in view the Philistines, to whom his threatenings were of no avail, as the Jews, whom he wished to comfort in their affliction; for they were so grievously afflicted that they were not far from despair. He therefore calls them *the first-born of the poor*, as being eminent for their wretchedness; for, being reduced to extremities, they held the first rank among the wretched. Now, he promises that the Lord will deliver them from such misery, and will again *feed* and nourish them. Hence we perceive that the Philistines were cut down and destroyed for the benefit of the people of God. In like manner, also, the Lord promised to Abraham and his posterity, *I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse them that curse thee*; for those who are hostile to the children of God must find that God is hostile to them. (Genesis 12:3.)

And the needy shall lie down in safety. The Prophet compares his people to sheep, whom we must resemble, if we wish to have God for our keeper. No metaphor is more frequently employed in Scripture than this. When the Lord chastises us, we are like sheep that are scattered, and exposed to wolves and robbers; but when he punishes our enemies, he intends to gather us together again, that we may dwell in a safe and quiet place. This is what

Isaiah means when he says, *in safety.* There are therefore two things which the Lord here promises; first, pastures, that is, everything that is necessary for food and raiment; and, secondly, safety and protection, that we may be protected and defended from every injury. These two things belong to the duty of a shepherd, and they include all that is necessary for our salvation.

And I will kill thy root with famine. He now turns to the Philistines, whom he compares to a tree which strikes its *roots* so deep that we would be apt to think that it cannot in any way be rooted out. But if the *root* be dried up, the tree also, however deeply laid, must decay. Hence we ought to infer that the condition of the wicked is never so firmly established that the Lord cannot easily overturn it; for not only will he cut off branches, but he will also dry up and destroy the root which is hidden under ground.

And he will slay thy remnant. This is commonly viewed as referring to Hezekiah; but I prefer, as I have already explained, to extend it to the whole body, of which he speaks as of one man, and of which the king was the head, and represented Christ himself. We might also refer it to the Assyrians, and to any others, whose agency the Lord employed in destroying the Philistines; for it is customary with the Jews to employ indefinite language when they speak of the agents by means of whom God executes his judgments.

31. *Howl, O gate.* Here the Prophet makes use of amplifications, that by means of them he may seal his predictions on the hearts of the godly, and may press with greater earnestness those things of which they might otherwise have entertained doubts. In explaining another passage, where it is said that *her gates shall mourn and lament*, (Isaiah 3:26,) we have stated that *the gates* mean crowded places, in which public meetings were held. [235] He threatens that there will be *mourning* in each of the cities, and mourning of no ordinary kind, for it will be spread through every one of the most crowded assemblies.

For a smoke cometh from the north. We may understand *Smoke* to mean *Fire*, so that the sign will denote the thing signified; for the *smoke* appears before the *fire* burns. By *the north* we may understand the Assyrians as well as the Jews, for both of them lay to *the north* with respect to the land of the Philistines. Yet I prefer to interpret it as referring to the Jews themselves, though I would not argue against the opposite exposition. The Philistines thought, as we have already said, that they were gainers by what the Jews suffered, as, for instance, when they sustained any defeat from the Assyrians; but they at length found that they suffered along with the Jews in such a defeat. Something of this kind happened, not long ago, to many nations who had taken great delight in seeing their enemies vanquished by the Turk: they found that such victories were destructive and *mournful* to themselves; for, after the defeat of those whom they wished to see destroyed, the road to themselves was likewise thrown open, and they also were defeated.

[235] And none shall be alone (or, he shall not be alone) in his appointed times, (or, assemblies.) — Eng. Ver.

And no one shall be alone on his appointed day. [236] When he adds, that at that time *no one shall be solitary*, [237] this relates to the enemies; and he says, that *on an appointed day*, that is, when God shall have determined to ruin the land of the Philistines, the enemies shall be endued with such power and authority, that no one will remain unemployed at home, but all will be ready for battle; as if one who intended to applaud the authority of some prince should say that his subjects, if he but lift up his finger, assemble and give their attendance.

32. *And what shall be answered to the messengers of the nation?* I choose to interpret this of any *nations* whatever, and not of a single *nation*; for strangers, as soon as they enter into any city, are wont to ask what is done, that they may hear some news. It is as if he had said, "*What shall be answered* to strangers when they shall inquire? And what report shall be spread when the Philistines shall have been vanquished?"

That the Lord hath founded Zion. By this he means that the destruction of the land of the Philistines will be a signal proof of God's compassion towards his people, that all may understand *that the* Lord is the guardian and protector of Judea, which he had chosen to be his own. The *foundation* is nothing else than God's gracious adoption, by which he promised to Abraham (Genesis 17:7) and his posterity that *he would be a God to them*; and next, when he determined that a temple should be built on *Zion*, (2 Chronicles 3:1; Psalm 65:1, 84:7,) that the remembrance of his name might there be preserved. That *foundation* does not consist of lime or stones, but of the gracious promises of eternal life, by which his grace was always known to all the godly. The Prophet therefore shows that this destruction of the Philistines will be a signal proof, by means of which the most distant nations will learn that God preserves and guards his people whom he hath chosen.

And the poor of his people will have confidence in it. [238] He does not mean that the hope of believers will be placed in *Zion*, as when we say that we ought to hope in God, but that the inhabitants of *Zion* shall dwell in a safe and quiet place, as the prophets often teach, in other passages, that *salvation is in Zion.* (Joel 2:32.) Isaiah, therefore, does not mean that the *confidence* of the godly is placed in the Church, but he shows that the godly are preserved in it, because the Lord defends it.

Yet the Lord intends to make trial of our faith, that we may not think that we are in every respect happy; and therefore he calls them *poor*, that we may not think that we are exempted from ordinary calamities, though we are under God's protection. Can any higher consolation be brought to us, than to learn that the inhabitants of the Church of God, though they are liable to a great variety of afflictions, are out of all danger? Let us therefore

[236] "Jonathan interprets it thus: There will be no one to cause delay in his time in the military forces whom God will assemble to come against you; there will be no one to retard their progress, that he may be solitary, that he may come alone; but all will come at once with prodigious violence." — Jarchi

[237] Shall trust in it, (or, betake themselves unto it.) — Eng. Ver.

[238] He is gone up to Bajith. — Eng. Ver.

apply that consolation to our calamities, and not faint through impatience, when we are informed that God takes care of us, and when we absolutely know that we are in safety.

Chapter 15

CHAPTER 15.

Isaiah Chapter 15:1-9

1. The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence:

1. Onus Moab. Quoniam in nocte vastata est Ar-Moab, in silentium redacta est; certe in nocte vastata est Kir-Moab, in silentium redacta.

2. He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.

2. Ascendet in domum, et Dibon ad excelsa, ad fletum super Nebo, et super Medba Moab, ululabit. Super omne caput ejus calvitium, et omnis barba detonsa.

3. In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.

3. In compitis ejus accincti erunt sacco; super tecta ejus et in vicis ejus omnis ululabit, descendet ad fletum.

4. And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh; their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.

4. Vociferabitur Hesbon et Eleale; usque ad Iahaz audietur vox eorum; propterea expediti Moab ululabunt; anima cujusque ululabit sibi.

5. My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.

5. Cor meum propter Moab vociferabitur; fugitivi ejus ad Zoar, vitulam

triennem per ascensum Luhith cum fletu ascendent: per viam Horonaim clamorem contritionis excitabunt.

6. For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.

6. Aquae Nimrim exinanitae sunt; aruit gramen, defecit herba, olus non superfuit.

7. Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.

7. Itaque quod residuum quisque fecit, et opes suas deferent ad torrentem salicum, (vel, Arabes.)

8. For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.

8. Circuivit clamor terminos Moab, usque in Eglaim ulutatus ejus, et usque in Beer-Elim ululatus ejus.

9. For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

9. Quia aquae Dimon implebuntur sanguine; quoniam ponam super Dimon additiones iis qui evaserint de Moab leones, et reliquiis terrae.

1. *The burden of Moab.* Here the Prophet prophesies against the *Moabites*, who were neighbors to the Jews and related to them by blood; for we know that the *Moabites* were descended from Lot, who was Abraham's nephew. (Genesis 11:31, 19:37.) Those nations being so closely related, humanity at least demanded that they should maintain some friendly intercourse with each other. But no relationship prevented the *Moabites* from cherishing hostility towards the Jews, or even from harassing them whenever it was in their power; which is an evidence of a savage and barbarous disposition. To them also, on account of their cruelty towards the people of God, to whom they ought to have conducted themselves with brotherly love, the Prophet therefore threatens destruction.

We ought to remember the design of these predictions. It cannot be believed that they were of any advantage to the *Moabites*, even though they had heard from the mouth of the Prophet himself the words which we read; but he neither addressed them with his voice, nor sent to them a written communication. It was therefore to believers, rather than to them, that the Prophet looked, and for two reasons. The first reason was, that when they saw so many changes taking place, cities overturned, kingdoms destroyed and succeeding one another, they might not think that this world is governed by the blind violence of fortune, but might acknowledge the providence of God. If nothing had been foretold, the minds of men, having a strong tendency to foolishness, and being strangely blind to the works of God, might have been disposed to attribute all this to chance; but when they had been forewarned by the Prophets, they beheld the judgments of God as from a lofty watch-

tower. To us also in the present day Isaiah has, as it were, pointed out with the finger what was then hidden. In his predictions we behold God sitting on his judgment-seat, and regulating everything according to his pleasure; and although the wicked in various ways vented their mad rage, still the Lord made use of their agency to execute his judgments. The second design which the prophets had in view was, that while the whole world was shaken, the Jews might know that God took care of their safety, and that he testified the warmth of his affection for the Church, by taking vengeance on her enemies by whom she had been barbarously treated.

Ar-Moab. The Hebrew word ער (*Ar*) means *a city*; as קיר (*kir*) means *a wall*; but as ער מואב (*Ar-Moab*) was one of the chief cities of the *Moabites*, it is supposed to be here a proper name. We might indeed explain both words as appellatives, to convey a threatening of the overthrow of the fortified towns of which the *Moabites* are proud; but I rather adopt the ordinary interpretation. Here therefore Isaiah has given a description, that we may behold in it the overthrow of the Moabites, when their chief cities are destroyed.

In the night. By *the night* he means a sudden and unexpected occurrence, which the Moabites did not dread. *Night* being appropriated to rest, if anything happen at that time, it is viewed as sudden and unlooked for, and therefore excites violent alarm. Besides, he intended to rebuke the Moabites for being free from anxiety, considering themselves to be fortified by defences on every hand, and placed beyond the reach of all danger.

Is brought to silence. That is, *is destroyed*, and hence also *Silence* sometimes means Death. Others disregard the metaphor, and choose to render it, *She is cut off*; but I leave that point undecided. What Isaiah declares as to the *Moabites*, Scripture pronounces as to the reprobate, that destruction is at hand, and, when they are looking for nothing of that kind, will fearfully overwhelm them. (Jeremiah 23:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3.)

2. *He shall go up into the house.* [239] So far as relates to the words, some pass by the Hebrew noun בית, (*baith*;) but as it signifies *a house* and *a temple*, it is probable that it was the word commonly used for *a temple*, as in many other passages *the house of God* means *the temple* [240] (Exodus 23:19, 34:26; Deuteronomy 23:18; Joshua 9:23.) By representing the Moabites as bowing down before their idols, he at the same time condemns their superstition in worshipping their idol Chemosh, as may easily be inferred from 1 Kings 11:7, Jeremiah 48:7, 13. "The Moabites," says Isaiah, "shall betake themselves to their god when matters are so desperate, but to no purpose; for they shall find in him no assistance."

And to Dibon to the high places. This makes it still more evident that he is speaking of the Temple; and it is beyond a doubt that the Moabites

[239] He is gone up to Moab into the house. — Jarchi. Breithaupt remarks that the Hebrew word הבית (habbaith) is sometimes viewed as a proper name, and that in the version of Junius and Tremellius it is rendered Bajith. --- Ed

[240] "Shaving the head and face are the eastern tokens of mourning for the dead. (Isaiah 3:24; Jeremiah 41:5; Micah 1:16.)" — Rosenmuller

had a fortress remarkable and celebrated above the rest, in which they had built *high places* in honor of their idol. Being ignorant of the true God, to whom they might betake themselves in adversity, we need not wonder that they betake themselves to an idol, in conformity to their ordinary custom. By doing this they increased their misery, and brought upon themselves an accumulation of all distresses; for they inflamed the wrath of God still more by those very means which they considered to be fitted for appeasing his wrath. He therefore wished to state more plainly the condition of the ungodly, who have no refuge in adversity; for as to those remedies which they think will be adapted to their diseases, nothing can be more destructive to them, since they excite more and more the Lord's indignation.

Moab shall howl over Nebo and over Medeba. Nebo also was one of the cities of the *Moabites.* The Prophet has already named two of them, *Ar* and *Kir*; he now adds a third, *Nebo*; and lastly he mentions a fourth, *Medeba*; as if he had said that this destruction would not only seize the extremities of that country, but would reach its inmost recesses, so that not one corner could be exempted.

On every head. Every nation has its peculiar ceremonies to denote mourning or joy. The Italians and other western nations allowed the hair and beard to grow when they were in mourning; and hence arose the phrase, *to lengthen the beard.* On the other hand, the eastern nations shaved the head and beard, which they reckoned to be ornamental; and when they reversed their ordinary custom, that was a token of mourning. [241] Nothing else therefore is meant than that the condition of the whole kingdom will be so mournful, that the indications of mirth will be laid aside, and all will wear the tokens of grief and lamentation.

3. *In his streets.* [242] He proceeds with the same subject, describing more fully the tokens of mourning, in which the eastern nations abound more than others; for, having quicker understandings and keener feelings, they express their emotions by outward signs more than others do, who, being slower in apprehension, are likewise slower in movement and gesture. It was no doubt faulty in them that they indulged in so many ceremonies and gesticulations; but the Prophet spoke of them as what was known and common, only for the purpose of describing the grief which would follow the desolation of that country.

Every one shall howl and descend to weeping. [243] It was with good reason that he added this description; for we are never moved by predictions, unless the Lord place them, as it were, before our eyes. Lest the Jews should think that these matters might be lightly passed by, when he described that destruction, he determined to mention also *mourning, weeping, and howling*, that they might see almost with their own eyes those events which appear

[241] In their streets. — Eng. Ver.

[242] Weeping abundantly. (Heb. descending into weeping, or, coming down with weeping.) — Eng. Ver.

[243] His life shall be grievous unto him. — Eng. Ver.

to be incredible, for the Moabites were at that time in a state of profound peace, and believers had the more need of being confirmed, that they might not call this prophecy in question. By the same means he points out the despair to which unbelievers are liable in adversity, for the support on which they rely is insecure.

4. *And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh.* Here he names other cities; for his design is to bind up, as it were, in a bundle all the cities of that country, that they may be involved in the general destruction; as if he had said, that none at all shall be exempted.

Therefore the light-armed soldiers of Moab shall howl. Though על כן (*gnal ken*) literally signifies *therefore*, yet some think that a reason is not here assigned; but that is of little importance. The Prophet shows that there will be none that does not *howl*; for he declares that the bold and courageous shall mourn. Next he adds, *the soul of every one shall howl to him.* [244] Every one shall be so engrossed with his own grief, that he will not think of his neighbors.

5. *My heart shall cry out for Moab.* At length he assumes the character of a mourner. But it may be thought to be strange and inconsistent in him to bewail the calamity of the Moabites; for he ought rather to have lamented the destruction of the Church, and to have rejoiced at the ruin of her enemies. It is customary with the prophets, however, to assume in this manner the character of those whose calamities they foretell, and thus to exhibit their condition, as it were, on a stage; by which means they produce a stronger impression than if they delivered their instruction in a direct form. Yet there can be no doubt that the prophets shuddered at the judgments of God, even against the wicked; though the meaning which I have stated is simpler and more appropriate, and may easily be inferred from frequent usage.

His fugitives to Zoar, [245] *a heifer of three years old.* He calls them *fugitives* who shall escape from it; for he means that those who shall escape from Moab will come even *to Zoar* [246] Now, he compares *Zoar* to *a heifer of three years old*, which is in full vigor, and has not felt the pangs of birth, or toil, or the yoke, but revels in the buoyancy of mirth and wantonness. When men are hard pressed by an invading army, they flee to cities which have not been attacked, and which appear to be the farthest removed from danger. Such was *Zoar*, for it had never been attacked by enemies. Yet, if it be thought better to view it as applying to the whole country, I have no objection; for Jeremiah appears to speak in general terms, though he borrows many statements from Isaiah. (Jeremiah 48:34.) But perhaps in that passage also he names both *Zoar* and *Horonaim*, or rather the whole of the country

[244] His fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old, (or, to the borders thereof, even as an heifer.) — Eng. Ver.

[245] "Jonathan translates the word בריחה, (berechahh,) as if it had been written בורחים (borachim,) that is, those who flee; so that the meaning will be, `Some of them shall flee, in order to preserve themselves, even to Zoar, as Lot, their father, once did, (Genesis 19:23,) who fled to Zoar.'" --- Jarchi

[246] Therefore the abundance they have gotten. — Eng. Ver. Therefore the substance which they have saved. — Stock The riches which they have gained. — Lowth

between them.

If you extend it to the whole nation, the meaning will be, "The Moabites have enjoyed the highest luxury, and every kind of abundance, and hitherto have suffered no distress. Hence has arisen their stubbornness, and, in order to subdue them, they must be banished and driven even to *Zoar*." Now *Zoar* was a town very far removed from the Moabites; and, therefore, he means that they cannot provide for their safety but by *fleeing* to a distance. Here all with whom the Lord deals tenderly are taught not to exalt themselves, or to provoke God by their wantonness, but to be modest even amidst the highest prosperity, and likewise to be prepared for every change, when the Lord shall be pleased to throw them down from their prosperity.

By the going up of Luhith. He describes other parts of the country of Moab, and delineates the flight and mourning of that nature which should spread throughout the whole land.

By the way of Horonaim they shall raise the cry of sorrow. The words which we have translated, *they shall raise up a cry*, some render, *they shall bruise* or *break themselves by crying*, and think there is a transposition of the letters, and that ע (*ain*) is doubled; and thus the root of the verb would be רעה, (*ragnah.*) But as it made little difference in the meaning of the passage, I have adhered to the commonly received opinion, that יעערו (*yegnogneru*) is derived from the verb עור, (*gnur.*) If it be thought better to make the verb signify *break*, the meaning will be, "There shall be a shaking, and, as it were, a *breaking* of the members of the body, when arm is dashed against arm."

6. *The waters of Nimrim.* By an exaggerated form of expression he gives a more enlarged view of this desolation. He says that *the grass is withered*, which takes place when God leaves any soil destitute of all nourishment. *The waters* will be taken away, which probably were highly necessary for that dry and parched country; for soils of that kind produce nothing without irrigation. Though the style is exaggerated, yet nothing is stated but what is strictly true; for the Prophet did not go beyond proper bounds, but found it necessary to use bold expressions to suit the ignorance of the people, in order to inform them that a land which is deprived of the blessing of God will be like a desert without any beauty.

7. *Therefore what every one hath left.* [247] This corresponds to the ordinary expression, (*Ce qu'il aura espargne,*) *Whatever he shall have spared.* He means the riches that are laid up, and describes what usually happens in countries which are invaded by an enemy. All the inhabitants are wont to convey their riches elsewhere, and to lay them up in some safe place, that they may afterwards bring them back when peace has been restored.

To the brook of the willows. He means that they will have no storehouse, no fortress in which they can lay them up with safety; so that they will be compelled to hide them among *the willows.* This certainly is the lowest wretchedness, when the enemy is attacking us, and we can find no storehouse

[247] For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab. — Eng. Ver.

for laying up those things which we have collected with great industry. These *willows* were probably situated in some remote and sequestered place. Others explain it as referring to enemies, that they will bring the fruits of their robbery *to the brook*, to divide among themselves the general plunder.

8. *The cry is gone round about the borders of Moab.* [248] כי, (*ki*,) *for*, is added for the sake of ornament. He means that every part of that country all around shall be full of *crying* and *howling*; because that destruction reaches from one extremity to another. Besides the *crying* he twice mentions the *howling*, to denote the excess of grief, as men who are in despair surrender themselves entirely to lamentation.

9. *For the waters of Dimon shall be filled with blood.* [249] Here he describes not only *grief* and *howling*, flight or trembling, or the covetousness of enemies in plundering their wealth, but the slaughter of men. How great must this have been, when large and magnificent rivers, such as *Dimon* was, are *filled with blood*!

For I will lay upon Dimon additions. [250] By *additions* he means that the Lord, in whose name he speaks, will multiply the murders; so that the dead bodies shall be heaped up, and there shall be no end to cruelty and slaying. Now, though the Assyrians were cruel in this slaughter, yet the Lord was not cruel; for he justly punished the barbarity of the Moabites which they basely exercised towards the Jews, on whom they ought to have had compassion. It was right that they should suffer the same punishment which they had inflicted on others.

To those who have escaped of Moab lions. These also are the *additions* of which he spake, or, at least, a part of them. This may be regarded as the copestone of that calamity; so that if any detachments of the enemy attempted to escape, and to rescue themselves from the slaughter, they had to encounter *lions* [251] and wild beasts, by which they were devoured. "They will, indeed," says he, "rescue themselves from the slaughter, but they will not on that account be safe, nor will they escape the hand of God." And this is the true meaning of the Prophet, if we carefully examine the scope of the whole passage; for he intended to deepen the picture of that distressing calamity by adding, that even the small remnant which shall be rescued from the slaughter will fall into the jaws of *lions*. The hand of the Lord pursues the wicked in such a manner that they cannot in any way escape; for if they avoid one danger, they immediately meet with another. Let us remember that these things are spoken by the Prophet for the consolation of the godly, that they may fortify their minds by some promise against the cruelty of their enemies, who shall at length be destroyed, and shall nowhere find a

[248] "Alluding to the name Dimon, which signifies Bloodtown." — Rosenmuller

[249] For I will bring more (Heb. additions) upon Dimon. — Eng. Ver.

[250] "This I take to be the plague of lions, recorded in 2 Kings 17:25, which afflicted the new inhabitants of the land of Israel, and the remnant of the Moabites, suffered to continue there by Shalmanezer. Other interpretations are proposed; but it is best, in obscure local prophecies, to adhere to the little light afforded by the records of the times." — Stock

[251] From Sela, (or, Petra.) — Eng. Ver.

refuge either in their gods, or in fortresses, or in lurking-places, or in flight.

Chapter 16

CHAPTER 16

Isaiah Chapter 16:1-14

1. Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

1. Mittite agnum dominatori terrae de petra deserti ad montem filiae Sion.

2. For it shall be, that as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

2. Erit autem sicut avis emissa, recedens e nido: ita erunt filiae Moab ad transitus Arnon.

3. Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noon-day; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth.

3. Cogite consilium, facite judicium; pone sicut noctem umbram tuam in medio meridiei; absconde expulsos, profugum ne prodas.

4. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.

4. Peregrinentur apud te ejecti mei. Moab, sis illis latibulum a facie vastatoris; quoniam cessavit emunctor, finitus est vastator, consumptus est conculcator e terra.

5. And in mercy shall the throne be established; and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.

5. Et praeparabitur in misericordia solium, sedebitque super ipsum in firmitate, in tabernaculo David qui judicet, et quaerat judicium, et acceleret justitiam.

6. We have heard of the pride of Moab, (he is very proud,) even of his

haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.

6. Audivimus superbiam Moab (superbus est valde) superbiam ejus, et arrogantiam ejus, et insolentiam (vel, indignationem) ejus. Sed non rata erunt mendacia ejus.

7. Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken.

7. Propterea ululabit Moab ad Moab, totus ululabit, propter fundamenta Kir-hareseth; gemetis tantum percussi.

8. For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof; they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea:

8. Quoniam vites Hesbon excisae sunt, vitis Sibma. Domini gentium conculcarunt eximias ejus propagines (vel, palmites) quae usque ad Iazer pervenerant; erraverant usque ad desertum, nobiles ejus plantae prostratae sunt, quae transibant mare.

9. Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh; for the shouting for thy summer-fruits, and for thy harvest, is fallen.

9. Propterea flebo in fletu Iazer vitis Sibma; inebriabo te lachrymis meis Hesbon et Eleale; quoniam super collectionem tuam, et super messem tuam irruet (vel, cadet) canticum.

10. And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage-shouting to cease.

10. Sublatum est gaudium et exultatio ab agro fertili; in vineis non exultabitur, nec jubilabitur. Vinum in torcularibus non calcabit calcator, canticum quiescere feci.

11. Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.

11. Propterea viscera mea super Moab quasi cithara sonabunt, et interiora mea super Kir-hareseth.

12. And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.

12. Et erit cum apparuerit fatigatum esse Moab super excelsa, tunc veniet ad sanctuarium precandi causa; nec proficiet.

13. This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.

13. Hoc est verbum quod protulit Iehova super Moab ab hoc tempore.

14. But now the Lord hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.

14. Nunc, inquam, locutus est Iehova, dicens, Tres anni, quasi anni mercenarii; et tunc in ignominiam vertetur gloria Moab, in tota multitudine ejus, quamvis multa; et reliquiae ejus paucae, exiguae, et invalidae.

1. *Send ye a lamb.* Here the Prophet scoffs at the Moabites for not acknowledging God at the proper time, but recklessly waiting for the stroke of his hand, till they were completely destroyed. It is, therefore, a condemnation of late repentance, when men cannot be brought to obedience by any warnings, and continue in obstinate opposition to God. Where the disease is incurable, an exhortation of this kind is appropriate; and this ought to be carefully observed, for both Jews and Christians misinterpret this passage.

Jerome explains it as referring to Christ, because he drew his birth from the Moabites, (Ruth 1:4; Matthew 1:5,) from whom Ruth was descended; and that opinion has been adopted by almost all Christians; as if the Prophet had said, "O Lord, though a judgment so severe as this awaits the Moabites, still thou wilt not utterly destroy them; for they will send thee *a Lamb, the ruler of the world."* But that interpretation, being destitute of plausibility, need not be refuted.

On the other hand, the Jews think that these words were spoken because, while the Jews were in a depressed condition, the Moabites ceased to pay the tribute which they owed them, but that, after having prophesied about the restoration of the kingdom of Judah, Isaiah likewise added an exhortation to remind them to acknowledge their king. They even go so far as to say that it serves the purpose of a royal edict, taking them to task for their disloyalty, "Send the tribute which you owe." But we nowhere read that the Moabites were subjects or tributaries to the Jews, and there is no probability in the conjecture. Nor does the passage which they quote (2 Kings 3:5, 6) give them any support; for that passage relates to *the king of Israel*, and expressly mentions *Ahab* and *Samaria*, who cherished, as we are aware, the utmost hatred against the Jews.

I therefore adhere to the interpretation which I first noticed, as the true and natural interpretation; for the design of the Prophet is to condemn the Moabites for not having repented in due season, and to tell them that they will now in vain do what they might easily have done formerly, and with great advantage to themselves. We ought, therefore, to view it as spoken ironically, (εἰρωνικῶς,) *Send*; as if he had said that there is no hope of pardon, that they will *send* in vain. When the wicked are warned, they indolently disregard all exhortation; when they are punished, they gaze around them with distressful looks, seeking assistance in every direction, and trying every method of relief, but unsuccessfully, for they gain no advantage. Isaiah, therefore, reproaches them for obstinacy and rebellion, and shows that there will be no time for repentance, when they meet with the destruction which they deserve.

To the ruler of the world. The opinion of the Jews, that this denotes

Hezekiah, is at variance with all reason; for ארץ (*eretz*) does not here denote a particular country, but rather the whole *world*, of which he speaks in general terms. The appellation *Ruler* must therefore be viewed as referring to God himself. By *a lamb*, he means what was to be offered in sacrifice; for even the Gentiles acknowledged that they worshipped God when they offered sacrifices.

From the rock [252] *of the desert.* He gives the name of *the rock of the desert* to the city, which is supposed to have been the chief city of the Moabites; [253] though it is possible that he intended to include the whole of the country, and thus a part will be taken for the whole.

To the mountain of the daughter of Zion; that is, to God's authorized temple, in which sacrifices were offered according to the injunction of the Law. (Deuteronomy 12:5, 6, 7; 2 Chronicles 7:12.) This is a remarkable passage against obstinate men, who set aside all instruction, and fearlessly despise God, till they are visited by his judgments.

2. *It shall be as a bird let loose.* [254] The Prophet now shows what he meant by the former mockery, that the Moabites ought not at that time to think of *sending* sacrifices, because they will not be able to provide for their safety in any other way than by leaving their native country. By the metaphor of *birds* he describes the terror with which they shall be struck, so that they will flee even at the rustling of a leaf. He threatens that the Moabites, who had abused their tranquillity, shall have a trembling and wearisome flight.

3. *Assemble a council.* [255] He proceeds with the same subject; for if we wish rightly to understand this passage, we must set before our minds the dreadful ruin of the Moabites. Their crimes are brought to remembrance, that all may see more clearly how deservedly they are punished. When everything was in their power, they freely indulged in licentiousness, and would not listen to any reproofs; but now, when they are deprived of everything, they groan, and seek remedies which are nowhere to be found. The Lord deals with the reprobate in such a manner that, in order to leave them without excuse, he bestows upon them, and places in their hands, everything that they need; but when, through their wicked passion, they have abused and turned everything to a wicked purpose, he deprives them of all aid and

[252] "Petra, Rock, also called Sela, (Isaiah 16:1,) and Joktheel, (2 Kings 14:7.) The capital of Idumea, and one of the most remarkable cities of the ancient world. For more than a thousand years this city remained unknown and unvisited, till Burckhardt discovered it in 1812. It was afterwards visited, with some difficulty, by Messrs. Legh, Banks, Captains Irby and Mangles, as well as by M. Linant and M. Laborde." Those who have not access to the details of those enterprizing researches, or who wish to see it ably stated and argued, that "the present condition of Petra furnishes a remarkable fulfillment of Scripture prophecy," will do well to read the article Petra in Dr. Eadie's Biblical Cyclopaedia, from which the above extracts are taken; an article which draws largely both from the narratives of travelers and from the inspired writers, and compresses within moderate limits a large amount of information. — Ed

[253] As a wandering bird. — Eng. Ver.

[254] Take (Heb. Bring) counsel. — Eng. Ver.

[255] "Make a shadow for thee at noon, to throw darkness over thee, as in the night, that by means of it thou mayest be concealed from the face of thy enemies." — Jarchi

support, and utterly destroys them.

Execute judgment. While the Moabites enjoyed prosperity, they cared little about what was good and right; while it was in their power to rule, and to have their kingdom established, in a just manner, they abused their power for the purpose of tyranny. Now that they were stripped of all authority, and were exiles and fugitives, Isaiah ironically advises them to *assemble councils* and *execute judgments*, which they had formerly overturned through fraud and injustice. Isaiah has in view that time when all power and authority was taken out of the hands of the Moabites. The upbraiding is similar to that with which the Lord addresses Adam, (Genesis 3:22,) *Behold, Adam is become as one of us*, ridiculing him with the biting taunt, that he was not satisfied with his exalted attainments, and wished to rival God himself.

In like manner, the Moabites, not satisfied with their ornaments and wealth, wretchedly harassed and plundered the Israelites and Jews, and formed wicked plans against them. Having abused the excellent gift of God, they therefore deserved to have this reproof addressed to them, which is equally applicable to all the reprobate, who proudly vaunt in prosperity and barbarously abuse it for harassing the godly. Seeing that they basely pollute those things which the Lord had set apart to their proper use, it is right that they should be deprived of them and reduced to the lowest poverty. We have instances of this every day. How comes it that those who were raised to the highest rank of honor fall down headlong, but because the Lord punishes their tyrannical rule and their crimes? The Lord also ridicules their upbraiding and reproachful language, their wailings, and even their complaints; as when they exclaim, "O that I had the wealth which I once enjoyed! O that I were restored to my former condition!" For then repentance will be too late.

Make thy shadow. The Moabites might, as I have already hinted, have given some relief to the wretched Jews, when they were harassed by the Assyrians; or, at least, if they had had a spark of humanity, they ought to have protected the fugitives; but, on the contrary, they persecuted them, and added to the weight of their afflictions, which were already oppressive. It was highly proper that the Moabites should be the subjects of that cruelty which they had exercised towards others; that, when they had been driven from their dwellings, and were exiles and wanderers, they should nowhere find any solace, any *shadow* to shelter them from the heat; for why should they enjoy the consolations which they had barbarously refused to others?

As the night in the midst of noon-day. [256] By *noon-day* is here meant the most scorching heat. This metaphor is frequently employed in Scripture, that the Lord was *like a cloud at noon, and like a pillar of fire by night*; for he once was so in the wilderness. (Exodus 13:21, 22; Numbers 14:14; Deuteronomy 1:33.) This mode of expression, being customary, was retained by the Prophets, though they did not relate the history.

Hide the banished. He means the Jews, whom the Assyrians persecuted

[256] For the extortioner (Heb. wringer) is at an end. — Eng. Ver.

and harassed, and whom the Moabites at the same time treated cruelly. It was their duty to shelter and relieve the fugitives, and especially those who fled to them for protection; but seeing that they drove them out, it was proper that they should be driven out in the same manner, and deprived of all assistance and support; for it is a righteous sentence which the Lord pronounces, when he enjoins that *the same measure which every one metes shall be measured to him again.* (Deuteronomy 19:19, 21; Matthew 7:2.) Now the Prophet calls on the Moabites to acknowledge their sins, so as to confess that they are justly punished for their cruelty. Yet he rather has the Jews in his eye, in order to inform them that God does not disregard their afflictions, for they are told that he will be their avenger.

4. *Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab.* The Prophet addresses the *Moabites*, as if he were humbly beseeching them in the name of the people at large. "You are neighbors, related to us by blood; receive and assist those who are in distress: and if you do not choose to assist, at least do them no harm." God, who usually undertakes the cause of his people, is represented by the Prophet as if he performed the part of a suppliant. It is certain, that the Moabites did not at all act in this manner towards the Jews, but, on the contrary, that they joined their efforts with the enemies of the Jews to do them injury. But, as I said a little before, the Prophet sets before our eyes that justice which even nature demands, that the cruel violation of it may be the more abhorred.

This passage ought to be carefully observed; for God shows how great is the care which he takes of his people, since the injuries done to them affect him in the same manner as if they had been done to himself; as he declares by Zechariah, that *whenever they are touched, the apple of his eye is touched.* (Zechariah 2:8.) He *hears the groaning*, (Psalm 102:20,) and observes the tears, of wretched men who call upon him; (Psalm 12:5, 38:9;) and though this be not always visible to us, yet in due season he shows that he has heard them.

Let us therefore learn from this passage to be kind and dutiful to fugitives and exiles, and especially to believers, who are banished for their confession of the word. No duty can be more pleasing or acceptable to God; and, on the other hand, nothing is more hateful or abominable in his sight than barbarity and cruelty. If we wish to obtain any alleviation of our calamities, let us be kind and compassionate, and not refuse assistance to the needy.

Blessed, says he, is he that judgeth wisely about the poor and needy; the Lord will deliver him in the evil day.
(Psalm 41:1.)

On the other hand,

he shall have judgment without mercy who hath showed no mercy. (James 2:13.)

When God calls them *his banished*, this may without impropriety be viewed as referring to punishment, as if he said, that by a just judgment

they were *banished* from the land of Canaan, (Deuteronomy 28:64,) as he had so often threatened against them. Yet undoubtedly he likewise means, that they continue to be under his defense and protection, because, though they are banished and driven out of their native country, still he acknowledges them to be his people. That calamity which the Jews endured might be regarded as an evidence that they were cast off; but the Lord acknowledges them to be *his children*, though he chastises them severely. Hence we obtain a doctrine full of consolation, that we are reckoned in the number of his children, though sharp and heavy strokes are inflicted upon us.

For the extortioner hath ceased. [257] He now directs his discourse to the Jews, and proceeds to comfort them, as he had done formerly, by showing that, when their enemies shall be removed from the midst of them, the banishment or ruin of their enemies will also relieve their own calamities and distresses. Yet the former statements related chiefly to the Jews, though the Prophet expressly addressed the Moabites. But at that time he only threatened vengeance on enemies, while here he more clearly promises consolation to his people; as if he had said, "Thou thoughtest, O Moab, that my people were utterly ruined: but I will restrain the enemies, and put an end to that affliction. Thou shalt therefore perish; but my people shall at length be delivered from those dreadful calamities."

Perhaps it will rather be thought that there is a change of the tenses; and thus the particle כי, (*ki*,) which we have rendered *For*, will signify *Until*; [258] and this clause will be read in immediate connection with the former part of the sentence. *Let my banished dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a place of concealment from the face of the destroyer, until the extortioner shall have ceased.* But as that might be thought to be a forced interpretation, I have chosen to abide by the natural meaning.

5. *And the throne shall be prepared in mercy.* [259] The Jews explain the whole of this verse as referring to Hezekiah; but this is altogether inappropriate, for the Prophet speaks of a more important restoration of the Church, and the Moabites had not been punished during the flourishing condition of Hezekiah's reign; and the blessing of God again began to burst forth on the Jews. It is as if it had been said "All the enemies of the chosen people maliciously contrive the ruin of that kingdom, which God promised *should be established for ever*." (2 Samuel 7:13.) That the godly may not give way to despondency amidst the unhappy confusion, they are reminded of the perpetuity of the kingdom, of which they had been assured by a well-known prediction.

It cannot therefore be explained as referring to any other than to Christ, though I acknowledge that Hezekiah was a type of Christ, as David and the rest of his successors also were. But they conduct us to Christ, who alone is

[257] Until the extortioner כי (ki) answers here to the Latin adverb, usquedum. --- Tayl. Concord. quoted by Stock.

[258] And in mercy shall the throne be established,(or, prepared.) — Eng. Ver.

[259] His wrath. — Eng. Ver. In the author's version of this chapter, the rendering is, his insolence; but in his margin he puts indignation. Lowth and Stock make it his anger. — Ed

the protector and leader of his people, (John 10:16,) and who has *gathered the remnant that was scattered abroad*. (John 11:52.) For this reason he sends back the godly to Christ, as if he had said, "You know what God you worship. He has declared that he will watch over your safety, so that under his protection you will always continue to be safe and uninjured; and if you shall at any time meet with reverses, he has promised to you a Redeemer, under whom you shall enjoy renewed and steadfast prosperity. Though for a time you may weep, yet the protector of the Church will come, and will restore you to a flourishing state of freedom. You ought, therefore, with your whole heart, to rely on the expectation of him; even when you see the Church to be in a confused and wretched condition."

This ought to be carefully observed; for all other consolations are transitory and fading, if we do not refer all of them to Christ. Let our eyes therefore be fixed on him, if we wish to be happy and prosperous; for he has promised that we shall be happy even amidst the cross, (Matthew 5:10,11,) that agony and torments will open up the way to a blessed life, (2 Corinthians 4:17,) and that all the afflictions which we shall suffer will add to the amount of our happiness. (Romans 8:28.)

In mercy. Isaiah shows that this does not take place through the agency of men, but by the kindness of God, who is the builder of this *throne*; and therefore we ought to acknowledge that it is owing to his undeserved goodness that this sacred *throne* is established among us. The Prophet expressly confirms this by saying, that the cause of it must not be sought anywhere else than in the absolute *mercy* of God. Nor can any other cause be found; for God could not be induced by any excellence of character, or by merits, (of which there certainly were none,) to set up again the throne which had fallen down through the fault and through the crimes of the people; but when he saw that those whom he had adopted were ruined, he wished to give a proof of his infinite goodness. Now, if God build this throne, by whom shall it be overturned? Will wicked men be stronger than he?

And he will sit upon it in the tabernacle of David. Almost every word here is emphatic, so that this verse deserves to be continually pondered. I do not object to the opinion that the word *tabernacle* contains an allusion to this effect, that he was but an ordinary man before he was *called to sit on a throne*. (1 Samuel 16:11, 12; 2 Samuel 7:8.) The Prophet intended to draw a picture of the Church, which has no resemblance to the thrones of kings and of princes, and does not shine with gold or precious stones. Though he has held out the spiritual kingdom of Christ under a mean and despicable shape, yet at the same time he shows that that kingdom will be seen on earth and amongst men. If he had only said that *the throne* of Christ will be erected, we might have asked, Will his *throne* be in heaven, or also on earth? But now when he says, *in the tabernacle of David*, he shows that Christ reigns not only among angels but also among men, lest we should think that, in order to seek him, we must enter into heaven. Wicked men ridicule what we

preach about the kingdom of Christ, as if it were some phantom of our own imagination. They wish to see it with their eyes, and to have the evidence of their senses; but we ought not to conceive of it as at all carnal, but to be satisfied with his arm and with his power.

In steadfastness. אמת (*emeth*) denotes not only *truth* but every kind of *certainty.* The Prophet means that the kingdom of Christ will be firm and steadfast, as Daniel also declared. (Daniel 2:44, 7:14.) The Evangelist also says, *Of his kingdom there shall be no end.* (Luke 1:33.) In this respect it is distinguished from the ordinary condition of kingdoms, which, even when they are founded on great and enormous wealth, crumble down or even fall by their own weight, so that they have no more permanency than vanishing pictures. But Isaiah declares, that the kingdom of Christ, though it frequently totter, will be supported by the hand of God, and therefore will last for ever. These proofs ought to fortify us against temptations which arise, whenever the kingdom of Christ is attacked by enemies so numerous and powerful that we might be ready to think that it will quickly be destroyed. Whatever weapons the world may employ, and though hell itself should vomit out flames of fire, we must abide by this promise.

Who shall judge. I understand שפת (*shophet*) to mean *Governor*, as if he had said, "There will be one who shall *govern*." Often do we see a magnificent throne when there is no one to sit on it, and it frequently happens that kings are either idols or cattle, without judgment or skill or wisdom. But here he says, that one will sit who shall discharge the office of a good *governor*; and this is added in order to assure us that Christ will be our protector.

And seek judgment and hasten righteousness. The *judgment* and the *righteousness* which are ascribed to him, are nothing else than the protection under which he receives us, and which he will not allow to be infringed; for he will not allow wicked men who injure us to pass unpunished, while we patiently and calmly commit ourselves to his protection. By the word *hasten* he shows that he will quickly and speedily avenge our cause. This must be viewed as a rebuke to our impatience, for we never think that his assistance comes soon enough. But when we are hurried along by the violence of passion, let us remember that this arises from not submitting to his providence; for although according to the judgment of our flesh he delays, still he regulates his judgment in the best manner by the seasons which are well known to him. Let us therefore submit to his will.

6. *We have heard of the pride of Moab.* The Prophet added this statement by way of anticipation. It might be thought that men could not believe what he had promised about restoring the *throne* of the king and destroying the Moabites, who at that time were in a flourishing state of riches, and were defended by strong fortresses, and who, puffed up with the prosperity which they now enjoyed, were exceedingly *proud.* Besides, their haughtiness, with which they scorned the unhappy Jews, was a disagreeable and powerful weapon for discouraging or shaking their minds. To provide against this

temptation, he relates that their boasting was well known, but that their *pride* would not prevent God from overthrowing them; because no array of armed forces, no treasures of riches, no multitude of men, can withstand God. Isaiah speaks of it as a thing extensively known, that the Moabites are puffed up in such a manner that they dread nothing; as is commonly the case with those who are well supplied with riches and troops, that they idly exalt themselves above God and men. But whatever may be their arrogance, the Lord will easily restrain it.

His insolence. [260] The Hebrew word עברה (*gnebrah*) most frequently signifies *indignation*; but the connection in which it stands appears to call for something more definite. This noun is derived from the verb עבר, (*gnabar*,) to *pass* or *go beyond*, answering to the Latin word *excessus*; and therefore I have thought it better to translate it *insolence*. In a parallel passage, after the words *pride* and *arrogance* comes the phrase *haughtiness of heart*. (Jeremiah 48:29.) Both Isaiah and Jeremiah, I have no doubt, mean that the Moabites, in consequence of their stubborn and disdainful behavior, and their sumptuous mode of living, were so cruel, that they kindled into wrath on the most trivial occasions, and rose fiercely against others. This vice is always accompanied by haughtiness of mind; for *pride* is followed by disdain and contempt of others, and they who claim more than is due to them easily kindle into rage, and become furious for the smallest offense. In short, they can bear nothing, and are not only passionate, but likewise outrageous. They would wish that all should yield to them, and that they should yield to none. If all do not yield at their bidding, they think that injustice is done to them. This passionate temper is easily betrayed by proud men. On the other hand, the humble possess kindness accompanied by corresponding modesty, and easily forgive any one who has injured them.

His lies. The Hebrew word בדים (*baddim*) denotes either *a mans limbs*, or *the branches of a tree*, and sometimes it is put for *divination*. Accordingly, the Greek translators [261] render it μαντεία, *divination*, and it has that signification in other passages. Some think that it is here used metaphorically for *children*; others translate it either *discourses* or *thoughts*; and others render it *strength* or *sinews*. But in my opinion it is rather put for *vain boasting*; for this word often denotes *falsehood*, and we shall soon see how well this signification applies to the present passage.

There is quite as much difference in the interpretation of the word כן (*ken*,) *so*. The greater part suppose it to mean that "the lies are not right," or that "the discourses are not right," and others, that "the lies are not true;" and as to the substance of the matter, I am almost of their opinion. I have no doubt that the meaning of the Prophet is, that Moab foolishly utters his vain boastings, for he will not accomplish what he imagines. As to the words,

[260] The rendering of the Septuagint is, , Not so thy divination, not so. — Ed

[261] לא כן (lo ken,) non rectum, the frivolous predictions of his diviners, on which no wise man would place dependence. --- Rosenmuller

the meaning of them is obtained with greater certainty from Jeremiah 48:30. After the same words which are here employed by Isaiah, he immediately adds, for the sake of explaining them, לא כן, (*lo ken*,) *Not so*; [262] *his lies shall not so effect it.* As if he had said, "What is determined in their hearts shall fail of accomplishment." Yet I do not think, that in the former clause the particle כן (*ken*) denotes comparison, but rather confirmation, so to speak, but negatively; for he declares that there will be no firmness or stability in his counsels, that *his divinations* or *lies will not take effect.* Proud men settle everything as if everything were in their power, and were not subject to the providence of God. "Such *arrogance*," says Isaiah, shall be brought down, and all that they promise, as to their own strength, shall vanish away. This reminds us that pride is highly displeasing to God, and that the more men are puffed up with their riches, they are the nearer to destruction.

7. *Therefore shall Moab howl to Moab.* [263] He declares more plainly what has been already said, that this *pride*, and the cruelty which springs from it, will be the cause of their destruction. Since the Lord *resisteth the proud*, (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5,) it is impossible but that he will lay low this haughtiness, by which the Church is basely and shamefully trampled under foot; and, according to this example, the end of all proud men must be mournful. When he adds, *Moab to Moab*, he means that there will be what may be called a melancholy concert among them, in which they shall mutually complain of their calamities and bewail their distresses among themselves. Others render it, *on account of Moab*, but this is a feeble interpretation; for immediately afterwards it follows that the *howling* will be universal, or that it will be throughout the whole of the people.

On account of the foundations of Kir-hareseth. It is sufficiently evident that this was a chief and royal city; but some consider it to be a proper name, and others to be an appellative. There can be no doubt that the etymology of the word was derived from its being constructed of earthen materials. It is also possible that it received this name on account of the nature of the walls, which were built of bricks. It was a distinguished city in that country. He names *the foundations* rather than the city itself, because it was to be completely thrown down; as if he had said, "You shall not mourn the plundering of the city or the destruction of the buildings, but its entire overthrow; for no part of it shall be left."

You will groan, being only smitten. [264] Some translate נכאים (*nechaim*) *lame*; but I prefer to take it as meaning *smitten.* The particle אך, (*ach*,) which is here prefixed to it, sometimes means *certainly* or *truly*; and sometimes it is put for *but* or *notwithstanding.* Those who explain it affirmatively suppose the meaning to be this, *You will groan, being truly smitten*; that is, "It will not be necessary for you to hire men to pretend mourning in your name,

[262] Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab. — Eng. Ver.

[263] Shall ye mourn, (or, mutter,) surely they are stricken — Eng. Ver. Moan even ye who yourselves are smitten. — Stock

[264] For the fields of Heshbon languish. — Eng. Ver.

as is usually done in funerals, but you will mourn in earnest." But I prefer to take אך (*ach*) as meaning *only*; that is, "All who shall be left will be wounded; not one shall be safe." By this mode of expression he describes the utter destruction of that city, and intimates that those who are left will lament not only the distresses of others, but also their own. They, too, will be wounded. And if such severe punishments are inflicted on the *proud*, let us learn to submit ourselves with humility and modesty, and willingly to *humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.* (1 Peter 5:6.)

8. *For the vines of Heshbon have been cut down.* [265] Here the Prophet describes allegorically the desolation of the whole country. There is reason to believe that it abounded in the choicest *vines*, [266] as may readily be inferred from this and the parallel passage. (Jeremiah 48:32.) When Prophets threaten destruction to countries, they usually delineate their more remarkable features. For instance, were we to speak of Picardy, we certainly would say nothing about *vines*, as if we had been speaking about Orleans or Burgundy. Now, the cities mentioned by the Prophet were the chief cities of Moab.

The lords of the nations have trodden down his choicest shoots or *branches.* [267] The Prophet says that *the most valuable branches* of their vineyards were torn out by *the lords of the nations*, that is, by the conquerors, who, having subdued the nations in war, held extensive dominion.

Which reached even to Jazer. [268] This serves to point out the extent of the devastation; for this city was situated on the confines of the land of the Moabites; as if he had said, "Not only shall a part of the vineyards be cut down, but the whole country shall be wasted far and wide." Some refer this to the enemies themselves; but I would rather supply the relative אשר, (*asher*,) *which*, and refer it to *the vines, which* were so extensive that they *reached even to Jazer.* Thus the meaning will be, "Though these vineyards *reached even to Jazer*, and covered a very large tract of country, yet thence *to the wilderness* they will all be trodden down by *the lords of the nations.*" This agrees best with the scope of the passage; for it is immediately added that the vineyards *reached to the wilderness*, and even *to the sea*; by which he means that the country was exceedingly fertile, and especially that it abounded in *vines.* He says that they *crossed the sea*, [269] because, when the soil is productive, it is customary to protect by mounds what is contiguous to the sea, in order to extend the cultivation, and to oppose the violence of

[265] "It ought to be known that Heshbon was a place of fields, and Sibmah was a place of vineyards. If you object, that all these cities were on the other side of Jordan, and at what time therefore did they fall under the hand (or power) of the Moabites? we reply. When Sennacherib carried the Reubenites and Gadites into captivity, the Moabites, who were their neighbors, came and dwelt in those cities." — Jarchi

[266] The lords of the heathen have trodden down the principal plants thereof. — Eng. Ver.

[267] They are come even unto Jazer. — Eng. Ver.

[268] "The lake of Jazer, as Jeremiah explains it, Jeremiah 48:32. The plantations of this vine spread onward to the banks, and seemed to overhang the whole breadth of the lake." — Rosenmuller

[269] For the shouting for thy summer-fruits and for thy harvest is fallen. (Or, the alarm is fallen upon thy summer-fruits and upon thy harvest. — Eng. Ver.

the waves by posts of wood and embankments, in order to obtain a large extent of available soil.

9. *Therefore I will bewail.* The Prophet here takes upon him the character of another person, as we have formerly remarked; for in the name of the Moabites he laments and groans. It is undoubtedly true that believers always shudder at the judgments of God, and cannot lay aside the feelings of human nature, so as not to commiserate the destruction of the wicked. Yet he does not describe his own feelings; but his intention is to give additional weight to his instruction, that no one may entertain a doubt as to the accomplishment. He therefore represents in the person of a Moabite, as on a stage, the mourning and grief which shall be felt by all after that calamity, in order to hold out to the Jews a confirmation of this promise, which otherwise might have been thought to be incredible.

Because on thy summer-fruits and on thy harvest a shouting shall break forth, or *shall fall.* [270] This last clause of the verse is variously explained by commentators. נפל, (*naphal,*) signifies to *fall*, or to *burst forth.* Those who translate it, *to burst forth*, consider the word הידד, (*hedad,*) *shouting*, to refer to the enemies themselves; as if he had said, "*The shouting* of enemies *bursts forth on thy harvest;"* so that there is an implied contrast between this *shouting* and the *joy* of which he will afterwards speak. Others explain it to mean, that *the shoutings will be laid;* that is, "there shall be no more *shouting*, and no longer shall the glad and merry voices of the reapers be heard, cheering themselves after the harvest." But I would rather refer it to the *shouting* of enemies; and on this point I follow a most faithful interpreter of this passage, the Prophet Jeremiah, who says that *the spoiler bursts forth*, (Jeremiah 48:32,) where Isaiah speaks of the *shouting* of the enemy; as if he had said, "When thou shalt make preparations for gathering in thy harvest and thy vintage, the enemies will *rush* in, and, instead of joy and cheerful song, their *shouting* shall be heard, which shall drive thee far away."

10. *Joy is taken away.* He confirms, by different words, what he has now said, that the whole country shall be desolate and forsaken, so that there shall never again be in it a harvest or a vintage. When he threatens that God will cause the vine-dressers to cease to sing, he refers to an ancient custom; for when they gathered the vintage, they usually testified their joy both by dancing and by singing. Hence these words of Virgil, *The exhausted vine-dresser now addresses by song his farthest rows* [271] In like manner, the sailors, when they approach the harbour, raise their shout of joy, (κἐλευσμα,) because, having finished their toils, and escaped dangers, they see that they have hope of obtaining some leisure or refreshment. It is as if the Prophet had said, "When the produce of the harvest shall be taken away, nothing will be left to them but to lament their poverty."

11. *Therefore my bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab.* Assuming the

[270] Jam canit extremos effoetus vinitor antes. — Virg. Georg. 2:417.
[271] But he shall not prevail. — Eng. Ver.

character of a Moabite, the Prophet again describes excessive lamentation, proceeding from grief so intense that even the bowels make a distressing noise; for by the sign he intended to point out the reality. We have formerly explained the object of those lively descriptions, which is, to bring the events, as it were, before our eyes, and to lead us to entertain stronger hopes of those things which appear to go beyond all belief. By again naming *Kir-Hareseth*, the chief city, and thus taking a part for the whole, he describes the destruction of the whole country.

12. *And it shall be.* He again returns to that statement which he formerly noticed, namely, that idolaters in their affliction betake themselves to their idols, hoping to obtain some relief from them. Yet it means somewhat more; for while idolaters have their ordinary temples and places of worship, if any uncommon calamity befalls them, they go to another temple more sacred than the rest, expecting that there they will be more abundantly favored with the presence of their god. In like manner, the Papists of the present day, when they are reduced to any uncommon danger, (for this fault has existed in all ages,) think that they will more readily obtain their wish by running to St. Claude, or to Mary of Loretto, or to any other celebrated idol, than if they assembled in some neighboring church. They resolve that their extraordinary prayers shall be offered up in a church which is at a great distance. It is in this sense that the Prophet applies the term *Sanctuary* to that which was most highly celebrated among the Moabites, and says that they will go to it, but without any advantage. Now it is evident from sacred history that their most celebrated temple was dedicated to *Chemosh.* (1 Kings 11:7.)

And shall not profit by it. The phrase לא יוכל, (*lo yuchal,*) *they shall not be able*, is explained by some to mean, that they shall at length be so completely worn out that they will not have sufficient strength to go to the temple. But I think it better to render it thus, *he shall not profit by it*; for he shuts out the Moabites from all hope of safety, by saying that they will find no protection even in their gods.

When it is seen. The word נראה, (*nirah,*) *seen*, is emphatic. It means that idolaters are not guided by reason, but rather by the impressions made on their senses, like brute beasts: for as the beasts judge by feeling, smelling, and seeing, so idolaters have no other guide than the judgment of the flesh. Accordingly, if any one shall show that they are doing wrong, he will gain nothing by it. Though they have often known by experience that they gain nothing by so many laborious exertions, they will not desist from them, but will contrive new methods and introduce new modes of worship, hoping that God will approve of them. If they succeed according to their wish, they ascribe everything to their superstitions, and become more obstinate. If they perceive that they have derived no advantage, they reject their contrivances, condemn the superstitious worship, and curse their gods. In short, they rely altogether on the events, and do not judge of anything either by reason or by

the word of God. The consequence is, that, as they are guided by what befalls them, they are continually changing their plans. But the Prophet appears to mean somewhat more, namely, that when their folly, in having hitherto labored to no purpose, shall have been openly manifested and exposed, the Moabites will come into the temple of Chemosh, rather through shame than in the exercise of judgment.

13. *This is the word.* This concluding sentence is the ratification of the prophecy. It means that he has pronounced the decree of God himself, and that he has brought nothing forward that did not proceed from the Lord, and thus, laying aside the person of a man, he introduces God speaking in this manner.

14. *Three years.* The time is fixed, not only for the sake of certainty, but likewise that believers may not become faint through longer delay. He alludes to agreements among men, in which it is customary to fix the time agreed on, which the parties are not at liberty to transgress. This is especially the case in the labors of *hirelings*, from whom Scripture frequently draws a comparison in this respect, that they earnestly long for the appointed day when they shall receive their reward; for they groan, as it were, under the burden, and grievously dislike their daily toils. (Job 7:1, 2, 14:6; Isaiah 21:16.) In this way the Lord says, that he fixes a day for the Moabites, in which they shall not escape from the entire destruction of their power.

With all his multitude. He expressly mentions a *multitude*, because their number was great, and because they boasted of it, and thought that they were invincible. When he adds, that *the remnant shall be feeble,* he means that there will be so great a change, that they will have no resemblance to their former condition; for nothing will be left but a sad and shocking sight.

End Of Volume First.

Chapter 17

CHAPTER 17.

Isaiah Chapter 17:1-14

1. The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.

1. Onus Damasci. Ecce Damascus ablata est, ne sit civitas; nam erit acervus ruinæ.

2. The Cities of Aroer are forsaken; they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

2. Derelictæ sunt urbes Aroer, in caulus vertentur; accubabunt, nec erit qui exterreat.

3. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the Lord of hosts.

3. Et cessabit præsidium ab Ephraim, et regnum a Damasco. Et reliquiæ Syriæ, quasi gloriæ filiorum Israel erunt, dicit Iehova exercituum.

4. And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

4. Et erit in die illa, attenuabitur gloria Iacob, et pinguedo carnis ejus macrescet.

5. And it shall be, as when the harvest-man gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

5. Et erit sicut qui colligit messem segitis, qui brachio suo spicas metit; similiter ut quis colligit spicas in valle Rephaim.

6. Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches therof, saith the Lord God of Israel.

6. Et relinquetur in ea racematio, sicut excussio oleæ; duæ illic aut tres baccæ restant in cacumine altioris rami, quatuor aut quinque in expansis ramis fructus ejus, dicit Iehova Deus Israel.

7. At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.

7. In die illa respiciet homo ad factorem suum, et oculi ejus ad sanctum Israelis intuebuntur.

8. And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images.

8. Nec respiciet ad altaria opus manuum suarum, non aspiciet quæ fecerunt digiti ejus, nec lucos, nec simulachra.

9. In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation.

9. In die illa erunt urbes fortitudinis ejus, quasi derelictio virgulti et frondis, quemadmodum reliquerunt coram filiis Israel; et erit desolatio.

10. Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:

10. Quoniam oblita es Dei salutis tuæ, nec memor fuisti Dei fortitudinis; idcirco plantabis plantas amoenas, et palmitem alienum conseres.

11. In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish; but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow

11. Die plantationis tuæ crescere facies eam, et mane germinare facies semen tuum; sed recedet messis in die fruendi, et erit dolor desperatus.

12. Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!

12. Hei multitudo populorum multorum; instar sonitus maris sonabunt, et strepitus nationum; instar strepitus aquarum ingentium tumultuabuntur.

13. The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind; and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

13. Strepent populi instar strepitus aquarum ingentium, et increpabit eum, et fugiet procul; fugabitur quasi stipula montium coram vento, et quasi globus coram turbine.

14. And behold at evening-tide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

14. Tempore vespertino ecce turbatio; antequam sit mane, nusquam erit. Hæc est pars conculcantium nos, et sors eorum qui nos diripiunt.

1. *The burden of Damascus.* Here he prophesies against the kingdom of Syria, and mentions the chief city in which the seat of the kingdom lay.

It was proper that this calamity, like others which came before it, should be described, that the righteous might confidently believe that God would one day assist them, and would not always permit them to be oppressed by the wicked without end. The king of Syria had formed an alliance with Israel against Judah, as we saw formerly in the seventh chapter; and as the Jews were not able to contend with him, and were deprived of other aids, they might also entertain doubts about God's assistance, as if he had utterly abandoned them. To free them, therefore, from these doubts, he threatens the destruction of that kingdom, from which they would readily conclude that God fought in defense of his people.

It is uncertain at what time Isaiah uttered this prophecy, for, as I have already remarked, he does not follow the order of time in threatening against each nation the punishment which it deserved. But, as far as I am able to conjecture, he foretold those events at the time when those two kings, that is, the kings of Israel and Syria, invaded Judea, and entered into a league to destroy it and the whole Church, (Isaiah 7:1, 2;) for, by joining together the Israelites and the Syrians, he summons them to a mutual judgment, in order to show that the only advantage which they had derived from the wicked and disgraceful conspiracy was, to be involved in the same destruction. In this manner Isaiah intended to comfort godly persons who were of the tribe of Judah; for he has his eye chiefly on them, that they may not be discouraged, and not on the Syrians, or even the Israelites, whose destruction he foretells.

Behold, Damascus is taken away. The demonstrative particle, *Behold,* seals the certainty of the prophecy. When he expressly mentions *Damascus,* it does not follow from this that the other parts of the kingdom are exempted, but it was customary with the prophets to take a part for the whole, so as to include under the destruction of the metropolis the fate of the whole nation; for what must ordinary towns expect when the citadel of the kingdom has been stormed? Yet there is another reason why the Prophets pronounce heavier threatenings on the chief and royal cities, and especially direct their discourse against them. It is, because a polluted flood of crimes overflows from them into the whole country.

2. *The cities of Aroer are forsaken.* It is not probable that *Aroer* here denotes the city which is mentioned elsewhere, (Numbers 32:34; Deuteronomy 2:36, 3:12, 4:48;) but it is rather the name of a country. He draws the picture of a country which has been ruined; for he shews that those places in which cities had been built will be devoted to pasture, and that no habitation will be left there but huts and shepherds' tents; for if any inhabitants remained, the shepherds would drive their flocks to some other place.

3. *The fortress shall cease.* [272] He points out the reason why the Lord determines to cut off the kingdom of Syria. Amos (Amos 1:3) enumerates additional reasons, but the most important was that which the Prophet

[272] "Le secours venant d'Ephraim cessara;" — "The assistance coming from Ephraim shall cease."

mentions, namely, that they had drawn the kingdom of Israel to their side for the purpose of making war against the Jews. The Israelites were undoubtedly allured, by the blandishments of the Syrians, to form an alliance with them against their brethren. It was a pretext exceedingly fitted to impose upon them, that the Syrians would aid them against all their enemies; and hence also the Israelites placed confidence in the forces and power of the Syrians to such an extent, that they reckoned themselves able to oppose any adversary. All Israel is here, as in many other passages, denoted by the name *Ephraim,* which was the chief tribe of that people. Now, "the assistance and kingdom" are said to "cease" from any place, when its strength is broken and its rank is thrown down.

And the remnant of Syria. That is, both of these nations, the Syrians and the Israelites, shall be brought to nothing; and, for the purpose of giving additional weight to the prophecy, he states that it is God who declares it; for he immediately adds these words, *saith Jehovah of hosts* Now, when the Lord punished so severely those two kingdoms, he unquestionably promoted in this way the benefit of his Church, delivering it by the destruction of its enemies. And, indeed, in destroying both nations, he employed as his agents the Assyrians, to whom even the Jews had applied; and although in this respect they had heinously sinned, yet their offense did not hinder the Lord from promoting the benefit of his Church, or from delivering it by bringing its enemies into conflict with each other. Hence we perceive how great is the care which God exercises over us, since he does not spare even the greatest kingdoms in order to preserve us. We ought also to observe, that though all the wicked enter into a league, and join hands to destroy us, yet the Lord will easily rescue us from their jaws. Besides, we ought to remark that it is advantageous to us to be deprived of earthly aids, on which it is in vain for us to rely in opposition to God; for when we are blinded by our prosperity, we flatter ourselves, and cannot hear the voice of God. It therefore becomes necessary to remove these obstructions, that we may perceive our helplessness, as was the case with the Israelites, who were bereft of their aid after Syria had been destroyed.

4. *The glory of Jacob shall be diminished.* [273] Although he had undertaken to speak of Syria and Damascus, he takes occasion to join Israel with the Syrians, because they were bound by a mutual league, and were united in the same cause. The Syrians, indeed, whom Isaiah chiefly addresses, were like a torch to inflame the Israelites, as we have already said. But the Israelites themselves were equally in fault, and therefore they were justly drawn, by what might be called a mutual bond, to endure the same punishment.

It is not easy to say whether under the name *Jacob* he speaks of the whole elect people, so as to include also the tribe of Judah. But it is probable that he refers only to the ten tribes, who laid claim to the name of the nation,

[273] "Sera diminué;" — "Shall be made thin." — Eng. Ver.

and that it is in mockery that he describes them as *glorious,* because, being puffed up with their power and multitude and allies, they despised the Jews their brethren.

And the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean. When he next threatens them with *leanness,* his object is to reprove their indolence, as the Prophets frequently reprove them for their fatness (Jeremiah 5:28; 50:11.) On account of their prosperity and of the fertility of the country, they became proud, as horses that are fat and excessively pampered grow restive. Hence also they are elsewhere called "fat cows" (Amos 4:1). But however fierce and stubborn they might be, God threatens that he will take away their fatness with which they were puffed up.

5. *And it shall be as when the harvest-man gathereth the corn.* He shews by a comparison how great will be the desolation. "As the reapers," he says, "gather the corn in armfuls, so this multitude, though large and extended, will be mowed down by the enemies." Now that he may not leave a remainder, he adds that at the conclusion of the harvest *the ears will be gleaned,* as if he had said, that when the multitude shall have been destroyed and the country laid bare like a field which has been reaped, even the shaken and scattered ears will not be left. Besides, he employs the metaphor of a harvest because the people, trusting to their great number, dreaded nothing; but as the reapers are not terrified by the large quantity of the corn, so he declares that their vast number will not prevent God from utterly destroying them. This may also refer to the Assyrians, but the meaning will be the same, for they were God's servants in executing this vengeance.

We need not spend much time in explaining the word *gather,* for it means nothing else than that the slaughter will resemble a harvest, the conclusion of which has been followed by the gleaning of the ears. When the ten tribes had been carried away, the Assyrians, having learned that they were meditating a revolution, destroyed them also (2 Kings 17:4). He especially mentions *the valley of Rephaim,* because its fertility was well known to the Israelites.

6. *Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it.* This metaphor has a different meaning from the former; for as if the name of the nation were to be entirely blotted out, he had expressly foretold that nothing would be left after the slaughter. He now adds a consolation, and thus abates the severity of the destruction; for he declares that, although the enemies had resolved to consume and destroy everything, still some remnant would be left. In like manner the gleaning of grapes is never made so completely as not to allow some grapes or even clusters to remain, which were concealed under the leaves, and the olive tree is never so thoroughly shaken as not to leave at least some olives on the tops of the trees. Consequently, to whatever extent the enemies may rage, and even the vengeance of God may be kindled, still he foretells that the Judge, notwithstanding his severity, will reserve for himself a small number, and will not allow the attacks of enemies to fall upon his own elect.

Hence it follows, that amidst the heaviest vengeance there will still be room for mercy. The present discourse relates to the posterity of Abraham; and though they had revolted from God so as to deserve to be cast off, yet the goodness of God rose above their wickedness. They had indeed rendered themselves unworthy of such goodness, but the covenant of God must remain firm and impregnable, and a proof of that firmness must be given by him in some remnant, though the nation entirely set it aside as far as lay in their power. This ought to be carefully observed, so that when we perceive no traces of the Church, and when the godly appear to be destroyed, still we may not think that the Church has perished; for the promise of the Lord stands, that it will continue for ever (Genesis 17:7). Some remnant, therefore, will always remain, though frequently it is not visible to our eyes.

7. *At that day shall a man look to his Maker.* He now shews the fruit of this chastisement, and this is the second consolation with which the godly ought to fortify themselves amidst their afflictions. Although they perceive nothing but the wrath of God, yet they ought to reflect that the Lord, who never forgets himself, will continually preserve his Church, and not only so, but that the chastisements will be advantageous to them. After having spoken, therefore, about the continual existence of the Church, he next adds, that *men will look to God* This is the most desirable of all, for when men betake themselves to God, the world, which was formerly disordered, is restored to its proper order; but when we have been estranged from him, no one repents of his own accord, and therefore there is no other way in which we can be brought back than to be driven by the scourge of chastisements. We are thus reminded that we ought not to be so impatient in enduring chastisements, which cure us of the fearfully dangerous disease of apostasy.

To look to God means nothing else than that, when we have turned away, we return to a state of favor with him, betake ourselves and are converted to him. For how comes it that men abandon themselves to every kind of wickedness but because they forget God? Where the knowledge of God exists, there reverence dwells; where forgetfulness of God is found, there contempt of him also prevails. Yet this relates properly to faith, as if he had said, "When chastisements so severe shall have tamed the Israelites, they will then perceive that there is no help for them but in God." For this reason he immediately adds the expression, *To his Maker.* It was indeed a proof of abominable indolence that they did not rely on God alone, who had bestowed on them so many precious gifts. The Prophet therefore says, that when they had been subdued by distresses and afflictions, they would afterwards return to a sound mind, so as to begin to hope in him who had bound them to himself by so many acts of kindness. And indeed he calls God their *Maker,* not as having created the whole human race, but in the same sense in which he likewise calls him *The Holy One of Israel.* Although therefore all men were created after the image of God, (Genesis 1:27), yet Israel was peculiarly his workmanship, because he was his heritage, and his

holy and chosen people (Exodus 19:6). This repetition, in accordance with the ordinary custom of the Hebrew language, is employed to denote the same thing. He therefore calls God *Holy,* not only as viewed in himself, but from the effect produced, because he has sanctified or separated to himself the children of Abraham. Hence it follows, that the creation which he speaks of must be understood to relate to spiritual reformation, in reference to which he is especially called *the Maker of Israel* (Isaiah 45:11; Hosea 8:14).

8. *And he shall not look to the altars.* This contrast shews more clearly that the *looking* which he spoke of in the former verse relates strictly to hope and confidence, for he says that every kind of sinful confidence will vanish away when men have learned to hope in God; and indeed in no other manner can any one obtain clear views of God than by driving far from him all superstitions. We are thus taught that obstacles of this kind ought to be removed if we wish to approach to God. It is vain to think of making a union between God and idols, as the Papists do, and as the Jews formerly did; for that vice is not peculiar to our age, but has prevailed in all ages. Every obstruction ought therefore to be removed, that we may look to God with such earnestness as to have just and clear views of him, and to put our trust in him.

The work of his hands. It is for the purpose of exciting abhorrence that he calls the false gods *the work of their hands,* that the Israelites, being ashamed of their folly, may shake off and drive away from them such a disgraceful reproach. On this vice, however, he dwells the more largely, because they were more chargeable with it than with any other, and because none can be more abominable in the sight of God. There were innumerable superstitions among them, and in places without number they had set up both idols and altars, so that Isaiah had good reason for reproving and expostulating with them at great length on account of these crimes.

It might be objected that the altar at Jerusalem was also built by men, and therefore they ought to forsake it in order to approach to God. (Exodus 27:1). I reply, that altar was widely different from others, for although it consisted of stone and mortar, silver and gold, and was made like others by the agency of men, yet we ought not to look at the materials or the workmanship, but at God himself who was the maker, for by his command it was built. We ought therefore to consider the essential form, so to speak, which it received from the word of God; other matters ought not to be taken into view, since God alone is the architect. (Exodus 20:24, 25; Deuteronomy 27:5, 6). Other altars, though they bore some resemblance to it, should be abhorred, because they had not the authority of the word. Such is the estimate which we ought to form of every kind of false worship, whatever appearance of sanctity it may assume; for God cannot approve of anything that is not supported by his word.

9. *In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough.* He follows out what he had begun to say about driving out the inhabitants of the

country; and as the Israelites, trusting to their fortified cities and to their bulwarks, thought that they were in safety, he threatens that they will be of no more use than if enemies were marching through desert places. The view entertained by some, that חורש (*chōrĕsh*) and עזובת (ăzūbăth) [274] are proper names of towns, is a forced interpretation. I understand them rather to denote unpleasant and disagreeable places, or that the walls and ditches will contribute no more to their defense than if the Israelites dwelt amidst thickets and bushes.

As they left. [275] Here the particle אשר, (*asher,*) I have no doubt, denotes comparison; and therefore I have rendered it *in like manner as,* which makes the statement of the Prophet to be, in connection with what had been already said, that the people would tremble and flee and be scattered, in the same manner as God had formerly driven out the ancient inhabitants. Those who think that אשר, (*asher,*) is a relative are constrained to supply something, and to break up the thread of the discourse. But it simply brings to their remembrance an ancient example, that the Israelites may perceive how vain and deceitful is every kind of defense that is opposed to the arm of God. It is a severe reproach; for the Israelites did not consider that the Lord gave to them that land, as it were, by hereditary right, in order that they might worship him, and that he drove out their enemies to put them in possession of it. And now, by their ingratitude, they rendered themselves unworthy of so great a benefit; and, consequently, when they had been deprived of it, there was good reason why they should feel distresses which were the reverse of their former blessings.

This passage will be made more plain by the writings of Moses, whom the prophets follow; for in the promises he employs this mode of expression, "One of you shall chase a thousand," (Leviticus 26:8; Joshua 23:10), and in the threatenings, on the other hand, he says, "One shall chase a thousand of you." (Deuteronomy 32:30.) Accordingly, as he struck such terror into the Canaanites, that at the sight of the Israelites they immediately fled, so he punished the ingratitude of the people in such a manner that they had no power to resist. Thus the Lord gave a display of his power in two ways, both in driving out the Canaanites and in punishing his people. The Prophet, therefore, by mentioning that ancient kindness, reproaches the people with ingratitude, forgetfulness, and treachery, that they may acknowledge that they are justly punished, and may perceive that it proceeds from the Lord, that they are thus chased by the enemies to whom they were formerly a terror.

10. *Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation.* He shews

[274] "'Like the leaving of the ploughed field, or on the topmost bough.' I adopt with pleasure the interpretation of this disputed passage proposed in the excellent Lexicon of Parkhurst, v. as being most natural, and in strict conformity with the Jewish law, Leviticus 19:9, 10; Deuteronomy 24:19-21; which commanded 'a leaving of the ploughman, and of the branches of the vine and olive,' to be given up to the use of the poor in harvest. Avarice would be apt to make these leavings very scanty." — Bishop Stock.

[275] Whom they left. — Eng. Ver.

the reason why the Lord exercises such severity against the Ten Tribes, that they may not complain of being unjustly afflicted or too harshly treated. The sum of what is stated is, that all those evils come to them because they have wickedly despised God. It was excessively base and altogether inexcusable ingratitude, after having received so many favors, to prostitute their hopes to heathen nations and to idols, as if they had never in any respect experienced the love of God. Indeed, no unbelievers, when they are called to account, will vindicate themselves from the charge of offering an insult to God by wandering after creatures. But the argument was applicable, in a special manner, to the people of Israel, to whom God had revealed himself in such a manner that they ought to have left off all the impostures of the world and relied on his grace alone. They are therefore justly accused of ingratitude, for having buried in forgetfulness the object of true faith; and indeed, when God has once allowed us to taste the delight of his goodness, if it gain a place in our hearts, we shall never be drawn away from it to anything else. Hence it follows that they are convicted of ingratitude who, not being satisfied with the true God, are unsteady and driven about in all directions; for in this manner they despise his invaluable grace.

Accordingly, the Prophet expressly calls him *the God of salvation* and the *God* or *Rock of strength* צור (*tsūr*) has both significations; for it was a monstrous thing that they were not kept in fidelity to God, who had so often preserved them, and, as it were, with an outstretched hand. When he adds that they *had not been mindful,* this is an amplification; for he indirectly charges them with base slothfulness in not considering in how many ways they had formerly been made to know the kindness of God.

Therefore thou shalt plant. Next follows the punishment, that they might not think that this ingratitude would remain unpunished. That is, because they forsook the fountain of all good, though they labor to obtain food, yet they will be consumed by famine and hunger; for all that shall be obtained with great labor the enemy will either carry away or destroy. This passage is taken from Moses; for it is a curse pronounced amidst other curses.

"The fruit of thy land, and all thy labors, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up." (Deuteronomy 28:33).

Hence we see what I have often mentioned before, that the prophets borrow many things from Moses, and are the true interpreters of the law. He speaks of choice vines and branches taken from them; because the greatness of the loss aggravates the sorrow.

11. *In the day.* This denotes the incessant labor which is bestowed on plants and seeds. Yet we might understand by it the fruit which is yielded, as if a vine newly planted would immediately produce wine. And this agrees with the next clause, in which *the morning* is put for *the day.* This appears to denote sudden maturity, unless perhaps this also be supposed to denote carefulness, because from the very earliest dawn they will devote themselves to labor.

The words are somewhat ambiguous; for some render them, "the removing of the branch on the day of affliction." But as נחלח (*năchălāh*) means "an inheritance," here, in my opinion, it literally denotes produce. It is not derived from חלה (*chālāh,*) and I do not see how the word "Branch" agrees with it. I grant, indeed, that as vines are mentioned, the word *Harvest* is employed (καταχρηστικῶς) differently from its natural meaning.

It might also be rendered a Collector; and yet I do not choose to dispute keenly about those two significations, for the meaning will be the same, provided that נחלח (*nāchălāh*) be understood to denote "the gathering of the fruits." In this way the passage will flow easily enough. "Though you labor hard in dressing the vines, and though you begin your toil at the earliest dawn, you will gain nothing; for by the mere shaking of the branches the fruit will fall off of its own accord, or your vines will be plundered." Thus, by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, the word *plant* denotes that unwearied toil which husbandmen and vine-dressers are wont to bestow on plants and vines.

This is a very severe punishment, and undoubtedly proceeds from the curse of God; for if he who has no possession be driven out and banished from a country, he will not be rendered so uneasy as the man who has well cultivated fields, and particularly if he has bestowed his labor on them for a long time. In this manner the Lord determined to punish the Israelites, because they abused the fertility of the country and grew wanton amidst their abundance. A similar punishment is also threatened against the wicked in general terms, that "in vain do they rise early, and vex themselves with unremitted toil;" for they gain nothing by it. (Psalm 127:2). On the other hand, it is declared that they who trust in the Lord will undoubtedly receive the reward of their toil, for the blessing of God will accompany their labors. (Psalm 128:2, 4).

12. *Alas* [276] *for the multitude!* Some render Woe, making it to denote execration. Sometimes, as we have seen elsewhere, it is employed in calling to a person; but on the present occasion I rather think that it betokens sorrow, [277] for he groans on account of the calamity which he foresees will befall Israel, and he does so either out of brotherly affection, or in order that the prophecy may make a more powerful impression on the minds of a sluggish and indolent people. It is certain, that the prophets regarded with greater horror than other men the vengeance of God, of which they were the heralds; and although, in sustaining the character assigned to them, they threatened severely, still they never laid aside human feelings, so as not to have compassion on those who perished. But the chief reason was a consideration of the covenant which God had made with the seed of Abraham; and we see that Paul also had this feeling to such an extent, that he "wished to be accursed for his brethren." (Romans 9:3). When therefore Isaiah brings

[276] Woe to the multitude. — Eng. Ver.

[277] "Mais il me semble plustost qu'il se prend ici pour Helas." — "But I rather think that here it stands for Alas!"

the fact before his mind, he cannot but be deeply affected with grief; and yet, as I have hinted, it tends to make the fact more certain, when he places it before his eyes as if he actually saw it.

The word *multitude* is here employed, because the army had been collected out of many and various nations, of which the Assyrian monarchy was composed. The metaphors which he adds are intended for no other purpose than to exhibit more forcibly what has been already stated; for he compares them to a sea or a deluge, which overflows a whole country.

13. *The nations shall rush.* Although he appears to follow out that threatening, which he formerly uttered, yet he begins to comfort believers by repeating the same statement, as if we should say, "They who were unmindful of God must be punished for their wicked revolt, and must be, as it were, overwhelmed by a deluge; but the Lord will restrain this savage disposition of the enemies, for, when they have exercised their cruelty, he shall find a method of casting them out and driving them away." This is a remarkable consolation, by which he intended to support the remnant of the godly. Nor does he speak of the Jews only, as is commonly supposed, for hitherto he has addressed his discourse to the ten tribes, and it is certain that there were still left in Israel some who actually feared God, and who would have despaired if they had not been upheld by some promise.

By these metaphors he describes dreadful storms and tempests. When the Holy Spirit intends to bring comfort to the godly, he holds out those objects which are wont to terrify and discourage the minds of men, that we may learn that God will easily allay all tempests, however violent and dreadful. As the winds and seas and storms are at his command, so it is easy for him to restrain enemies and their violence; and therefore immediately afterwards he compares the Assyrians to *chaff.*

As the chaff of the mountains before the wind. Although with regard to the Israelites their attack was terrible, yet he shews that before God they will be like *chaff,* for without any effort he will scatter all their forces. Hence it follows that we ought not to judge of their resources and strength by our senses. Whenever therefore we see the restraints laid on the wicked withdrawn, [278] that they may rush forward for our destruction, let us indeed consider that, so far as lies in ourselves, we are ruined, but that God can easily frustrate their attacks. גלגל (*galgal*) means *a rolling thing,* [279] which is easily driven by the wind.

14. *And, behold, at evening tide trouble.* The meaning is, "As when a storm has been raised in the *evening,* and soon afterwards allayed, no trace of it is found in the *morning,* so will cheerful prosperity suddenly arise, contrary to expectation." The Prophet intended to state two things — first, that the attack of the enemy will be sudden; and secondly, that the ravages

[278] "Toutes les fois donc que nous voyous les merchans avoir la bride sur le col pour nous ruiner." "Whenever then we see the wicked have the bridle on their neck to ruin us."

[279] "And like the gossamer before the whirlwind." — Lowth. "And like thistle-down before the storm." — Stock.

which they shall commit will not be of long duration. As the Assyrians rose suddenly against the Israelites, so their fall was sudden.

From this passage all the godly ought to draw wonderful consolation, whenever they see that everything is in disorder, and when dreadful changes are at hand; for what is it but a sudden storm which the Lord will allay? Tyrants rush upon us like storms and whirlwinds, but the Lord will easily dispel their rage. Let us therefore patiently wait for his assistance; for though he permit us to be tossed about, yet through the midst of the tempests he will at length conduct us "to the haven." (Psalm 107:30.) And if the Prophet comforted a small remnant, who appeared to be almost none at all, this promise undoubtedly belongs to us also. True, we are almost none, and a wretched church is concealed in a few corners; but if we look at the condition of the kingdom of Israel, how few were the servants of God in it! And these hardly ventured to mutter, such was the universal hatred of religion and godliness. Although therefore the Lord destroy the multitude of the wicked, yet to the small number of the godly, who may be said to be tossed about in the same ship with them, he will hold out a plank to rescue them from shipwreck, and will guide them safely and comfortably into the harbour.

This is the portion. He addresses the believers who were concealed in the kingdom of Israel, and joins them with the Church, although, as is frequently the case with the children of God, the members were scattered in every direction. We see here what will be the end of the wicked who have persecuted us. Though we are exposed to their rage, so that they tear and plunder and trample upon us, and inflict on us every kind of insult, yet they will be like storms which are subdued by their own violence and quickly disappear. We ought to expect that this will be the lot of all the tyrants who at the present day wretchedly harass the Church, and treat cruelly the children of God. Let this consolation be engraved on our minds, that we may know that the same thing will happen to them.

Chapter 18

CHAPTER 18

Isaiah Chapter 18:1-7

1. Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:

1. Heus terra inumbrans alis, quæ est trans flumina Æthiopiæ.

2. That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the water, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

2. Mittens per mare legatos, in vasis junceis super aquas. Ite nuntii celeres ad gentem distractam et expilatam, ad populum formidabilem ab eo et deinceps, gentem undique conculcatam, cujus terram flumina diripuerunt.

3. All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.

3. Omnes habitatores orbis, et incolæ terræ, cum signum sustulerit in montibus, videbitis; cum tuba clanxerit, audietis.

4. For so the Lord said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling-place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.

4. Porro sic mihi dixit Iehova, Quiescam, et videbo in tabernaculo meo, sicut calor siccans pluviam, et sicut nubes roscida in calore messis.

5. For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.

5. Quia dum adfuerit messis, perfectum erit germen, et ex flore fructus erit maturescens; tum amputabit ipsos palmites falcibus, et propagines auferendo

exscindet.

6. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

6. Derelinquentur pariter volatili montium et animalibus terræ. Æstivabit super illud volatile, et omnia animalia terræ hyemabunt.

7. In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion.

7. Tempore illo adducetur Iehovæ exercituum munus, populus laceratus et expilatus, et de populo terribili, ex quo esse coepit et deinceps; gente undique conculcata, cujus terram flumina diripuerunt, ad locum nominis Iehovæ exercituum, ad montem Sion.

1. *Woe to the land.* I cannot determine with certainty what is the nation of which Isaiah speaks, though he shews plainly that it bordered on *Ethiopia.* Some consider it to refer to the whole of Egypt; but this is a mistake, for in the next chapter he treats of Egypt separately, from which it is evident that the people here meant were distinct from the Egyptians. Some think that the Troglodytes are here meant, which does not appear to me to be probable, for they had no intercourse with other nations, because their language, as geographers tell us, was hissing and not speech; [280] but those who are mentioned evidently had intercourse and leagues with other nations.

Still it is uncertain whether they leagued against the Jews or joined with the Egyptians in driving out the Assyrians. If they were avowed enemies to the Jews, Isaiah threatens punishment; but if they deceived them by false promises, he shews that nothing is to be expected from them, because by idle messages they will only protract the time. However that may be, from the neighboring nations to be mentioned in the next chapter, we may in part ascertain where they were situated, that is, not far from Egypt and Ethiopia: yet some may be disposed to view it as a description of that part of Ethiopia which lay on the sea-coast; for we shall afterwards see that the Assyrians were at war with the king of the Ethiopians. (Isaiah 37:9.)

When he says that that *land shadows with wings,* we learn from it that its sea was well supplied with harbours, so that it had many vessels sailing to it and was wealthy; for small and poor states could not maintain intercourse or traffic with foreign countries. He therefore means that they performed many voyages.

2. *Sending ambassadors by the sea.* This relates strictly to the state of those times. It would appear that this nation solicited the Egyptians or

280 "The Ethiopian Troglodytes," says Herodotus "are the swiftest of foot of all men of whom we have received any accounts. The Troglodytes feed on serpents, and lizards, and reptiles of that sort, and the language which they have adopted has no resemblance to any other, but they screech like bats. — Herod. 4:183.

Syrians to harass the Jews, or that the Assyrians employed them for the purpose of harassing the Jews, or that they had formed an alliance with the Egyptians, in order that, by their united force, they might prevent the power of the Assyrians from increasing beyond bounds; for nothing more than conjectures can be offered, because we have no histories that give any account of it, and where historical evidence is wanting, we must resort to probable conjectures. These voyages, there is reason to believe, were not made to any place near at hand, but to a distant country.

In ships of reeds. [281] We ought not to think it strange that he calls them *ships of reeds,* for it is evident from the ancient histories that these were commonly used by the Egyptians, because the channel of the Nile is in some places very steep and dangerous to navigators on account of the cataracts, which the Greeks call Κατάδουπα, so that ships of wood cannot be used at those places without being broken and dashed to pieces on the rocks; and therefore it is necessary to employ ships of pliant materials. That the ships might not admit water and thus be sunk, historians tell us that they were daubed within with pitch.

Go, ye swift messengers. This passage is obscure, but I shall follow what I consider to be probable. The Prophet shews the design of his prediction, or the reason why he foretold the destruction of that nation. If we believe them to have been the avowed enemies of the Jews, the design was to afford some consolation to believers who were wretchedly broken up and scattered, that having received this message they might rejoice and give thanks to God. But if we rather think that the Jews were led by this nation into an unlawful league, we must then consider that this exhortation is ironical, and that the Prophet intended to reprove the folly of the chosen people, in forsaking God and relying on useless aid. Some think that these words were spoken by God, as if he commanded those nations who inhabited the sea-coast to destroy the Jews; but I am not at all of that opinion.

To a nation scattered and plundered. [282] I do not agree with those who think that these words describe the destruction of that unknown and obscure nation; for by "a plundered nation" he means the Jews who were to be grievously harassed and scattered, so that no part of them escaped injury.

To a people terrible from their beginning hitherto. He calls it *terrible,* because so great calamities would disfigure it in such a manner that all who beheld it would be struck with terror. I cannot approve of the exposition given by some, that this relates to the signs and miracles which the Lord performed amongst them, so as to render them an object of dread to all men; for the allusion is rather to that passage in the writings of Moses, "The Lord will make thee an astonishment and a terror." Deuteronomy 28:37 In like manner it is said elsewhere, "for the shaking of the head and mockery." (Jeremiah 18:16; 19:8; 25:9, 13, 18.) He therefore means that they are a

[281] "In vessels of bulrushes." — Eng. Ver.

[282] "Scattered and peeled, or, outspread and polished." — Eng. Ver.

nation so dreadful to behold as to fill all men with astonishment, and we know that this was foretold and that it also happened to the Jews.

A nation trodden down on every side. [283] קו קו, (*kav-kav,*) that is, *on every side,* as if one drew lines and joined them so closely that no space was left between them, or as if one drew furrows in a field so as to break every clod; for in this manner was the nation thrown down and trampled under foot. [284]

Whose land the rivers have spoiled. By *the rivers* he means the vast army of the enemies, that is, of the Assyrians. He alludes to what he had formerly said, that the nation, not satisfied with its own little stream, longed for rapid and boisterous rivers. (Isaiah 8:6.) After having applied to them for assistance, they were overwhelmed by them as by a deluge; and the reason of the whole evil was this, that they were not satisfied with the promises of God, and sought assistance in another quarter. Now, if this command is understood to be given to the *swift messengers* in the name of God, we infer from it that he does not immediately assist his own people, but delays his aid till they are brought to a state of despair. He does not send to them a cheerful and prosperous message while they are still uninjured, or when they have received a light stroke, but he sends a message to a nation altogether trodden down and trampled under foot. Yet when he commands them to make haste, he means that the judgment will be sudden and unexpected, so that light will suddenly burst forth amidst the darkness.

3. *All ye inhabitants of the world.* He shews that this work of God will be so manifestly excellent as to draw the attention not only of the Jews but of all nations.

When he shall lift up an ensign on the mountains, you will see it. [285] These words, which are in the future tense, are rendered by some, agreeably to the custom of Scripture, in the imperative mood; [286] but it is better to view them as denoting what is future. It is as if he had said that the most distant nations will be witnesses of this destruction, because not only will the *ensign* be beheld by all, but the sound of the trumpets will be heard throughout the whole world. This will plainly shew that the war did not originate with men, but with God himself, who will prove himself to be the author of it by remarkable tokens. When wars are carried on, every one sees clearly what is done; but the greater part of men ascribe the beginning and end of them to chance. On the other hand, Isaiah shews that all these things ought to be ascribed to God, because he will display his power in a new and

[283] "A nation meted out and trodden down." Heb. "A nation of line, and line, and treading under foot." — Eng. Ver.

[284] "A nation meted out by line, that is, utterly subdued. Heb. Put under line and line, to decide what part of them should be destroyed, and what saved by the conquerors. In this manner David is described, (2 Samuel 8:2,) as having dealt with the children of Moab. See Lamentations 2:8. Such a nation might well deserve to be called drawn out and pilled, that is drawn through the fingers (or an instrument) like a willow, in order to be peeled and made fit for wicker work." — Stock.

[285] "Videbitis." "Vous le verrez."

[286] "See ye." "Hear ye." — Eng. Ver.

extraordinary manner; for sometimes he works so as to conceal his hand and to prevent his work from being perceived by men, but sometimes he displays his hand in such a manner that all are constrained to acknowledge it; and that is what the Prophet meant.

4. *But thus said Jehovah unto me.* After having threatened a slaughter of the Ethiopians or their neighbors, and at the same time shewn that comfort will arise from it to the Jews, or ironically reproved the foolish confidence with which the Jews had been deceived, he now adds that God will regulate these confused changes in such a manner as to gather to him at length his chosen people. The particle כי, (*ki*,) which I have translated *but*, sometimes means *for* and sometimes *but*. The latter meaning appears to be more appropriate in this passage, for the Prophet replies to a doubt which otherwise might grievously perplex weak minds; because when confusion arises, there may be said to be a veil which conceals from us the providence of God. Such also was the state of that nation whose destruction he foretells, that this prediction might be reckoned fabulous and worthy of ridicule; for, as we may gather from it, there was no danger or change to be dreaded.

I will rest. Some consider this as referring to the person of Isaiah, as if, relying on what God had revealed, he *rested,* that is, was in a state of composure, as we ought to be when we have heard the word of God, and fully expect what has been foretold. In like manner Habakkuk also says, *On my watch-tower will I stand.* (Habakkuk 2:1.) But unquestionably he relates what the Lord had foretold to him, and the Lord himself, by the mouth of the Prophet, makes this declaration, *I will rest,* that is, I will remain unemployed.

And I will look in my tabernacle. [287] The phrase, *I will look,* has the same import with the former; for a spectator takes no part in doing, but rests satisfied with *looking.* Such is likewise the force of the term *tabernacle*, as if the Lord betook himself to rest under a roof; while, on the contrary, he says that he ascends the judgment-seat, when he avenges the transgressions of the wicked; for these modes of expression are adapted to our capacity. But perhaps it may be thought more probable that the Prophet alludes to the sanctuary; because, although the majesty of God will remain concealed for a time among an afflicted people, yet his rest will not be without effect. It amounts to this, that though everything be turned upside down, so as to awaken a suspicion that God takes no further concern in the government of the world, yet he *rests* for an express purpose, as if he shut himself up unemployed in a chamber, and the effect of this rest will in due time appear.

As the heat that drieth up the rain. [288] By this beautiful metaphor the Prophet expresses more fully what he had formerly said. Yet there are two ways in which it may be shewn to agree with the Prophet's meaning; either that God, aroused, as it were, from his rest, will shew a smiling countenance

[287] "And I will consider in my dwelling-place." — Eng. Ver. "I will rest, and look round in my dwelling-place." — Stock.

[288] "Like a clear heat upon herbs," or "after rain" — Eng. Ver.

to gladden believers, or will water them by a refreshing shower; and in this way the Prophet would describe their varied success. Or there is an implied contrast, by which he reminds us that, while God appears to remain unemployed and to look at what is going on, still he can execute his judgments as if it were in sport. And yet, as the two following verses are closely connected with this verse, Isaiah appears to mean, that though God does not act in a bustling manner like men, or proceed with undue eagerness and haste, still he has in his power concealed methods of executing his judgments without moving a finger. Perhaps also he intended to shew, that in destroying this nation, God will act in an extraordinary manner. But we ought to be satisfied with what I lately suggested, that when men carelessly resign themselves to sleep in the midst of prosperity, and, intoxicated by their pleasures, imagine that they have nothing to do with God, "sudden destruction is at hand," because God, by a look, frustrates all the designs or preparations of the world. (1 Thessalonians 5:3.) He therefore declares that he will be like a clear and calm sky, [289] and *like the heat that drieth up the rain.*

And as a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. [290] Now we know that this rain is exceedingly adapted to ripen the fruits, and likewise that the heat which follows the rain penetrates the fruits with its force, and drives the moisture more inward, by which it hastens their maturity and renders them more productive. Now the Prophet meant, that though calamities and distresses await the reprobate, still everything proceeds so much to their wish, that they appear to be supremely happy, as if the Lord intended to load them with every kind of blessings; but that they are fattened like oxen destined for slaughter, for when they appear to have reached the highest happiness, they suddenly perish.

Hence it follows, that we ought not to form an estimate of the judgments of God according to outward appearances; for when men imagine themselves to be exceedingly safe, they are not far from destruction and from utter ruin. Thus he speedily comforts believers, that they may not suppose that it fares better with the reprobate so long as God forbears to strike; for though he appears to cherish in his bosom those whom he sustains, he will quickly reduce them to nothing. These statements ought to be applied to those wretched and disastrous times when the tyrants who oppress the Church are the only persons that are prosperous, and abound in all kinds of wealth, and contrive in such a manner as if everything were in their power, because they surpass other men in power, and skill, and cunning. But let us know that all these things are done by the appointment of God, who promotes

[289] Like the clear heat at the coming of daylight. The resting of Jehovah, hovering over the enemy till they are ripe for destruction, is here beautifully compared to the condensed gloom before daylight, which is wont to usher in a hot summer's day, and to the sheet of dew that appears to hang over the ground in harvest time presently after sunset. עלי, (ălē,) is here used for near the time of, as we say, against such a time. אור, עלי (ălēōr,) prope lucem, adventante luce. --- Stock.

[290] Rosenmüller takes notice of another reading supported by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate, קציר, ביום (bĕyōm kātzīr,) ``at the time of harvest,'' instead of, קציר, בהם (bĕhōm kātzīr,) ``in the heat of harvest,'' but justly remarks that it makes no difference to the meaning. --- Ed.

their endeavors and renders them successful, that he may at length slay and destroy them in a moment. I am aware that a widely different meaning is given by some to these words of the Prophet; but any one who takes a judicious view of the whole passage will have little difficulty, I trust, in assenting to my interpretation.

5. *For when the harvest shall be at hand.* Literally it is, "in presence of the harvest;" but we must soften the harshness of the expressions; and it cannot be doubted that the meaning of the Prophet is, that when the harvest is close at hand, and when the grapes are nearly ripe, the whole produce, in the expectation of which wicked men had rejoiced, will suddenly be snatched from them. The Prophet continues the same subject, and confirms by these metaphors what he had formerly uttered, that the wicked are not immediately cut off, but flourish for a time, and the Lord spares them; but that when the harvest shall be at hand, when the vines shall put forth their buds and blossoms, so that the *sour grapes* make their appearance, the branches themselves shall be cut down. Thus when the wicked shall be nearly ripe, not only will they be deprived of their fruit, but they and their offspring shall be rooted out. Such is the end which the Lord will make to the wicked, after having permitted them for a time to enjoy prosperity; for they shall be rooted out, so that they cannot revive or spring up again in any way.

Hence we obtain this great consolation, that when God conceals himself, he tries our faith, and does not suffer everything to be carried along by the blind violence of fortune, as heathens imagine; for God is in heaven, as in his tabernacle, dwelling in his Church as in a mean habitation; but at the proper season he will come forth. Let us thus enter into our consciences, and ponder everything, that we may sustain our minds by such a promise as this, which alone will enable us to overcome and subdue temptations. Let us also consider that the Lord declares that he advances and promotes the happiness of wicked men, which tends to exhibit and to display more illustriously the mercy of God. If he instantly cut down and took them away like a sprouting blade of corn, his power would not be so manifest, nor would his goodness be so fully ascertained as when he permits them to grow to a vast height, to swell and blossom, that they may afterwards fall by their own weight, or, like large and fat ears of corn, cuts them down with pruning-knives.

6. *They shall be left together.* [291] He means that they will be cast aside as a thing of no value, as John the Baptist also compares them to chaff, which is thrown on the dunghill. (Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17.) Thus Isaiah shews that they will be exposed to the wild beasts and to the fowls, so that the fowls will nestle in them in summer, and the wild beasts will make their lairs in them in winter; as if he had said, that not only men, but the wild beasts themselves will disdain them. Such therefore is the end of wicked men, who, situated in a lofty place, and thinking that they are beyond all danger, despise every one but themselves. The fowls and the beasts of prey

[291] "That is, their dead bodies." — Jarchi.

will make use of them for nests and for food. They will be thrown down, I say, not only beneath all men, but even beneath the beasts themselves, and, being exposed to every kind of insult and dishonor, they will be a proof of the wonderful providence of God. [292]

7. *In that time.* The Prophet again shews why he threatened the destruction of a heathen nation; for when almost all the nations had leagued together against the Church, it appeared as if the Church were utterly ruined, and therefore Jehovah declares that in due time he will render assistance. Had he not opposed such designs, and seasonably restrained the attacks of enemies, the Jews would have despaired; and on this account he shews that he takes care of the Church, and that though he determines to chastise it, still he comes forward at the proper season to hinder it from perishing, and displays his power in opposition to tyrants and other enemies, that they may not overthrow it or succeed in accomplishing what they imagined to be in their power. In order therefore to excite them to patience, he not only distinguishes them from the Ethiopians, but likewise reminds them that God mitigates his judgments for their preservation.

A present shall be brought. He alludes to the second verse of this chapter, [Isaiah 18:2,] in which we have seen the same names and descriptions applied to the Jewish nation, and he employs the word *brought* because they would first of all be led into captivity, so that it would not be more practicable for them than for foreign nations to go up into the temple.

From a people. This expression deserves notice, for מעם, (*mĕgnăm,*) means that it will not be an entire nation; as if he had said, though you must be reduced to a small number, so as to be a feeble remnant, yet those few who are left will be offered in sacrifice to God. Hence we ought to learn a doctrine highly useful and exceedingly adapted to our times, for at the present day the Church is not far from despair, being plundered, scattered, and every where crushed and trodden under foot. What must be done in straits so numerous and so distressing? We ought to lay hold of these promises, so as to believe that still God will preserve the Church. To whatever extent the body may be torn, shivered into fragments and scattered, still by his Spirit he will easily unite the members, and will never allow the remembering and the calling on his name to perish. Out of those fragments which are now broken and scattered, the Lord will unite and assemble the people. Those whom he joins together in one spirit, though widely separated from each other, he can easily collect into one body. Although therefore we see the nation diminished in numbers, and some of its members cut off, yet some present will be offered by it to the Lord.

To the place of the name. This mode of expression is customary with the prophets. When they speak of the worship of God they describe it by outward acts, such as altars, sacrifices, washings, and such like; and, indeed,

[292] "To quit the metaphor, the flourishing leaders of a people, devoted by Jehovah to destruction, shall be cut off and trampled on. The people here spoken of are the Assyrians under Sennacherib." — Stock.

the worship of God being within the soul, there is no way in which it can be described but by outward signs, by which men declare that they worship and adore God. But he chiefly calls it *Mount Zion,* because that place was consecrated to God, and God commanded that sacrifices should be offered there. The chief honor which he bestowed upon it was when he caused the doctrine of his word (Isaiah 2:3) to go forth from it, as we have formerly seen; [293] so that the name of *Mount Zion* may be properly understood to denote the pure and uncorrupted worship of God. In short, the prophets do not describe the worship of God as it would be after the coming of Christ, but as it was in their own time, because they found it necessary to accommodate themselves to the people to whom they ministered. Hence it ought to be inferred that there is no other way in which we can belong to the Church than by being offered to God in sacrifice. Let every one therefore who wishes to belong to God present himself for such an oblation, and let him no longer live to himself, but be wholly dedicated to God. (Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 5:15.) Now we know that it is by this sword of the word, that is, by the gospel, that Paul boasts of offering and sacrificing men to God. (Romans 15:16.)

By *the place of the name of the Lord,* he does not mean that his essence, of which we ought not to form any gross or earthly conception, is confined to it, as if God were limited to a place, but because it was a place in which the Lord commanded that his power should be acknowledged, and that men should worship and call upon him where he manifested his presence by his benefits and by his power, and that on account of the ignorance of the people, who could not otherwise comprehend his majesty. Yet it ought to be observed, that we cannot become acceptable to God without being united in one and the same faith, that is, without being members of the Church; for it is not necessary for us to run to Jerusalem, or to *Mount Zion,* because in the present day *Zion* is as wide and extensive as the whole world, which is entirely devoted to God. All that is necessary therefore is, that the same faith dwell in us, and that we be joined together by the bond of love. If this be wanting, every thing about us is heathen, and we have nothing that is sacred or holy.

[293] See vol. 1 p. 96

Chapter 19

CHAPTER 19

Isaiah Chapter 19:1-25

1. The burden of Egypt. Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

1. Onus Ægypti. Ecce Iehova equitat super nubem celerem, et veniet in Ægyptum; et commovebuntur idola Ægypti a facie ejus, et cor Ægypti dissolvetur in medio ejus.

2. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.

2. Et committam Ægyptios cum Ægyptiis, pugnabit quisque tunc contra fratrem suum; quisque, inquam, contra proximum suum; civitas contra civitatem, et regnum contra regnum.

3. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

3. Et exinanietur spiritus Ægypti in medio ejus: et consilium ejus destruam, etiamsi quærant illod apud idola, apud magos, apud pythones, apud divinos.

4. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts.

4. Et tradam Ægyptios in manum domini sævi, et rex fortis dominabitur eis, dicit Dominus Iehova exercituum.

5. And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.

5. Tunc deficient aquæ a mari, et fluvius exsiccabitur atque arescet.

6. And they shall turn the rivers far away; and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither.

6. Elongabuntur flumina; exhaurientur et siccabuntur rivi munitionis, arundo et carectum succidentur.

7. The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more

7. Herbæ ad rivum et super os rivi, et omnis sementis rivi arescet, et propelletur, ut non sit.

8. The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the water shall languish.

8. Et moerebunt piscatores, et lugebunt omnes qui hamum projiciunt in rivum; qui expandunt rete super faciem aquarum debilitabuntur.

9. Moreover, they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded.

9. Qui in lino optimo operantur erubescent, et qui texunt plagas foratas, (vel, pellucidas.)

10. And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish.

10. Erunt enum retia ejus dissipata; et omnes architecti retis (vel, mercedis) tristes erunt anima.

11. Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Paroaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Paraoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?

11. Certe stulti principes Zoan; prudentum consiliariorum Pharaonis consilium unfatuatum est. Quomodo dicitis Pharaoni, Filius sapientum ego, et filius regum antiquorum?

12. Where are they? Where are thy wise men? And let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.

12. Ubi nunc prudentes tui? ut annuntient tibi, aut etiam sciant quid decreverit Iehova exercituum super Ægyptum.

13. The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof.

13. Infatuati sunt principes Zoan, decepti sunt principes Noph, seduxerunt Ægyptum angulus tribuum ejus.

14. The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof; and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

14. Iehova miscuit in medio ejus spiritum perversitatis; et seduxerunt Ægyptum in omni opere ejus, quemadmodum circumagitur ebrius in vomito suo.

15. Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.

15. Nec erit Ægypto opus quod faciat caput vel cauda, ramus aut juncus.

16. In that day shall Egypt be like unto women; and it shall be afraid and fear, because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which he shaketh over it.

16. In die illa erit Ægyptus instar mulierum; horrebit enim et pavebit a facie agitationis manus Iehovæ exercituum, quam agitabit ipse super eam.

17. And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt; every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

17. Et erit terra Iuda Ægyptiis in tremorem. Omnis qui recordatus fuerit illius pavebit super ipsam, propter consilium Iehovæ exercituum, quod decrevit super eam.

18. In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts: one shall be called, The city of destruction.

18. In die illa erunt quinque civitates in terra Ægypti loquentes labio Canaan, et jurantes per Iehovam exercituum. Civitas desolationis una vocabitur.

19. In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord.

19. In die illa erit altare Iehovæ in medio terræ Ægypti, statua item juxta terminum ejus Iehovæ.

20. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a savior, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.

20. Eritque in signum et in testem Iehovæ exercituum, in terra Ægypti; quia clamabunt ad Iehovam propter oppressores, et mittet eis servatorem et principem, ut liberet eos.

21. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it

21. Et cognoscetur Iehova ab Ægyptiis, cognoscent, inquam, Ægyptii Iehovam in illo die; et facient sacrificium et oblationem, vovebuntque vota Iehovæ et reddent.

22. And the Lord shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them.

22. Itaque percutiet Iehova Ægyptum, percutiens et sanans; convertentur enim ad Iehovam, et exorabitur ab eis, et sanabit eos.

23. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

23. In die illa erit via ab Ægypto in Assyriam; commeabunt Assyrii in Ægyptum, et Ægyptii in Assyriam; et colent Ægyptii Assyrios (vel, cum Assyriis.)

24. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:

24. In die illa erit Israel tertia cum Ægypto, et Assyria benedictio in medio terræ.

25. Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

25. Quia benedicet illi Iehova exercituum, dicens: Benedictus populus meus Ægyptius, et opus manus meæ Assyrius, et hæreditas mea Israel.

1. *The burden of Egypt.* The Prophet here prophesies against *Egypt,* because it was a kind of refuge to the Jews, whenever they saw any danger approaching them; for when they had forsaken God, to whom they ought to have had recourse, they thought that they had no help left to them but in the Egyptians. It was therefore necessary that that kingdom should be overthrown, that its wealth or its forces might no longer deceive the Jews; for so long as Egypt was prosperous, the Jews thought that, on account of its being exceedingly populous and highly fortified, they were far removed from danger, and therefore despised God, or at least paid scarcely any regard to his promises. This led to evil consequences in two respects; first, because when they ought to have relied on God alone, they were puffed up with that vain confidence in Egypt; and secondly, because whenever the Lord punished them, they defended themselves against his chastisements by the power of the Egyptians, as if by human resources they could make void his judgments, when they ought to have been turned to God altogether. On this subject Isaiah speaks more fully in a later portion of this book. (Isaiah 30:2.)

Behold, the Lord rideth on a swift cloud. This mode of expression is found also in other passages of Scripture, but in a general form. (Psalm 104:3.) The Prophet applies it to this prediction, because the Egyptians thought that they were so well fortified on all sides, that there was no way by which God could approach them. He therefore ridicules their foolish confidence, and exhibits the exalted power of God, when he *rideth on a swift cloud,* by which he will easily make a descent upon them, and neither walls nor bulwarks shall hinder his progress. Again, because in addition to earthly aid the Jews were likewise bewitched by a false religion, on this ground also the Prophet ridicules their madness, because God will dash to the ground all the assistance which they expected to obtain from idols. I pass by the foolish notion which many have entertained, as to the idols which Christ overthrew in Egypt, when he was carried thither in infancy; for it does not deserve a refutation. (Matthew 2:14.) This passage has been perverted to prove it, and to prove many conjectures of the same kind. But the Prophet's meaning is totally different; for he speaks of the defeat of the Egyptians by the Assyrians, and shews that it ought to be ascribed to God, and not, as irreligious men commonly do, to fortune. He shews it to be a judgment of God, by whose hand all things are governed.

And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence. He declares that *the idols* shall fall; that is, that they shall be of no avail to the Egyptians, though they rely on their assistance, and think that they are under their protection. No nation ever was so much addicted to superstitions; for they worshipped cats, and oxen, and crocodiles, and even onions, and plants of every sort, and there was nothing to which they did not ascribe some kind of divinity. He means that the power of all those false gods, whom the Egyptians had taken for their protectors, will be overthrown. Having declared that the Egyptians rely in vain on their superstitions, he likewise casts down the pride which they cherished as to their earthly resources.

And the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of her. By the word *heart* he means the courage which sometimes fails even the bravest men, so that they do not attempt any action, even when their strength and forces are abundant, and in this manner he declares that they will be at war with God, who will *melt their hearts* within them, before they are called to contend with their enemies. Not only does he threaten that they will be terrified, but he likewise adds *in the midst* of the whole kingdom, where they had an exceedingly safe and peaceful dwelling, because they were far removed from every attack. It was the duty of all believers to consider this, when war was waged against the Egyptians; and we also ought to behold the same thing exemplified in all revolutions of kingdoms, which proceed solely from the hand of God. If *the heart melts,* if the strength fails, in men who are usually brave, and who had formerly displayed great courage, this ought to be ascribed to the vengeance of God.

2. *And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians.* Here he describes more particularly the calamity which the Lord had determined to bring on Egypt. By the expression, *I will set,* he means the internal struggles, in which those who ought to be mutual defenders cut down one another; and no evil can be more destructive than this to a state or a people. It was of importance also to convince the Jews that God, in whose hands are the hearts of men, (Proverbs 21:1,) could by his unseen influence inflame the Jews to mutual animosities, that they might slay each other, though they were victorious over foreign enemies. Hence we learn that nations never rise in a seditious manner, unless the Lord *set them* against each other, as when one brings forward gladiators to the place of combat. He inflames their minds for battle, and prompts them to slay each other by mutual wounds; and therefore, as we ought to reckon it an evidence of God's favor, when friendship is cherished among citizens, so we ought to ascribe it to his vengeance, when they rage against and slay and injure one another.

And they shall fight every one against his brother. For the sake of heightening the picture, he adds what was still more monstrous, that those who were related to them by blood would take up arms to destroy each other; for if men are worse than beasts when, forgetting their common nature, they engage in battle, how much more shocking is it to nature that brethren or

allies should fight with each other! But the more monstrous it is, the more ought we to acknowledge the judgment of God and his terrible vengeance.

City against city, and kingdom against kingdom. Isaiah appears to advance by degrees; for he mentions, first, *a brother;* secondly, *a neighbor;* thirdly, *cities;* and, fourthly, *kingdoms* By *kingdoms* he means *provinces,* into which Egypt was divided, which the Greeks called νομοὶ, the term by which the Greek translators have rendered it in this passage. [294]

3. *And the spirit of Egypt shall be emptied.* [295] As Isaiah had, a little before, deprived the Egyptians of courage, so he now takes away their understanding, both of which are exceedingly necessary for the defense of kingdoms; for when these have been taken away, there is no possibility of transacting national affairs. Now, the Egyptians had so high an opinion of their own wisdom, that they reckoned themselves superior to other nations; and it is well known that they haughtily despised all other nations as barbarians, as if there had been no civilization, refinement, learning, or skill, but in Egypt alone. They boasted that they were the inventors of learning, that philosophy and astronomy came from them, and, in short, that Egypt was the workshop of all the liberal arts; and therefore they would never have thought it possible that they should fail in wisdom and prudence, and unquestionably, if this prediction had come to their knowledge, they would have laughed at it in disdain, and would have thought, that sooner would the waters of the sea be dried up, and everything be overturned, than this should befall those who imagined that prudence was their birthright. But Isaiah declares it boldly, for he did not speak from himself.

Again, since he had predicted that they would be deprived of courage, in which they excelled, the context requires us to understand the meaning to be, that they would be struck with blindness; for both faculties of the soul depend entirely on the favor of God. Consequently, רוח (*rūăch*) means here understanding and sagacity, which ought to be carefully observed, for many are mistaken as to the meaning of this word. When he immediately adds, *I will destroy the counsel thereof,* this is a stronger expression of the former statement; for it shews what is the cause of that *emptiness,* namely, that God will take and carry away their *counsel.*

Even though they seek it. This is spoken by anticipation, for he meets the objections of the Egyptians, who might have said, "Have we not gods whom we can consult? Have we not magicians, diviners, and soothsayers? Do you reckon those to be of no value?" He threatens that all these things will be of no avail to them, to whatever extent they may rely on them, and be puffed up with the empty name of wisdom. I shall not spend much time on these names, though it is probable that Isaiah's enumeration proceeds by gradual advancement. First, he mentions *gods,* next *magicians,* and afterwards *di-*

[294] K . The reader will observe the distinction between the paroxytone , a law, and the oxytone , a field or a dwelling; for it is the latter that is employed by Herodotus to denote a district or province. Herod. 2:164. — Ed.

[295] "And the spirit of Egypt shall fail. Heb. shall be emptied." — Eng. Ver.

viners and *fortune-tellers* They had their oracles, in which they placed the highest confidence. Next after them came the *magicians,* though these too had great influence. In matters of smaller moment they consulted the soothsayers. Superstitious men are so restless that nothing can satisfy them; for they are fickle and unsteady, and sometimes resort to one remedy and sometimes to another; and indeed Satan deceives them in such a manner, that at first he holds out to them the appearance of peace and quietness, which they think that they have fully obtained, but afterwards shews them that they have not reached it, and distresses and harasses them more and more, and compels them to seek new grounds of confidence. Thus our minds cannot obtain rest and peace but in God alone. And undoubtedly the Prophet condemns those arts as contrary to reason; for God has revealed all that is necessary to be known by means of the arts and sciences, which he intended to be used, and of which he approves. If any man shall wish to be wise in any other manner, he must have Satan for his teacher.

4. *And I will deliver the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel master.* [296] He now shews what will happen to the Egyptians, after having lost courage and been deprived of understanding. Nothing will be left for them but to be reduced to slavery; for a nation destitute of these must fall of its own accord, even though it were not violently attacked by any enemy. Of such aids, therefore, God deprives those on whom he determines to take vengeance, and shuts them out from every method of upholding their liberty. Yet the Prophet threatens what is still more shocking, that not only will the empire of which the Egyptians proudly vaunted fall down, but the inhabitants also will undergo hard bondage. Though the adjective קשה, (*kāshĕh,*) *cruel,* is in the singular number, yet he says in the plural number, that they shall be subject to *lords,* which is harder to endure than if there had been but one lord to whom they were subject.

And a powerful king [297] *shall rule over them.* He means that the power of the tyrant to whom he will subject them shall be so great, that it will not be easy to restore them to liberty. Historians shew that various changes occurred in many countries, which they who subdued them were unable to hold and retain; for to keep what has been obtained is often more difficult than to conquer. But the Prophet intimates that this condition will not be easily changed, and that the bondage of the Egyptians shall be of long duration, because no one will dare to enter the lists with an exceedingly powerful conqueror. We may also understand the meaning to be, that the princes of smaller nations will deal more gently with their people than more powerful monarchs, who, relying on their greatness, allow themselves to do whatever they please; for, reckoning their power to be unlimited, they set no bounds to their freedom of action, and rush forward, without restraint, wherever their passions drive them. Whether the one view or the other be

[296] "And the Egyptians will I give over, or, shut up." — Eng. Ver. "And I will shut up Egypt in the hand of cruel lords." — Stock.

[297] "A fierce king." — Eng. Ver.

adopted, it will amount to this, that the Egyptians, who consider themselves to be the highest and most distinguished of all men, shall fall under the power of another, and shall be oppressed by hard bondage, that is, by the bondage of *a powerful king,* whom no one will dare to oppose. Hence we see how great is the folly of men who are desirous to have a powerful and wealthy king reigning over them, and how justly they are punished for their ambition, though it cannot be corrected by the experience of every day, which is everywhere to be seen in the world. France and Spain, at the present day, boast that they are governed by mighty princes, but feel to their cost how little advantage they derive from that which dazzles them by a false pretense of honor. But on this subject we have spoken formerly in another place. [298] (Isaiah 8:6,7.)

5. *Then the waters shall fail from the sea.* He follows out the subject which he had already begun, that the fortifications, by which the Egyptians thought that they were admirably defended, will be of no avail to them. They reckoned themselves to be invincible, because they were surrounded by the sea, and by the Nile, and by fortifications; and historians tell us that it was difficult to gain entrance to them, because the Nile had no mouth, by which they could not easily prevent ships from landing. They therefore boasted that their situation was excellent, and that they were strongly fortified by nature, in like manner as the inhabitants of Venice, at the present day, think that, in consequence of being surrounded by deep ditches, they are impregnable; but fortresses are useless, when God has determined to punish us.

6. *And the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up.* [299] What he adds about fortifications is to the same purpose with what he had stated immediately before. He alludes to the embankments, which not only restrained the overflowing of the Nile, but protected the whole country; as if he had said that the embankments will not be needed, because the Nile will be dried up. Now, it is certain that the Nile was not laid dry, and yet the Prophet did not foretell what was not accomplished. We must therefore call to remembrance what we have already said, that on account of our stupidity those calamities are represented to us in a lively manner, which places them as it were before our eyes; for we need to have a representation made to us which is fitted to impress our minds, and to arouse us to consider the judgments of God, which otherwise we despise. We ought to observe the haughtiness of the Egyptians, whose resources were so various and abundant, and who thought that it was impossible for them to be overtaken by such a calamity.

7. *And the reed and the rush shall wither.* He mentions *the reed* and *the rush,* because they had abundance of them, and employed them for various purposes; or, it may be thought to mean that the marshes will be dried up.

By the mouth of the brooks. Some render it *embankments,* but it rather

[298] See vol. 1 p. 266

[299] "Embanked canals. Rivi aggerum, as the Vulgate has it. The canals by which the waters of the Nile were distributed were fortified by mounds or banks. מצור, (mātzōr,) which word Rosenmüller vainly endeavors to shew to be another name for Egypt or Mizraim." --- Stock.

means the fountain itself, which seldom is dried up, though torrents or rivers fail. By *the mouth,* therefore, he means the source of the river which shall be dried up in such a manner that no part of the country can be watered. Though the source of the Nile was at a great distance, yet not without reason did the Prophet threaten that that river, on whose waters the fertility almost of the whole land depended, shall be dried up at its very source; for in that country rain seldom falls, but its place is supplied every year by the Nile. If that river overflow but scantily, it threatens scarcity and famine; and therefore, when the Prophet threatens that it will be dried up, he means that the whole country will be barren. For this reason he says also, that, even at its very *mouth,* from which the waters spring up, there will be a lack of waters, so that in that place the herbs will be withered.

8. *And the fishers shall mourn.* Isaiah still keeps in his eye the condition of Egypt. We have formerly mentioned [300] that the prophets made use of those figures of speech by which, when any country is mentioned, they chiefly name those things which abound in that country, and for which it is celebrated. Thus, when a vinebearing country is spoken of, they mention vines; if it abound in gold, they speak of gold; and if it abound in silver, they speak of silver. Accordingly, when he speaks of Egypt, which was well watered, and contained abundance of streams, he mentions *fishing.*

They who spread a net on the face of the waters shall languish. Some translate the word אמללו, (ăm*lālū*,) "they shall be cut off," but the more correct rendering is, "they shall be weakened;" for this corresponds to the mourning and lamentation which was formerly mentioned. Now, we know that in that country there was a great number of fishers, and that these formed a great part of the wealth of Egypt. When fishers were taken away, of whom there were vast numbers among the Egyptians, and of whom their wealth chiefly consisted, they must have been *weakened.* Now, if the nation be deprived of that which is its ordinary food, great poverty will follow. He therefore describes an astonishing change that shall pass on the whole country.

9. *And they who work in the finest flax.* As he spoke of mourning, so he now speaks of shame; for they who formerly earned an abundant livelihood by this trade will have no gains. Now, the two occupations are closely connected, to weave nets and to fish. Yet it is doubtful if he speaks of those only who manufactured nets; for if we understand שריקות, (*sĕrīkōth*) to mean certain very fine linens, it is probable that the latter clause relates to other productions of the loom, manufactured out of small fine thread, and of the most elegant workmanship. We know that linens of very great value were woven in Egypt, and there may be good reason for interpreting the phrase *white nets,* or, as we have rendered it, "perforated," to mean also linen garments, which were more costly in proportion to the greater delicacy of their texture.

[300] See vol. 1 p. 492

It will thus be a metaphorical expression, by which the Prophet indirectly taunts them with their unbecoming luxury, alleging that the Egyptians cover themselves with linen garments in the same manner as if they clothed themselves with a net. If this meaning be adopted, it will agree with the following verse; and indeed I do not see how such exquisite skill in weaving can be applied to fishing. But if it be thought better to understand the whole as relating to fishes, the meaning will be, that they who had been much employed in fishing, and had found it to be a profitable occupation, will be overwhelmed with sorrow. [301]

10. *And all that make ponds.* As to the word שכר, (*secher,*) there is no absolute necessity, in my opinion, for translating it *a net;* for the derivation shews it, on the contrary, to denote a lucrative occupation. [302]

Where fishes are very abundant, they are also preserved in pools and ponds; because the fishers would otherwise be constrained to sell them at a very low price. Besides, when they throw a net, they are not always successful. He therefore follows out the same subject, "It will not be possible either to take or to preserve fishes. Pools will be of no use."

11. *Surely the princes of Zoan are fools.* Here he joins wisdom with folly, and not without reason; for it is impossible to take away from men a conviction of their wisdom, which leads them to believe, in opposition to God himself, that they are wise. It is therefore a kind of acknowledgment, when he calls those persons wise whom he at the same time accuses of folly or stupidity. Though the Hebrew particle אך, (ăch,) sometimes means *but,* yet as the Prophet appears to attack the Egyptians, I choose rather to render it "surely," or "truly," or "now at least;" for he scoffs *at the counselors of Pharaoh* for wishing to be regarded, and believing themselves to be, exceeding wise, though they are the most foolish of all men. Thus it is an exclamation: "Where is that wisdom of Egypt? Where are the counselors who held all men in contempt? Why do they not preserve their kingdom?" Now, at least, it is evident what kind of wisdom they had. This tends to confirm and seal the prophecy, in which the Prophet obviously does not speak of things unknown, but has before his eyes, as it were, the destruction of Egypt. "Armed therefore with the authority of God, I venture to pronounce all those princes to be fools, though they think that they are wise."

Finally, the Prophet shews that vain is the glory of men who, without God, claim for themselves even a spark of wisdom; because their folly is at length exposed, and when the actual trial comes, they shew that they are

[301] "And ashamed (disappointed or confounded) are the workers of combed (or hatchelled) flax, and the weavers of white (stuffs.) The older writers supposed the class of persons here described to be the manufacturers of nets for fishing, and took חורי, (hōrai,) in the sense of perforated open work or net-work. The moderns understand the verse as having reference to the working of flax and manufacture of linen. Knobel supposes חורי, (hōrai,) to mean cotton, as being white by nature, and before it is wrought. Some of the older writers identified שריקות, (sĕrīkōth,) with sericum, the Latin word for silk. Calvin supposes an allusion in the last clause to the diaphanous garments of luxurious women." --- Professor Alexander.

[302] Our author is puzzled about this word. In his version he follows the old rendering, "all that make a net," but his marginal reading is "all that make gain," and to the latter he adheres in his commentary. Bishops Lowth and Stock render it, "all that make a gain," and Professor Alexander, "all laborers for hire." — Ed.

children. The Lord permits them, indeed, to achieve many exploits, that they may obtain reputation among men, but in the end he infatuates them, so that, notwithstanding their sagacity and long experience, they act more foolishly than children. Let us therefore learn to seek from the Lord the spirit of wisdom and counsel, and if he shall bestow it upon us, let us use it with propriety and moderation; for God opposes the wisdom of men when they claim more than they have a right to claim, and those who are too ambitious to exalt themselves, must be punished for their folly; and therefore he often puts them to shame, that it may be made manifest that their wisdom is nothing but empty smoke. There is no wisdom but that which is founded on the fear of God, which Solomon also declares to be the chief part of wisdom. (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10.)

How say ye to Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? He reproves the counsellors of Pharaoh for flattering him, as courtiers are wont to flatter princes; for they utter nothing but what is intended to soothe and gratify the ears of princes, because this is the way by which they succeed and obtain favor. Thus, amidst many flatteries and lies, there is no room for truth. Though this vice is commonly found in the courts of great princes, yet at that time it abounded chiefly among the Egyptians. They boasted that they were the most ancient of all nations, and that they were the inventors of the arts, and of all liberal education; and if such a conviction existed even among the common people, how much stronger must it have been in the kings themselves?

The boasting related to two points, antiquity and knowledge; and Isaiah reproves both, or at least says that they will be of no value. Pharaoh boasted both of the antiquity and of the wisdom of his nation; and indeed this was common among the whole people; but he speaks chiefly of the king as the head, in whom this haughtiness was more conspicuous than among ordinary persons. Now, we ought not to boast of the wisdom of our ancestors, as if it belonged to us by hereditary right, but we must look to heaven and ask it from its Author. So far as relates to antiquity, it is a foolish and idle boast; and yet princes are so deeply infected by this vice, that they would willingly seek their birth and descent out of the world, and cannot easily be drawn away from that vanity. This madness is heightened by flatterers, who have contrived, as we perceive, many things about the genealogy of certain princes. No song is more delightful to them than when they are separated from the common herd of men, like demigods or heroes. But it frequently happens, that when they carry their curiosity to excess in inquiring about their grandfathers and great-grandfathers, they lay themselves open to ridicule, because it is found that they are descended from one of the common people.

I have heard an amusing anecdote, related by persons worthy of credit, about the Emperor Maximilian, who was very eager to inquire into his descent, and was induced by a silly trifler to believe that he had traced his lineage to Noah's ark. This subject made so powerful an impression on his

mind, that he left off all business, applied himself earnestly to this single investigation, and would allow no one to draw him away from it, not even the ambassadors who came to treat with him about important matters. All were astonished at this folly, and silently blamed him for it, but no one had power or courage to suggest a remedy. At length his cook, who was likewise his jester, and often entertained him with his sayings, asked leave to speak, and, as one who was desirous to uphold the Emperor's dignity, told him that this eagerness to trace his descent would neither be useful nor honorable; for, said he, at present I revere your majesty, and worship you as a god; but if we must come to Noah's ark, there we shall all be cousins, for we are all descended from it. Maximilian was so deeply affected by this saying of the jester, that he became ashamed of his undertaking, though formerly neither friends, nor counsellors, nor business could dissuade him from it; for he perceived that his name which he wished to render more illustrious by inquiring into his remote ancestors, would be altogether degraded if they came to its earliest source, from which princes and peasants, nobles and artisans, are descended.

What is blamed even by jesters and fools must be great madness; and yet it is not a vice which has lately sprung up, but is deeply rooted in the minds of almost all men. In order to avoid it, let us learn to depend on God alone, and let us prefer the blessedness of adoption to all riches, and lineage, and nobility. So far as relates to the kings of Egypt being descended from very ancient kings, who had kept possession of the throne for many ages, they were as proud as if wisdom had been born with them. [303]

12. *Where are thy wise men? that they may tell thee.* Though literally it runs thus, "*And* they shall tell thee, and shall know," yet the word ought to be regarded as meaning, "that they may tell thee, and even that at length they may know;" for this mode of expression is frequently employed by the Hebrews. The Egyptians had their diviners from whom they thought that nothing, however secret, was concealed; for they consulted them about the smallest and greatest affairs, and held their replies to be oracles. The Prophet, mocking that vanity, says, "How shall they tell what they do not know? Have they been admitted to the counsel of God?" It is also probable that he condemns the art which they used in divination, because it was not only unlawful, but also made use of absolute tricks and deceptions.

There are three ways in which we may foresee or know what is future. The first and chief way is, by the revelation of the Spirit, which alone can make us certain, as by the gift of prophecy, which is rare and uncommon. The second is, by astronomy. The third is, by a comparison of past events, from which prudence is commonly obtained

As to a knowledge of the stars, from their position and conjunction, some

[303] קדם, (kědĕm,) has two meanings, ``antiquity'' and ``the east;'' and accordingly Bishop Stock renders this clause, ``the son of the kings of the east,'' adding the following note: --- ``Kings of the east. A synonyme for wise men, μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν, the quarter of the world where the arts of divination originated, and to whose sovereigns Egyptian sages pretended kindred. Hence the magi, that came to worship Christ, are often denominated the three kings.'' --- Ed.

things may occasionally be learned, such as famine, scarcity, pestilence, abundant harvests, and things of that sort; but even these cannot be certain, for they rest on mere conjecture. Now, we ought always to consider what relation the stars bear to these lower regions; for the actions of men are not regulated by them, as idle and false astrologers imagine, a vast number of whom, at the present day, endeavor to insinuate themselves into the minds of princes and subjects, as if they possessed a knowledge of everything, both present and future. Such men resemble the impostors of whom the Prophet speaks, who deceive men by their jugglery. Yet princes lend an attentive ear to such persons, and receive them as gods; and indeed they deserve to be thus imposed upon, and are justly punished for their curiosity.

They likewise boast of magic, in which those Egyptian diviners were skilled. But they add many things which are worse, and more abominable, exorcisms and calling on devils, than which nothing more destructive can be expressed or conceived. The Lord pronounces a curse on such conjectures and arts of divination, and the issue of them cannot but be disastrous and wretched. And if they were formerly condemned in the Egyptians, how much more do they deserve condemnation in those who use the name of God as a pretext? It is wonderful that men otherwise acute and sagacious should be so childishly deceived by such jugglery, so that they appear to be deprived of understanding and judgment; but it is the Lord's righteous vengeance, who punishes the wickedness of men.

Again, when from past events we calculate what is future, and judge by experience and observation what is most proper to be done, that cannot in itself be blamed; but neither can we by these means learn with certainty what is future, for the matter always lies in conjecture. Yet Isaiah directly attacks that sagacity which is universally applauded as something highly excellent, not because it is in itself sinful, but because we can scarcely find an acute or ingenious person who does not confidently believe that his skill places within his reach all that deserves or is necessary to be known. In this manner they despise the secret providence of God, as if nothing were hidden from them.

What the Lord of hosts hath decreed. There is still another vice, that craftiness and sleight of hand are preferred by them to true wisdom. But Isaiah expressly censures that pride which led men endued with great abilities to measure events by their own judgment, as if the government of the world were not in the hand of God; and therefore with their divination he contrasts the heavenly decree. And hence learn how skillfully Isocrates says,

"Κράτιστον εἶναι παρὰ μὲν θεοῦ εὐτυχίαν, παρὰ δὲ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν εὐβουλίαν,

"that the best gift of God is success, and the best gift from ourselves is prudence."

At first sight, this maxim of the elegant orator appears beautiful; but since he robs God of the spirit of prudence and bestows it on mortals, the

distribution is both wicked and foolish, to ascribe to men sound counsel, and to leave nothing to God but prosperous fortune. Now, if any one neglect the methods by which God teaches us, and resort to Satan's impostures, he richly deserves to be deceived and involved in the greatest disgrace; for he seeks remedies that are nowhere to be found, and despises those which were offered by God.

13. *The princes of Zoan are become infatuated, the princes of Noph are deceived. Zoan* was one of the chief cities of Egypt; *Noph* also was highly celebrated; [304] but what cities they were we cannot with certainty determine. Some think that one of them was Alexandria, the antiquity and wealth of which may be inferred from many passages of Scripture, which serve also to refute the notion of those who think that it was founded by Alexander the Great; for although it had been frequently destroyed, yet he did not build it anew, but only repaired it. That at one time it was an independent state, and allied to the Egyptians, and that it was one of the most flourishing cities in the whole world, is evident from Nahum 3:8. The Prophet justly represents the stupidity of the princes to be the forerunner of its destruction; because the chief strength of any commonwealth or kingdom consists in wisdom and prudence, without which neither great riches nor a numerous population can be of any avail.

A corner of its tribes have deceived Egypt. [305] I consider the word *corner* to be here used metaphorically for the chief part of a building on which the whole weight rests; and I choose rather to view it in the nominative than in the accusative case. [306] It ought, I think, to be viewed as referring to those wise men by whom the Egyptians supposed themselves to be so powerfully defended that no evil could befall them. But Isaiah says that this is too feeble a support, because, having been deceived in their counsels, they ruined Egypt; and therefore he holds up to mockery that pretended wisdom which, when it is not accompanied by the fear of God, ought to be called vanity and folly, and not wisdom. Not only do men abuse an excellent gift of God, but they are puffed up with vain ambition, and are more delighted with cunning than with real prudence. To this is added a devilish fury, which leads them to disregard the providence of God, and to bring down all events to the level of their own capacity. This is the reason why Scripture so frequently attacks wise men of that description, and declares that they are fools. They usurp what belongs to God, and claim it for themselves; which is shocking and intolerable sacrilege. We need not wonder if the Lord make fearful displays against such wise men, so that with all their great acuteness

[304] "Zoan, the Tanis of the Greeks, was one of the most ancient cities of Lower Egypt, (Numbers 13:22,) and a royal residence. The name is of Egyptian origin, and signifies low situation. Noph is the Memphis of the Greek geographers, called Moph, (Hosea 9:6.) It was one of the chief cities of ancient Egypt, the royal seat of Psammetichus." — Alexander.

[305] "The stay (Heb., corners) of the tribes thereof." — Eng. Ver.

[306] Instead of פנת, (pinnăth,) the construct singular, Grotius, Lowth, and others, prefer the conjectural reading, פנות (pinōth,) corners. But Rosenmüller removes the difficulty of the Syntax by remarking, that פנה, (pinnāh,) a collective noun, and agreeably to the frequent usage of the Hebrew tongue, fitly agrees with a plural verb; and he quotes 2 Samuel 19:41, as a parallel instance. --- Ed.

and ingenuity they stumble and fall in the smallest matters, and run into great dangers which any peasant or artisan would have foreseen. Let these things be a warning to us, that we may not be elated or lay claim to the praise of wisdom. If we have any abilities or prudence, we ought to ascribe it wholly to God, and conform ourselves to the rule of sobriety and modesty; for if our wisdom rest on God he will truly be a steadfast corner-stone, which no one shall shake or overthrow.

14. *The Lord hath mingled a spirit of perverseness.* Because it was a thing unexpected and incredible that the leaders of a sagacious and prudent nation would destroy the country by their stupidity, the Prophet therefore ascribes it to the judgment of God, that the Jews may not shut their eyes against an example so striking and remarkable, as irreligious men usually attribute the judgments of God to chance when anything new or unexpected has happened. The expression is metaphorical, as if one were to mix wine in a cup, that the Lord thus intoxicates the wise men of this world so that they are stunned and amazed, and can neither think nor act aright. The consequence is, that they deceive Egypt, because, first, they were themselves deceived. That the Egyptians suffer themselves to be imposed on, and cannot guard against the deception, is the judgment of the Lord.

And yet Isaiah does not represent God to be the Author of this folly in such a manner that the Egyptians could impute blame to him, but we ought to view the matter in this light: "Men have in themselves no understanding or judgment, for whence comes wisdom but from the Spirit of God, who is the only fountain of light, understanding, and truth? Now, if the Lord withhold his Spirit from us, what right have we to dispute with him? He is under no obligations to us, and all that he bestows is actually a free gift." Yet when he strikes the minds of men with *a spirit of giddiness,* he does it always for good reasons, though they are sometimes concealed from us. But very frequently he punishes with blindness those wicked men who have risen up against him, as happened to those Egyptians who, puffed up with a conviction of their wisdom, swelled with pride and despised all other men. It is therefore superfluous to dispute here about predestination, for the Lord punishes them for open vice; and, accordingly, when God blinds men or gives them over to a reprobate mind, (Romans 1:28,) he cannot be accused of cruelty; for it is the just punishment of their wickedness and licentiousness, and he who acts justly in punishing transgressions cannot be called the Author of sin.

Let us now attend to the manner of punishing. He delivers them up to Satan to be punished; for he it is, strictly speaking, that mingles the spirit of giddiness and perverseness; but as he does nothing but by the command of God, it is therefore said that God does what Satan does. The statement commonly made, that it is done by God's permission, is an excessively frivolous evasion; for the Prophet has expressed more than this, namely, that this punishment was inflicted by God, because he is a righteous judge. God therefore

acts by means of Satan, as a judge by means of an executioner, and inflicts righteous punishment on those who have offended him. Thus in the book of Kings we read that Satan presented himself before God, and asked leave to deceive Ahab's prophets; and having obtained it, he then obeyed the command of God, for he could have done nothing by himself. It is unnecessary to produce a multitude of quotations in a matter so obvious.

And they have misled Egypt in all her work. When he adds that her counsellors *deceived* her, he points out a second judgment of God; for it might have happened that the princes were deprived of understanding, and resembled *drunkards,* and yet the common people continued to possess some judgment; but here he says, that the impostors obtained also the power of leading astray so as to deceive the people. This is a two-fold vengeance of God, both on them that lead astray, and on those who are led astray by them.

As a drunken man staggereth in his vomit. By a *vomit* He means shameful drunkenness. This is added (πρὸς αὔξησιν) by way of amplification, in order to shew that they were not ordinary drunkards, who have still some understanding left, but that they resembled swine.

15. *Neither shall Egypt have any work to do.* This is the conclusion of the former statement, for it means that all the Egyptians shall be stupefied to such a degree that whatever they undertake shall be fruitless. This must happen where there is no counsel, and it is the righteous punishment of our pride and rashness. He therefore intended to describe the result and effect, so as to shew that it will be unhappy and miserable.

Head or tail, branch or rush. When he threatens both the *head* and the *tail*, he means, that all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, all without exception, shall be deprived of counsel, so that they will not succeed in anything. Or perhaps it will be thought rather to mean the order which they observe in their actions. Hence we learn, that both the beginning and the end of everything depend on God; for we ought to ask from him counsel, and prudence, and success, if we do not wish that the same thing should happen to us which happened to the Egyptians.

16. *In that day shall Egypt be like women.* He again repeats what he had formerly said, that the Egyptians will have nothing that is manly. Some think that he alludes to an effeminate custom, on account of which the ancient historians censured the Egyptians, namely, that, by inverting the order of things, women appeared in public and transacted the affairs of state, and men performed the occupations of women. It is possible that the Prophet may have had this in his eye, but when I take a more careful view of the whole passage, this conjecture cannot be admitted; for here he threatens a judgment of God, which will hold up men to astonishment. If he were speaking of an ordinary custom, this would not apply to the matter in hand, for he does not charge the hearts of the Egyptians with being effeminate, but, on the contrary, threatens that they shall be struck with

such dread that in no respect will they differ from women. The Egyptians not only thought that they were able to maintain war, but attacked without provocation, and gave aid to other nations. We see that heathen writers relate many of the exploits of the Egyptians, and expatiate largely on their praises; and, therefore, although the Egyptians were feeble and effeminate in comparison with other nations, yet they wished to retain the praise and renown of warlike men.

Because of the shaking of the hand of Jehovah of hosts. [307] The sudden change which is now effected is a striking display of the judgment of heaven, and therefore he adds, that *the shaking of the hand of God* will be the cause of the terror. By these words he shews that this war will be entirely carried on by the Lord, and therefore that the Egyptians cannot stand against it, because they have not to do with men. What Isaiah declares concerning Egypt ought to be likewise applied to other nations; for if wars arise and insurrections spring up, we ought to acknowledge it to be a judgment of God when men lose courage and are overwhelmed with terror. We see how the most warlike nations give way, and shew themselves to be less courageous than women, and are vanquished without any preparations of war, whenever the Lord strikes their minds with dread.

17. *And the land of Judah shall be a terror to the Egyptians.* Some explain it simply to mean, that the land of Judah will be an astonishment to the Egyptians as well as to other nations, and compare this passage with the saying which has formerly come under our observation, "You shall be an astonishment." [308] But I think that the meaning of the Prophet here is different, for he intended to point out the reason why the Lord would make such a display against the Egyptians. It was because they had brought destruction on the Jews, for they had turned them aside from the confidence which they ought to have placed in God, as princes frequently solicit their neighbors, and offer them their aid, that they may afterwards make use of them for their own advantage. Now the Lord had forbidden them (Deuteronomy 17:16) to resort to the Egyptians for the purpose of asking assistance from them; but those wretched people, instead of obeying God, listened to to the solicitation of unbelievers who made offers to them, and on this account they were justly punished.

But the Egyptians also, who had given occasion to their unbelief and distrust, did not pass unpunished, for they were so sharply chastised that whenever they remembered the Jews they were overwhelmed with terror. Hence we ought to draw a profitable doctrine, that they who have turned

[307] Professor Alexander prefers the literal rendering, "from before the shaking of the hand," and thus explains the passage: , " (mippĕnē,) may be rendered, on account of, which idea is certainly included, but the true force of the original expression is best retained by a literal translation. תנופת יד, (tĕnūphāth yăd,) is not the act of beckoning for the enemy, but that of threatening or preparing to strike. The reference is not to the slaughter of Sennacherib's army, but more generally to the indications of Divine displeasure."

[308] The only passage which occurs to my remembrance as likely to be in the author's eye is, "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb and a bye-word, among all the nations whither the Lord shall lead thee." (Deuteronomy 28:37.) — Ed.

aside the Church from obeying and trusting in God, and who, by fear, or counsel, or any enticements, have given occasion for offense, will be severely punished. The meaning of the Prophet's words is as if we should say, that the look of a woman will bring a blush on him who has seduced her, when the disgrace of the uncleanness shall have been laid open, and when God shall come forth as the avenger of conjugal fidelity.

18. *In that day there shall be five cities.* After having threatened the Egyptians, and at the same time explained the reason of the divine judgment, he comforts them, and promises the mercy of God. He declares that they will be in part restored, and will regain a prosperous and flourishing condition; for he says that out of six *cities five* will be saved, and only one will perish. He had already foretold a frightful destruction to the whole kingdom, so that no one who examines the former prediction can think of anything else than a condition that is past remedy. He therefore promises that this restoration will be accomplished by the extraordinary kindness of God, so that it will be a kind of addition to the redemption of the Church, or a large measure of the grace of God, when the Redeemer shall be sent.

The manner of expression is somewhat obscure, but if we observe it carefully, there is no difficulty about the meaning; for the Prophet means that on1y the sixth part of the cities will be destroyed, and that the rest will be saved. The difficulty lies in the word ההרס, (*hăhĕrĕs.*) Some read it החרס, (*hăchĕrĕs,*) that is, *of the sun*, but they have mistaken the letter ה (*he*) for ח (*cheth,*) which resembles it. Those who explain it *"of the sun,"* think that the Prophet spoke of Heliopolis; [309] but this does not agree with the context; and he does not merely promise that *five cities* would be restored, (for how inconsiderable would such a restoration have been!) but generally, that *five* cities out of six would be saved. We know that the cities in Egypt were very numerous. I do not mention the fables of the ancients, and those who have assigned to them twenty thousand cities. But still, there must have been a vast number of cities in a country so highly celebrated, in a kingdom so flourishing and populous, with a climate so mild and temperate. Let us then suppose that there were a thousand cities in it, or somewhat more. He says that only the sixth part will perish, that the rest will be restored, so that but few will be destroyed. From what follows it is evident that this restoration must be understood to relate to the worship.

Speaking with the lip of Canaan. By the word *lip* he means the *tongue*, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) taking a part for the whole. He expresses their agreement with the people of God, and the faith by which they will make profession of the name of God; for by the *tongue* he metaphorically describes confession. Since there was but one language which acknowledged and professed the true God, that is, the language of that nation which inhabited the land of Canaan, it is evident that by such a language must be meant agreement

[309] Heliopolis is a Greek word, and signifies "the city of the sun." It is the name of a famous city of Lower Egypt, in which there was a temple dedicated to the sun. — Ed.

in religion. It is customary enough to employ these modes of expression, "to speak the same language," or, "to speak a different language," when we intend to describe agreement or diversity of opinion. But at the same time it must be remembered that it is not every kind of agreement that is sufficient, as if men were to form a conspiracy about the worship which they preferred, but if they agree in the truth which was revealed to the fathers. He does not merely say that the Egyptians will speak the same language, but that they will speak the language *of Canaan.* They must have changed their language, and adopted that which God had sanctified; not that the dialect was more holy, but it is commended on account of its containing the doctrine of truth.

This ought to be carefully observed, that we may understand what is the true method of agreement. We must by all means seek harmony, but we must see on what conditions we obtain it; for we must not seek any middle course, as is done by those who overturn religion, and yet who wish to be regarded as peace-makers. Away with such fickle and changeful tongues! Let the truth itself be preserved, which cannot be contained but in the word. Whosoever shall determine to agree to it, let him talk with us, but away with every one who shall corrupt it, choose what language he may. Let us abide firmly by this. It will therefore be impossible for the Egyptians to speak the language of Canaan till they have first relinquished their own language, that is, till they have relinquished all superstitions. Some refer this to the age of Ptolemy, but it is absurd, and we may infer from what follows that the Prophet speaks of piety and of the true worship of God.

And swearing by Jehovah of hosts. First, employing a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, he shews that their conversation will be holy, by exhibiting a single class of them, for in *swearing* they will make profession that they worship the true God. It may also be read, *swearing to the Lord*, or, *by the* Lord, for ל (*lamed*) often signifies *by.* If we read, "to the Lord," the meaning will be, that they will promise obedience to him, and that by a solemn oath, as when any nation promises fidelity to its prince; as if he had said, "They will acknowledge the authority of God, and submit to his government." But since another reading has been more generally approved, I willingly adopt it; for since one part of the worship of God is *swearing*, by taking a part for the whole, as I have said, it fitly describes the whole of the worship of God. Again, to "swear by the Lord" often means to testify that he is the true God. (Deuteronomy 6:13.) In a word, it denotes a perfect agreement with the Church of God.

Hence we ought to learn that outward confession is a necessary part of the true worship of God; for if any person wish to keep his faith shut up in his heart, he will have but a cold regard for it. (Romans 10:9,10.) True faith breaks out into confession, and kindles us to such a degree that we actually profess what we inwardly feel. "To me," says the Lord in another passage, "every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." (Isaiah 45:23.) Accordingly, there ought to be an outward worship and outward profession

wherever faith dwells. It ought also to be observed, that those things which belong to the worship of God ought not to be applied to any other purpose, and therefore it is a profanation of an oath if we swear by any other. It is written, "Thou shalt swear by my name." (Deuteronomy 6:13.) Accordingly, he is insulted and robbed of his honor, if the name of saints, or of any creature, be employed in an oath. Let it likewise be observed with what solemnity oaths should be made; for if by swearing we profess to worship God, we ought never to engage in it but with fear and reverence.

One shall be called the city of desolation. When he devotes to destruction every sixth city, he means that all who are not converted to God, so as to worship him, perish without hope of salvation; for he contrasts the cities of Egypt which shall begin to acknowledge God with those which are destined to destruction. Where the worship of God is wanting, nothing but destruction can remain behind. הרס (*hĕrĕs*) denotes execration and curse, which is followed by ruin and eternal death.

19. *In that day shall there be an altar in the midst of the land of Egypt.* He continues what he had said in the former verse, and states more clearly that the aspect of Egypt will be renewed, because there true religion will flourish, the pure worship of God will be set up, and all superstitions will fall to the ground. He employs the word *altar* to denote, as by a sign, the worship of God; for sacrifices and oblations were the outward acts of piety. By *the midst of Egypt* he means the chief part of the whole kingdom, as if he had said, "in the very metropolis," or, "in the very heart of the kingdom."

And a statue [310] *to the Lord.* Let it not be supposed that by *statue* are meant images which carry the resemblance of men or of saints; but memorials (μνημόσυνα) of piety; for he means that they will be marks similar to those which point out the boundaries of kingdoms, and that in this manner signs will be evident, to make known to all men that God rules over this nation. And indeed it usually happens that a nation truly converted to God, after having laid aside idols and superstitions, openly sets up signs of the true religion, that all may know that the worship of God is purely observed in it.

Josephus relates (Ant. 13. 3. 1,) that Onias perverted this passage, when he fled to Ptolemy Philometor, [311] whom he persuaded that it would be advantageous to erect an altar there, on which the Jews who dwelt in that country might sacrifice; and he brought forward this passage, alleging that what the Prophet had foretold ought to be accomplished. The wicked and ambitious priest persuaded the king to do this, though it was openly opposed by the Jews; for the king looked to his own advantage, and that scoundrel, who had been deprived of his rank, sought to obtain additional honor and advancement; so that no entreaty could prevent the execution of that wicked counsel. But Isaiah simply describes the pure worship of God under the figure of signs which were then in use; for he has his eye upon his

[310] "Pillar." — Eng. Ver.

[311] The name "Philomētor," which means "loving his mother," was ironically given to him on account of his known hatred of his mother Cleopatra. — Ed

own age and the men with whom he had to do. This passage, therefore, was wickedly and maliciously perverted by Onias.

But not less impudently do the Popish doctors of the present day torture a passage in Malachi to defend the sacrifice of the Mass. When he says that "a pure oblation will everywhere be offered to God," (Malachi 1:11,) they infer that it is some sacrifice different from the ancient sacrifices, because oxen and sheep must no longer be sacrificed, and therefore that it is the Mass. A witty and ingenious argument truly! Now, it is evident that under the legal figure Malachi describes nothing else than the pure worship of God, as Isaiah does here; and we ought carefully to observe such forms of expression, which are frequently employed by the prophets.

This will be clearly explained by a passage in Joel, which we shall quote as an example. "Your sons and your daughters," says he, "shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." (Joel 2:28.) Peter shews (Acts 2:16) that this prediction was fulfilled, when the apostles spoke various languages through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Having formerly been uneducated men, they began to be qualified for declaring the mysteries of God. On that occasion we perceive no "dreams," so that it might be thought that Peter quoted that passage inappropriately; but it is evident that Joel there describes nothing else than prophecy, and for the purpose of adorning it, he mentioned "visions and dreams," by means of which the Lord anciently held communication with the prophets. (Numbers 12:6.) He kept in view the ordinary custom of that age; for otherwise the Jews would have found it difficult to comprehend the gifts of the Spirit which at that time were unknown. Having been reared under that preparatory instruction of the Law, [312] they could rise no higher than where they were conducted by sacrifices, ceremonies, sacraments, and signs. [313] So then the prophets addressed them as children, who ought to have nothing set before them beyond what they can learn in a homely style (παχυμερέστερον) by custom and experience.

This doctrine will unfold to us various passages, the obscurity of which might lead to much hesitation. It is plain that the Prophet speaks of the kingdom of Christ, and that these things were not fulfilled before his coming. We must therefore take away the shadows and look at the reality of things, in order that by the *altar* we may understand a true and sincere calling on God. But by these signs the Prophet likewise shews that the worship of God cannot be maintained without external acts of devotion, though we have no right to lay down rules for them. Away with the inventions of men, that we may listen to God alone on this subject.

20. *And he will send them a Savior.* We cannot serve God unless he first bestow his grace upon us; for no one will dedicate himself to God, till he be drawn by his goodness, and embrace him with all his heart. He must

[312] "Sous ceste pedagogie de la Loy."
[313] "Les signes et sacramens."

therefore call us to him before we call upon him; we can have no access till he first invite us. Formerly he shewed that they must be subdued by various afflictions in order that they may submit to God, and now he repeats the same thing; for men never deny themselves and forsake idle follies any farther than the scourge compels them to yield obedience. But he likewise adds another kind of invitation, that, having experienced the kindness of God, they will freely approach to Him.

They will cry unto the Lord. The *cry* of which he speaks proceeds from faith, for they would never resort to this refuge till they had been allured and delighted by the goodness of God. When the Lord promises that he will send a *Savior*, by whose hand the Egyptians will be delivered, this can mean no other than Christ; for Egypt was not delivered from its distresses before the doctrine of Christ reached it. We read of various changes which that country suffered for four hundred years, foreign and civil wars by which it was wasted and almost destroyed; but when we would be ready to think that it is utterly ruined, lo! it is converted to the Lord, and is rescued from the hand of enemies and tyrants. Thus Christ delivered that country, when it had begun to know him. In like manner, we must be brought to the knowledge and worship of God, that, where we have suffered various afflictions, we may learn that salvation is found in him alone. Would that the world would now learn this lesson, having suffered so many calamities that it appears to be on the brink of ruin! For what can be the issue but that it shall either perish or by repentance acknowledge that it has been justly punished for so great wickedness?

That he may deliver them. When he adds these words, we ought to draw from them a profitable doctrine, that God assists us through Christ, by whose agency he gave deliverance to his own people from the beginning. He has always been the Mediator, by whose intercession all blessings were obtained from God the Father; and now that he has been revealed, let us learn that nothing can be obtained from God but through him. [314]

21. *And the Lord shall be known by the Egyptians.* Isaiah now adds what was most important; for we cannot worship the Lord, or call upon him, till we have first acknowledged him to be our Father. “How,” says Paul, “shall they call on him whom they know not?” [315] (Romans 10:14.) We cannot be

[314] Of one clause in this verse, rendered by our translators “and a great one,” Calvin takes no notice. Rosenmüller considers רב (rāb) to be the participle Kal of ,רוב (rūb,) and assigns to Cocceius the honor of having discovered that the punctuation, which the Masoretic annotators have set aside, in the parallel passage of Deuteronomy, as a peculiarity for which they could not account, was the key to the true interpretation. Almost all the commentators, Cocceius excepted, render רב (rāb) ``a great one,'' some of them supposing that Ptolemy the Great, the son of Lagus, and others that Alexander the Great, was meant. But Cocceius was the first to perceive that the signification ``Great'' does not agree with the context, and has justly remarked that the word רב (rāb) with a Kametz, ought not to be confounded with רב (rāb,) with a Pathach, but that its meaning should be sought from the verb רוב (rūb) or ריב (rīb,) ``to contend, to argue, to defend one's cause in a court of justice;'' and he quotes a parallel passage, in which Moses, while he blesses Judah, speaking of God, says, לו רב ידיו (yādaiv rāb lō) ``his hands shall be his protector.'' (Deuteronomy 33:7.) See Robertson's Clavis Pentateuchi, p. 561. The ancients appear to have taken a similar view. The Septuagint renders it thus. Καὶ ἀποστελεῖ αὐτοῖς ἄνθρωπον ὃς σώσει αὐτοὺς, κρίνων σώσει αὐτούς. The Chaldee and Syriac render it, ``a deliverer and a judge,'' and Jerome's rendering is, propuqnatorem, ``a defender or champion''. Rosenmüller Scholia. ``A Savior and a vindicator''. Lowth. ``An advocate''. Stock. ``The explanation of ,רב (rab) as a participle,'' says Professor Alexander, ``is found in all the ancient versions, and is adopted by most modern writers.'' --- Ed.

[315] The words of the Apostle are, “How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?”

partakers of the gifts of God for our salvation without previously having true knowledge, which is by faith. He therefore properly adds, the knowledge of God, as the foundation of all religion, or the key that opens to us the gate of the heavenly kingdom. Now, there cannot be knowledge without doctrine; and hence infer, that God disapproves of all kinds of false worship; for he cannot approve of anything that is not guided by knowledge, which springs from hearing true and pure doctrine. Whatever contrivance therefore men may make out of their own minds, they will never attain by it the true worship of God. We ought carefully to observe passages like this, in which the Spirit of God shews what is the true worship and calling of God, that, having abandoned the inventions to which men are too obstinately attached, we may allow ourselves to be taught by the pure word of God, and, relying on his authority, may freely and boldly condemn all that the world applauds and admires.

The Egyptians shall know. It is not without good reason that he twice mentions this *knowledge*. A matter of so great importance ought not to be slightly passed by; for it holds the chief place, and without it there is nothing that can properly be called worship.

And shall make sacrifice and oblation. This passage must be explained in the same manner as the former, in which he mentioned an *altar*. What would have been the use of sacrifices after the manifestation of Christ? He therefore describes metaphorically confession of faith and calling on God, which followed the preaching of the gospel. Here he includes everything that was offered to God — slain beasts, bread, fruits of every description, and all that was fitted to express gratitude. But we must attend to the difference between the Old and New Testaments, and under the shadows of ceremonies we must understand to be meant that "reasonable worship" of which Paul speaks. (Romans 12:1.)

And shall vow vows to the Lord and perform them. What he adds about *vows* is likewise a part of the worship of God. The Jews were accustomed to express their gratitude to God by *vows*, and especially they rendered thanksgiving by a solemn vow, when they had received from God any extraordinary blessing. Of their own accord also, when any one chose to do so, they made *vows* on various occasions. (Deuteronomy 12:6; 23:21-23.) And yet every person was not at liberty to make this or that vow according to his own pleasure; but a rule was laid down. (Numbers 30:3.) Whatever may be in that respect, it is evident that by the word *vows* the Prophet means nothing else than the worship of God, to which the Egyptians devoted themselves after having learned it from the word of God; but he mentions the acts of devotion by which the Jews made profession of the true worship and religion.

Hence the Papists draw an argument to prove, that whatever we vow to God ought to be performed; but since they make vows at random, and

But Calvin's remark, which immediately follows, vindicates the appropriateness, though not the verbal accuracy, of the quotation. — Ed.

without any exercise of judgment, this passage lends no aid to defend their error. Isaiah foretells what the Egyptians will do, after having embraced and followed the instruction given by God. [316] In like manner, when David exhorts the people to vow and to perform their vows, (Psalm 76:11,) they think that he is on their side; but be does not therefore exhort them to make unlawful and rash vows. (Ecclesiastes 5:2.) There always remains in force the law of vows, which we are not at liberty to transgress, namely, the word of God, by which we learn what he requires from us, and what he wishes us to vow and perform. We never received permission to vow whatever we please, because we are too much disposed to go to excess, and to take every kind of liberty with regard to God, and because we act more imprudently towards him than if we had to deal with men. It was therefore necessary that men should be laid under some restraint to prevent them from taking so great liberties in the worship of God and religion.

This being the case, it is evident that God permits nothing but what is agreeable to his law, and that he rejects everything else as unacceptable and superstitious. What a man has vowed of his own accord, and without the support of the word, cannot be binding. If he perform it, he offends doubly; first, in vowing rashly, as if he were sporting with God; and secondly, in executing his resolutions wickedly and rashly, when he ought rather to have set them aside and repented. So far, therefore, is any man from being bound by vows, that he ought, on the contrary, to turn back and acknowledge his sinful rashness.

Now, if any one inquire about the vows of Papists, it will be easy to shew that they derive no support from the word of God. If those things which they highly applaud and reckon to be lawful, such as the vows of monks, are unlawful and wicked, what opinion must we form of the rest? They vow perpetual celibacy, as if it were indiscriminately permitted to all; but we know that the gift of continence is not an ordinary gift, and is not promised to every one, not even to those who in other respects are endued with extraordinary graces. Abraham was eminent for faith, steadfastness, meekness, and holiness, and yet he did not possess this gift. (Genesis 11:29; 25:1.) Christ himself, when the apostles loudly commended this state of celibacy, testified that it is not given to all. (Matthew 19:11,12.) Paul states the same thing. (1 Corinthians 7:7,9,26.) Whosoever, therefore, does not possess this gift of continence, if he vow it, does wrong, and will be justly punished for his rashness. Hence have arisen dreadful instances of want of chastity, by which God has justly punished Popery for this presumption.

They likewise vow poverty, as if they would have nothing of their own, though they have abundance of everything beyond other men. Is not this an open mockery of God? The obedience which they vow is full of deceit; for they shake off the yoke of Christ, that they may become the slaves of men. Others vow pilgrimages, to abstain from eating flesh, to observe days, and

[316] "La doctrine de salut;" "The doctrine of salvation."

other things full of superstition. Others promise to God toys and trinkets, as if they were dealing with a child. We would be ashamed to act thus, or to pursue such a line of conduct towards men, among whom nothing is settled till it has been agreed to on both sides by mutual consent. Much less is it lawful to attempt anything in the worship of God but what has been declared by his word. What kind of worship will it be, if the judgment of God has no weight with us, and if we yield only to the will of men? Will it be possible that it can please God? Will it not be (ἐθελοθρησκεία) "will-worship," which Paul so severely censures? (Colossians 2:23.) In vain, therefore, do they who make such vows boast that they serve God; and in vain do they endeavor to find support in this passage; for the Lord abhors that kind of worship.

22. *Therefore Jehovah will smite Egypt.* From what has been already said the Prophet draws the conclusion, that the chastisement which he has mentioned will be advantageous to the Egyptians, because it will be a preparation for their conversion; [317] as if he had said, that it will be for the good of Egypt that the Lord will punish her. Those who translate the words, "he will strike with a wound that may be healed," misinterpret this passage, and greatly weaken the Prophet's meaning; for it means that the wounds will be advantageous to them, and that by means of these wounds the Lord will bring them back. Hence we ought to conclude, that we must not refuse to be chastised by God, for it is done for our benefit. (Proverbs 3:11, 12; Hebrews 12:5-7.) Exemption from punishment would cherish a disposition to sin with less control. As men are exceedingly prone to give way to their own inclinations, whenever God spares them for a little, it is necessary on this account that the Lord should prevent this danger, which he does by chastisements and stripes, which excite and arouse us to repentance. A remarkable instance of this is here exhibited in Egypt, which abounded in superstitions and wickedness, and went beyond all nations in idolatry, and yet experienced the mercy of God.

For they shall be turned to Jehovah. We must attend to the manner of its accomplishment, which is, their conversion to God. It is the explanation of the former clause; as if he had said, "God will heal the Egyptians, because they shall be converted." The copulative ו (*vau*) signifies *for*. Hence we infer that conversion may be said to be a resurrection from eternal death. We are utterly ruined so long as we are turned away from God; but when we are converted, we return to his favor, and are delivered from death; not that we deserve the favor of God by our repentance, but because in this manner God raises us up, as it were, from death to life. To repentance is added a promise, from which we conclude, that when we sincerely repent, [318] we do not in vain implore forgiveness. Now, when the Prophet says that the Lord

[317] "Ce sera un preparatif pour les amener à repentance;" — "It will be a preparation to lead them to repentance."

[318] "Pourvenu que notre repentance ne soit hypocritique;" — "Provided that our repentance be not hypocritical."

will be gracious and reconciled to the Egyptians, he at the same time shews, that as soon as they have been converted, they will obtain forgiveness. It will therefore be a true conversion when it is followed by a calling on God. But without faith (Romans 10:14) it is impossible to call on God; for even the ungodly may acknowledge sin; but no man will have recourse to the mercy of God, or obtain reconciliation, till he be moved by a true feeling of repentance, which is likewise accompanied by faith.

And will heal them. He does not repeat what he had said, that God strikes in order to *heal;* but he promises *healing* in another sense, that is, that God will cease to inflict punishments. The former healing, which he mentioned a little before, was internal; but the latter relates to stripes and wounds. In short, he means that it will be a speedy remedy for all their distresses. After having been reconciled to God, there is nothing in us that calls for punishment; for whence comes punishment but on account of guilt? and when guilt is pardoned, exemption from punishment will quickly follow. [319] And if we be chastised, it is an evidence that we are not yet sufficiently prepared for repentance.

In a word, let us remember this order, which the Prophet points out to us; first, that stripes prepare men for repentance; secondly, that they are healed, because they are delivered from eternal destruction; thirdly, that when they have been brought to the knowledge of their guilt, they obtain pardon; fourthly, that God is gracious and reconciled to them; fifthly, that chastisements cease after they have obtained pardon from God. There is no man who ought not to acknowledge in himself what Isaiah here declares concerning the Egyptians, in whom the Lord holds out an example to the whole world.

23. *In that day.* The Prophet now foretells that the Lord will diffuse his goodness throughout the whole world; as if he had said, "It will not be shut up in a corner, or exclusively known, as it formerly was, by a single nation." Here he speaks of two nations that were the most inveterate enemies of the Church, and that appeared to be farther removed than any other from the kingdom of God; for much more might have been expected from distant nations, because the nations here mentioned openly made war with God and persecuted his Church. And if the Lord is so gracious to the deadly enemies of the Church, that he pardons and adopts them to be his children, what shall be the case with other nations? This prophecy thus includes the calling of all nations.

There shall be a highway. Now, when he says that, in consequence of a *highway* having been opened up, there will be mutual access that they may visit each other, he describes brotherly intercourse. We know that the Egyptians carried on almost incessant wars with the Assyrians, and cherished an inveterate hatred towards each other. He now foretells that the Lord will

[319] "D'où viennent les chastimens, si non de nos pechez? S'ils sont pardonnez, aussi le sont les chastimens meritez a cause d'iceux." — "Whence come chastisements but from our sins? If they are remitted, so are also the chastisements deserved on account of them."

change their dispositions, and will reconcile them to each other, so that they will have mutual communications, mutual coming in and going out, in consequence of laying open the *highways* which were formerly shut. Here we ought to observe what we formerly remarked at the fourth verse of the second chapter, [320] namely, that when men have been reconciled to God, it is likewise proper that they should cherish brotherly kindness towards each other. Strife, quarreling, disputes, hatred, and malice, ought to cease when God has been pacified. We need not wonder, therefore, that he says that a highway to Egypt is opened up for the Assyrians; but this ought undoubtedly to be referred to the reign of Christ, for we do not read that the Egyptians were on a friendly footing with the Assyrians till after they had known Christ.

And the Egyptians shall serve the Assyrians, (or, with the Assyrians.) [321] This clause may be rendered, "shall serve God;" but as the name of God is not expressed here, it may refer to the Assyrians, which is also pointed out by the particle את (ĕth.) [322] It may therefore be explained thus. They who formerly burned with a desire to injure one another will be changed in their dispositions, and will desire to shew kindness. In short, the fruit of true repentance will be made evident, for they who formerly distressed each other in mutual wars will lend mutual aid. And this opinion will agree very well with those words of the Prophet with which they stand connected. Yet I do not set aside another interpretation which is almost universally adopted, namely, "They who formerly worshipped other gods will henceforth acknowledge one God, and will assent to the same confession of faith." I leave every one to adopt that interpretation which he thinks best. If the latter interpretation be preferred, the Prophet makes brotherly love to flow from godliness, [323] as from its source.

24. *In that day shall Israel.* Isaiah concludes the promise which he had briefly glanced at, that the Egyptians and Assyrians, as well as Israel, shall be *blessed*. Formerly the grace of God was in some measure confined to Israel, because with that nation only had the Lord entered into covenant. The Lord had stretched out "his cord" over Jacob, (Deuteronomy 32:9,) as Moses speaks; [324] and David says,

"He hath not done so to any nation, and hath not made known to them his judgments." (Psalm 147:20.)

In a word, the blessing of God dwelt solely in Judea, but he says that it will be shared with the Egyptians and Assyrians, under whose name he includes also the rest of the nations. He does not mention them for the purpose of

[320] See vol. 1 p. 101

[321] This is the Author's version. See p. 48

[322] The particle את (ĕth) does not decide the question, for it may either be the sign of the accusative case, or a preposition signifying with. Professor Alexander adopts the latter view, and argues powerfully in favor of the rendering, ``they shall serve God,'' in which he concurs with Lowth, ``And the Egyptian shall worship with the Assyrian,'' and with Stock, ``And Egypt shall serve [God] with Assyria.'' --- Ed.

[323] "De la crainte de Dieu," — "from the fear of God."

[324] "Jacob is the lot (Heb. cord) of his inheritance." — Eng. Ver.

shewing respect, but because they were the constant enemies of God, and appeared to be more estranged from him and farther removed from the hope of favor than all others. Accordingly, though he had formerly adopted none but the children of Abraham, he now wished to be called, without distinction, "The father of all nations." (Genesis 17:7; Exodus 19:5,6; Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2.)

Israel shall be the third blessing. Some render it, *Israel shall be the third* [325] I do not approve of that rendering; for the adjective being in the feminine gender, ought to be construed with the noun ברכה, (*berachah,*) *blessing*, and *blessing* means here a form or pattern of blessing.

25. *Because the Lord of hosts will bless him.* [326] He assigns a reason, and explains the former statement; for he shews that, through the undeserved goodness of God, the Assyrians and Egyptians shall be admitted to fellowship with the chosen people of God. As if he had said, "Though these titles belonged exclusively to Israel, they shall likewise be conferred on other nations, which the Lord hath adopted to be his own." There is a mutual relation between God and his people, so that they who are called by his mouth "a holy people," (Exodus 19:6,) may justly, in return, call him their God. Yet this designation is bestowed indiscriminately on Egyptians and Assyrians.

Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands. Though the Prophet intended to describe foreign nations as associated with the Jews who had belonged to God's household, yet he employs most appropriate marks to describe the degrees. By calling the Egyptians "the people of God," he means that they will share in the honor which God deigned to bestow in a peculiar manner on the Jews alone. When he calls Assyrians *the work of his hands*, he distinguishes them by the title peculiar to his Church. We have elsewhere remarked [327] that the Church is called "the workmanship" (τὸ ποίημα) of God, (Ephesians 2:10,) because by the spirit of regeneration believers are created anew, so as to bear the image of God. Thus, he means that we are "the work of God's hands," not so far as we are created to be men, but so far as they who are separated from the world, and become new creatures, are created anew to a new life. Hence we acknowledge that in "newness of life" nothing ought to be claimed as our own, for we are wholly "the work of God."

And Israel my inheritance. When he comes to *Israel*, he invests him with his prerogative, which is, that he is *the inheritance of God,* so that among the new brethren he still holds the rank and honor of the first-born. The

[325] "The meaning obviously is," says Professor Alexander, "that Israel should be one of three, or a party to a triple union." By an analagous idiom of the Greek language, Peter calls Noah , "the eighth," that is, "one of eight persons." (2 Peter 2:5.) From classical writers other instances might be given, such as "he went to his house the twelfth," or, "one of twelve," that is, "along with eleven other persons." — Ed.

[326] "Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless." — Eng. Ver.

[327] Our Author perhaps refers to his expository remarks on Ephesians 2:10, Isaiah 17:7, Isaiah 64:7, See p. 26

word *inheritance* suggests the idea of some kind of superiority; and indeed that covenant which the Lord first made with them, bestowed on them the privilege which cannot be made void by their ingratitude; for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," as Paul declares, (Romans 11:29,) who shews that in the house of God they are the first-born. (Ephesians 2:12.) Although therefore the grace of God is now more widely spread, yet they still hold the highest rank, not by their own merit, but by the firmness of the promises.

Chapter 20

CHAPTER 20

Isaiah Chapter 20:1-6

1. In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it;

1. Anno quo venit Thartan in Asdod, cum misisset eum Sargon rex Assyriæ, oppugnassetque Asdod, et cepisset;

2. At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the son Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

2. Tempore illo, inquam, loquutus est Iehova iu manu Isaiæ filii Amoz, dicendo: Vade et solve saccum de lumbis tuis, et calceamentum tuum exrahe de pede tuo; fecitque sic, ambulans nudus et discalceatus.

3. And the Lord said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;

3. Et dixit Iehova: Sicut ambulavit servus meus Isaias nudus et discalceatus tribus annis, signum et portentum super Ægypto et Ethiopia;

4. So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

4. Ita abducet rex Assur captivitatem Ægypti, et transmigrationem Æthiopiæ juvenum et senum, nudam et discalceatam, et discoopertos natibus in ignominiam Ægypti.

5. And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

5. Et timebunt, et pudefient ab Æthiopia respectu suo, et ab Ægypto gloriatione (vel, pulchritudine) sua.

6. And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is

our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

6. Dicetque incola insulæ hujus in die illa; Ecce, quomodo habeat respectus noster, quo confugimus auxilii causa, ut liberemur a facie regis Assur; et quomodo effugiemus nos?

1. *In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod.* In the preceding chapter Isaiah prophesied about the calamity which threatened Egypt, and at the same time promised to it the mercy of God. He now introduces the same subject, and shews that Israel will be put to shame by this chastisement of the Egyptians, because they placed their confidence in Egypt. He now joins Ethiopia, which makes it probable that the Ethiopians were leagued with the Egyptians, as I have formerly remarked, and as we shall see again at the thirty-seventh chapter.

First, we must observe the time of this prediction. It was when the Jews were pressed hard by necessity to resort, even against their will, to foreign nations for assistance. Sacred history informs us (2 Kings 18:17) that *Tartan* was one of Sennacherib's captains, which constrains us to acknowledge that this *Sargon* was Sennacherib, who had two names, as may be easily learned from this passage. We must also consider what was the condition of Israel, for the ten tribes had been led into captivity. Judea appeared almost to be utterly ruined, for nearly the whole country was conquered, except Jerusalem, which was besieged by Rabshakeh. (2 Kings 18:13.) Tartan, on the other hand, was besieging Ashdod. Sacred history (2 Kings 18:17) mentions three captains; [328] and this makes it probable that Sennacherib's forces were at that time divided into three parts, that at the same instant he might strike terror on all, and might throw them into such perplexity and confusion that they could not render assistance to each other. Nothing was now left for the Jews but to call foreign nations to their aid. In the mean time, Isaiah is sent by God to declare that their expectation is vain in relying on the Egyptians, against whom the arm of the Lord was now lifted up, and who were so far from assisting them, that they were unable to defend themselves against their enemies. Hence the Jews ought to acknowledge that they are justly punished for their unbelief, because they had forsaken God and fled to the Egyptians.

We must consider the end which is here proposed, for the design of God was not to forewarn the Egyptians, but to correct the unbelief of the people, which incessantly carried them away to false and wicked hopes. In order therefore to teach them that they ought to rely on God alone, the Prophet here foretells what awaits their useless helpers. The warning was highly seasonable, for the Ethiopians had begun to repel the Assyrians, and had forced them to retire, and no event could have occurred which would have been more gladly hailed by the Jews. Lest those successful beginnings should

[328] "Tartan, and Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh"

make them wanton, he foretells that this aid will be of short duration, because both the Ethiopians and the Egyptians will soon be most disgracefully vanquished.

2. *Go and loose the sackcloth from thy loins.* In order to confirm this prophecy by the use of a symbol, the Lord commanded Isaiah to walk naked. If Isaiah had done this of his own accord, he would have been justly ridiculed; but when he does it by the command of the Lord, we perceive nothing but what is fitted to excite admiration and to strike awe. In this nakedness, and in the signs of a similar kind, something weighty is implied. Besides, the Lord does nothing either by himself or by his servants without likewise explaining the reason; and therefore the Prophet does not merely walk naked, but points out the design which the Lord had in view in ordering him to do so. In other respects false prophets imitate the true servants of God, and put on varied and imposing shapes, to dazzle the eyes of the multitude, and gain credit to themselves; but those symbols are worthless, because God is not the author of them.

This ought to be carefully observed in opposition to the Papists, who bring forward empty ceremonies instead of true sacraments. This is the rule with which we ought to meet them. If they proceed from God, we ought to embrace them, but if not, we may boldly reject them; and, indeed, they cannot be adopted without offering an insult to God, because in such cases men usurp his authority. Besides, God does not bring forward signs without the word, for what would a sacrament be if we beheld nothing but the sign? It is the doctrine alone that makes the sacrament, and therefore let us know that it is mere hypocrisy where no doctrine is taught, and that Papists act wickedly when they lay aside doctrine, and give the name of sacrament to empty ceremonies; for the Lord has connected them in such a manner that no man can separate them without infringing that order which he has enjoined.

When the Lord commands him to *loose the sackcloth;* almost all the commentators infer from it that Isaiah at that time wore a garment of mourning, because he bewailed the distressed condition of Israel; for sackcloth was a mourning dress, as is evident from Joel (Joel 1:13.) Their interpretation is, that this was done in order that, in the dress of culprits, he might supplicate pardon from God, or that it was impossible for his countenance or his dress to be cheerful when his heart was sad, and he could not but be affected with the deepest grief when he beheld so great a calamity. Some think that it was his ordinary dress, because the Prophets, as Zechariah informs us, commonly wore a mantle. (Zechariah 13:4.) But that conjecture rests on exceedingly slight grounds, and has no great probability. It is more probable that he wore sackcloth as expressive of mourning. Judea was at that time sunk into such a state of indifference, that when men saw their brethren wretchedly distressed and wasted, still they were not affected by it, and did not think that the affliction of their brethren was a matter which at all concerned them. They still thought that they were beyond the reach of danger, and mocked at

the Prophets when they threatened and foretold destruction. Hence Micah also complains that no man bewails the distresses of Israel. (Micah 1:11.)

A question arises, Was this actually done, or was it merely and simply a vision which he told to the people? The general opinion is, that the Prophet never went naked, but that this was exhibited to him in a vision, and only once. They allege as a reason, that on account of heat and cold, and other inconveniences of the weather, he could not have walked naked during the whole period of three years. What if we should say that the Prophet wore clothes at home, and also in public, unless when he wished to come forth to teach, and that on such occasions he was accustomed to present to the people a spectacle of nakedness? I pay little attention to the argument, that he was unable to endure heat and cold; for God, who commanded him to do this, could easily strengthen and protect him. But they assign another reason, that nakedness would have been unbecoming in a Prophet. I answer, this nakedness was not more unbecoming than circumcision, which irreligious men might consider to be the most absurd of all sights, because it made an exposure of the uncomely parts. Yet it must not be thought that the Prophet went entirely naked, or without covering those parts which would present a revolting aspect. It was enough that the people understood what the Lord was doing, and were affected by it as something extraordinary.

I am led to form this opinion by what is here said, "*By the hand* of Isaiah;" for although this mode of expression frequently occurs elsewhere, still we never find it where it does not imply something emphatic, to describe the effect produced. He places himself in the midst between God and his countrymen, so as to be the herald of a future calamity, not only in words, but likewise by a visible symbol. Nor is it superfluous that it is immediately added, *He did so.* I am therefore of opinion that Isaiah walked naked whenever he discharged the office of a prophet, and that he uncovered those parts which could be beheld without shame.

So far as relates to *sackcloth*, although it was customary for men in private stations of life to express their guilt in this manner in adversity, yet it is probable that it was with a view to his office that Isaiah made use of this symbol to confirm his doctrine, that he might the better arouse the people from their sluggishness. If at any time the Lord chastise ourselves or our brethren, he does not enjoin us to change our raiment, but we are cruel and (ἄστοργοι) without natural affection, if we are not moved by the afflictions of brethren and the ruin of the Church. If we have any feeling towards God, we ought to be in sadness and tears; and if it be our duty to mourn, we ought also to exhort others and stimulate them by our example to feel the calamities of the Church, and to be touched with some (συμπαθείᾳ) compassion.

3. *Three years.* Why for such a period? Because that was the time granted to the Egyptians and Ethiopians, during which the Lord gave them a truce for repentance, and at the same time wished to make trial of the obedience of

his people, that without delay they might relinquish unlawful aid, and that, though the Egyptians and Ethiopians appeared to be secure, they might know that they were not far from ruin. The Lord intended also to expose the rebellion of wicked men; for undoubtedly many persons made an open display of their impiety when they despised the nakedness of the prophet, and the godly, on the other hand, moved by the sight of his nakedness, though the prosperity of the Ethiopians was delightfully attractive, still did not hesitate to fix their attention on the word. What they were bound to consider was not the nakedness itself, but the mark which the Lord had put upon it; in the same manner as, in the visible sacraments, we ought to behold those things which are invisible.

4. *The captivity of Egypt and the removal of Ethiopia.* [329] The words "captivity" and "removal" are taken collectively, to denote the multitude of captives and emigrants. Next, he shews that there will be no distinction of age, declaring that the *old*, as well as the *young*, shall be led into captivity.

5. *And they shall be afraid.* He now shews for whose benefit he had foretold these things about the Egyptians and Ethiopians. It was in order that the Jews might learn amidst their afflictions to hope in God, and might not have recourse to foreign aid, which the Lord had forbidden.

6. *Lo, what is become of our expectation?* He calls them *expectation*, or *lurking*, because the Jews turned towards them, whenever they were oppressed by any calamity, and placed their hope in them. We are accustomed to turn our eyes to that quarter from which we expect any assistance. Hence also, to "look" often signifies, in the Hebrew language, to "hope." (Psalms 34:5; Job 6:19.) Now, they ought to have looked to God alone. Their wandering levity is therefore censured. And the same thing must happen to us, and deservedly, that when we have been invited by God, and refuse the sure refuge which he offers to us, and allow ourselves to be captivated by the delusions of Satan, we may lie down naked and destitute with shame and disgrace.

And the inhabitants of the island shall say. He gives the name *island* not only to Jerusalem, but to the whole of Judea; and it is generally thought that the name is given because its shores are washed by the Mediterranean sea. But I think that there is a different reason for this metaphor, for it is but a small portion of the sea that washes it; but as an *island* is separated from other lands, so the Lord separated Judea from other countries. It was kept apart from all the nations, which cherished a mortal hatred towards the Jews; for there was a "wall" between them, as Paul says, (Ephesians 2:14,) which Christ at length threw down. Here again Isaiah confirms his prophecy. If you are not now moved by my nakedness, you shall one day be taught by the event, that these words were not spoken to you in vain. Thus, at a late hour, obstinate and rebellious men are constrained by God to confess their

[329] "The Egyptians prisoners (Heb. the captivity of Egypt) and Ethiopians captives." — Eng. Ver. "The captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush." — Lowth

guilt, so that they are struck with amazement, and argue within themselves how they could be so greatly blinded by their own stubbornness.

Chapter 21

CHAPTER 21

Isaiah Chapter 21:1-17

1. The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.

1. Onus deserti maris, Sicut tempestates in australi regione, transituræ a deserto, veniet a terra horribili.

2. A grievous vision is declared unto me: The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media: all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

2. Visio dura indicata est mihi: transgressor transgressori, et vastator vastatori. Ascende, Persa; obside, Mede; omnem gemitum ejus cessare feci.

3. Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it

3. Propterea impleti sunt lumbi mei dolore; angustiæ corripuerunt me, sicut angustiæ parturientis; incurvatus sum audiendo, et videndo obstupui.

4. My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.

4. Concussum est cor meum; horror perterruit me; noctem deliciarum mearum posuit mihi in horrorem.

5. Prepare the table, watch in the watch-tower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.

5. Adorna mensam, speculare in specula, comede, bibe; surgite, Principes, et ungite clypeum.

6. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.

6. Quoniam sic dixit ad me Dominus: Vade, constitue vigilem, qui annun-

tiet quod viderit.

7. And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed.

7. Et vidit currum paris equitum, currum asini, et currum cameli; deinde attentius speculatus est, multum, inquam, speculatus est.

8. And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time, and I am set in my ward whole nights;

8. Tum clamavit, Leo. In specula mea, Domine mi, jugiter sto interdiu, et totis noctibus in custodia mea locatus sum.

9. And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.

9. Et ecce, hic venit currus hominis, par equitum. Et loquutus est, ac dixit, Cecidit, cecidit Babel, et omnia sculptilia deorum ejus contrivit ad terram.

10. O my thrashing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

10. Tritura mea, et filius areæ meæ. Quæ audivi a Iehova exercituum Deo Israel, nuntiavi vobis.

11. The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?

11. Onus Duma. Clamat ad me ex Seir: Custos, quid de nocte? Custos, quid de nocte?

12. The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye; return, come.

12. Dixit custos: Venit mane, postea nox. Si interrogavaris, interrogate. Revertimini, venite.

13. The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.

13. Onus in Arabia. In nemore in Arabia pernoctabitis, in viis Dedanim.

14. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled.

14. In occursum ferte aquas sitienti, icolæ terræ Tema, pane suo succurrite profugo.

15. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.

15. Quia a facie gladiorum fugiunt, a facie gladii extenti, a facie arcus intenti, a facie gravitatis belli.

16. Fore thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail:

16. Nam sic dixit mihi Dominus: Adhuc annus, secundum annos mercenarii, tum deficiet omnis gloria Cedar;

17. And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the Lord God of Israel hath

spoken it

17. Et residuum arcus, quod numerabitur fortium filiorum Cedar, imminuetur; quoniam Iehova Deus Israel loquutus est.

1. *The burden of the desert of the sea.* The Prophet, after having taught that their hope ought to be placed, not on the Egyptians, but on the mercy of God alone, and after having foretold that calamities would come on the nations on whose favor they relied, adds a consolation in order to encourage the hearts of the godly. He declares, that for the Chaldeans, to whom they will be captives, a reward is prepared; from which it follows, that God takes account of the injuries which they endure. By *the desert* [330] he means Chaldea, not that it was deserted or thinly inhabited, but because the Jews had a desert on that side of them; just as if, instead of Italy, we should name "the Alps," because they are nearer to us, and because we must cross them on our road to Italy. This reason ought to be kept in view; for he does not describe the nature of the country, but forewarns the Jews that the destruction of the enemies, which he foretells, is near at hand, and is as certain as if the event had been before their eyes, as that desert was. Besides, the prophets sometimes spoke ambiguously about Babylon, that believers alone might understand the hidden mysteries, as Jeremiah changes the king's name. [331]

As storms from the south. He says *from the south*, because that wind is tempestuous, and produces storms and whirlwinds. [332] When he adds that "it cometh from the desert," this tends to heighten the picture; for if any storm arise in a habitable and populous region, it excites less terror than those which spring up in deserts. In order to express the shocking nature of this calamity, he compares it to storms, which begin in the desert, and afterwards take a more impetuous course, and rush with greater violence.

Yet the Prophet appears to mean something else, namely, that as they burst forth like storms from that direction to lay Judea desolate, so another storm would soon afterwards arise to destroy them; and therefore he says that this burden will come *from a terrible land.* By this designation I understand Judea to be meant, for it was not enough to speak of the ruin of Babylon, if the Jews did not likewise understand that it came from God. Why he calls it "a terrible land" we have seen in our exposition of the eighteenth chapter. [333] It was because, in consequence of so many displays of the

[330] "This plainly means Babylon, which is the subject of the prophecy. The country about Babylon, and especially below it towards the sea, was a great flat morass, often overflowed by the Euphrates and Tigris. It became habitable by being drained by the many canals that were made in it." — Lowth.

[331] The allusion appears to be to the use of the name "Coniah" instead of "Jehoiachin." "Though Coniah … were the signet upon my right hand. Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol?" (Jeremiah 22:24, 28.) — Ed

[332] Lowth remarks, and quotes Job 1:19, and 37:9, and Zechariah 9:14, in support of the statement, that "the most vehement storms to which Judea was subject came from the great desert country to the south of it." — Ed

[333] See p. 37

wrath of God, its disfigured appearance might strike terror on all. The occasion on which the words are spoken does not allow us to suppose that it is called "terrible" on account of the astonishing power of God by which it was protected. Although therefore Babylon was taken and plundered by the Persians and Medes, Isaiah declares that its destruction will come from Judea; because in this manner God will revenge the injuries done to that nation of which he had promised to be the guardian.

2. *A harsh vision.* As the object was to soothe the grief of the people, it may be thought not to be appropriate to call a vision, which is the occasion of joy, *a harsh vision.* But this refers to the Babylonians, who, puffed up with their prosperity, dreaded no danger; for wealth commonly produces pride and indifference. As if he had said, "It is useless to hold out the riches and power of the Babylonians, and when a stone is hard, there will be found a hard hammer to break it."

The spoiler. As Babylon had gained its power by plundering and laying waste other nations, it seemed to be free from all danger. Although they had been a terror to others, and had practiced every kind of barbarity and cruelty, yet they could not avoid becoming a prey and enduring injuries similar to those which they had inflicted on others. The Prophet goes farther, and, in order to obtain credit to his statements, pronounces it to be a righteous retaliation, that violence should correspond to violence.

Go up, O Elam. Elam is a part of Persia; but is taken for the whole of Persia, and on this account also the Persians are called Elamites. It is worthy of observation, that, when Isaiah foretold these things, there was no probability of war, and that he was dead a hundred years before there was any apprehension of this calamity. Hence it is sufficiently evident that he could not have derived his information on this subject from any other than the Spirit of God; and this contributes greatly to confirm the truth and certainty of the prediction.

Besiege, O Mede. By commanding the Medes and Persians, he declares that this will not befall the Babylonians at random or by chance, but by the sure decree of God, in whose name, and not in that of any private individual, he makes the announcement. Coming forward therefore in the name of God, he may, like a captain or general, command his soldiers to assemble to give battle. In what manner God employs the agency of robbers and wicked men, has been formerly explained at the tenth chapter. [334]

I have made all his groaning to cease. Some understand it to mean, that the groaning, to which the Babylonians had given occasion, ceased after they were subdued by the Medes and Persians; for by their tyrannical measures they had caused many to groan, which must happen when wicked and ungodly men possess rank and power. Others approach more closely, perhaps, to the real meaning of the Prophet, when they say, that "the groaning ceased," because the Babylonians experienced no compassion, having for-

[334] See vol. 1 p. 341

merly shewn none to others. But I explain it more simply to mean, that the Lord was deaf to their groanings; as if he had said, that there would be no room for their groanings and lamentations, because having been cruel and barbarous, it was just that they should receive back the same measure which they had meted out to others. (Matthew 7:2.)

3. *Therefore are my loins, filled with pain.* Here the Prophet represents the people as actually present, for it was not enough to have simply foretold the destruction of Babylon, if he had not confirmed the belief of the godly in such a manner that they felt as if the actual event were placed before their eyes. Such a representation was necessary, and the Prophet does not here describe the feelings of his own heart, as if he had compassion on the Babylonians, but, on the contrary, as we have formerly said, [335] he assumes, for the time, the character of a Babylonian. [336] It ought undoubtedly to satisfy our minds that the hidden judgments of God are held out to us, as in a mirror, that they may arouse the sluggishness of our faith; and therefore the Prophets describe with greater beauty and copiousness, and paint in lively colors, those things which exceed the capacity of our reason. The Prophet, thus expressing his grief, informs believers how awful is the vengeance of God which awaits the Chaldeans, and how dreadfully they will be punished, as we are struck with surprise and horror when any sad intelligence is brought to us.

As the pangs of a woman that travaileth. He adds a stronger expression of grief, when he compares it to that of a woman in labor, as when a person under fearful anguish turns every way, and writhes in every part of his body. Such modes of expression are employed by the Prophets on account of our sluggishness, for we do not perceive the judgments of God till they be pointed at, as it were, with the finger, and affect our senses. We are warned to be on our guard before they arrive.

4. *My heart was shaken.* Others render it not amiss, "my heart wandered;" for excessive terror moves the heart, as it were, out of its place. He declares how sudden and unlooked for will be the destruction of Babylon, for a sudden calamity makes us tremble more than one which has been long foreseen and expected. Daniel relates, that what Isaiah here foretells was accomplished, and that he was an eye-witness. Belshazzar had that night prepared a magnificent banquet, when the Persians suddenly rushed upon him, and nothing was farther from his expectation than that he would be slain. High delight was thus suddenly changed into terror. (Daniel 5:30.)

5. *Prepare the table.* These verbs may be taken for participles; as if he had said, "While they were preparing the table and appointing a guard, while they were eating and drinking, sudden terror arose; there was a call to arms, Arise ye princes," etc.. But Isaiah presents lively descriptions, so as

[335] See vol. 1 p. 494

[336] "Vivacity is here imparted to the description by the Prophet's speaking of himself as of a Babylonian present at Belshazzar's feast, on the night when the town was surprised by Cyrus." — Stock

to place the actual event, as it were, before our eyes. Certainly Xenophon does not describe so historically the storming of the city; and this makes it evident that it was not natural sagacity, but heavenly inspiration, that taught Isaiah to describe so vividly events that were unknown. Besides, we ought to observe the time when these predictions were uttered; for at that time the kingdom of Babylon was in its most flourishing condition, and appeared to have invincible power, and dreaded no danger. Isaiah ridicules this vain confidence, and shews that this power will speedily be laid in ruins.

Let it not be thought absurd that he introduces the watchmen as speaking; for although the siege had not shaken off the slothfulness of a proud and foolish tyrant so as to hinder him from indulging in gaiety and feasting, still there is no room to doubt that men were appointed to keep watch. It is customary indeed with princes to defend themselves by guards, that they may more freely and without any disturbance abandon themselves to every kind of pleasure; but the Prophet expressly mixes up the sentinels with the delicacies of the table, to make it more evident that the wicked tyrant was seized with a spirit of giddiness before he sunk down to drunken reveling. The king of Babylon was thus feasting and indulging in mirth with his courtiers, when he was overtaken by a sudden and unexpected calamity, not that he was out of danger, but because he disregarded and scorned the enemy. The day before it happened, it might have been thought incredible, for the conspiracy of Gobryas, and of that party which betrayed him, had not yet been discovered. At the time when Isaiah spoke, none would have thought that an event so extraordinary would ever take place.

6. *For thus hath the Lord said to me.* The Prophet is commanded to set a *watchman* on the watchtower, to see these things at a distance; for they cannot be perceived by the eyes, or learned by conjecture. In order, therefore, that all may know that he did not speak at random, he declares that he foretells these things; for although they are unknown to men, and incredible, yet he clearly and distinctly knows them by the spirit of prophecy, because he is elevated above the judgment of men. This ought to be carefully observed; for we must not imagine that the prophets learned from men, or foresaw by their own sagacity, those things which they made known; and on this account also they were justly called "Seers." (1 Samuel 9:9.) Though we also see them, yet our sight is dull, and we scarcely perceive what is at our feet; and even the most acute men are often in darkness, because they understand nothing but what they can gather by the use of reason. But the prophets speak by the Spirit of God, as from heaven. The amount of what is stated is, that whosoever shall attempt to measure this prophecy by their own judgment will do wrong, because it has proceeded from God, and therefore it goes far beyond our sense.

Go, appoint a watchman. It gives additional weight that he "appoints a watchman in the name of God." If it be objected, "You relate incredible things as if they had actually happened," he replies that he does not declare

them at random; for he whom the prince has appointed to be a watchman, sees from a distance what others do not know. Thus Isaiah saw by the revelation of the Spirit what was unknown to others.

7. *And he saw a chariot.* What he now adds contains a lively description of that defeat. Some think that it is told by the king's messenger. This is a mistake; for the Prophet, on the contrary, foretells what he has learned from the watchman whom he appointed by the command of God. Here he represents the watchman as looking and reporting what he saw. As if at the first glance he had not seen it clearly, he says that there is "a chariot," and afterwards observing more closely, he says that there is "a couple of horses" in the chariot. At first, on account of the novelty and great distance of the objects, the report given is ambiguous and confused; but afterwards, when a nearer view is obtained, they are better understood. There is no absurdity in applying to prophets or to divine visions what belongs to men; for we know that God, accommodating himself to our feeble capacity, takes upon himself human feelings.

8. *And he cried, A lion.* "Having hearkened diligently with much heed," at length he observes *a lion.* This is supposed to mean Darius who conquered and pillaged Babylon, as we learn from Daniel. (Daniel 5:28, 31.)

I stand continually. When the watchman says that he is continually on his watchtower by day and by night, this tends to confirm the prediction, as if he had said that nothing can be more certain than this vision; for they whom God has appointed to keep watch are neither drowsy nor dim-sighted. Meanwhile, by this example, he exhorts and stimulates believers to the same kind of attention, that by the help of the lamp of the word, they may obtain a distant view of the power of God.

9. *Babylon is fallen, is fallen.* This shews plainly that it is not king Belshazzar's watchman who is introduced, for this speech would be unsuitable to such a character. The Prophet therefore makes known, by the command of God, what would happen. Now, this may refer either to God or to Darius, as well as to the watchman; and it makes little difference as to the meaning, for Darius, being God's servant in this matter, is not inappropriately represented to be the herald of that judgment. There would be greater probability in referring it to God himself; for Darius had no such thoughts when he overthrew the idols of the Babylonians. But the speech agrees better with the character of a guardian, as if an angel added an interpretation to the prophecy.

And all the graven images of her gods. There is here an implied contrast between the living God and dead idols. This mode of expression, too, deserves notice, when he calls them "images of gods;" for the Babylonians knew, as all idolaters loudly proclaim, that their images are not gods. Yet they ascribed to them divine power, and when this is done, "the truth of God is changed into a lie," (Romans 1:25,) and not only so, but God himself is denied. But on this subject we shall afterwards speak more largely. Here

we see, that by her destruction Babylon was punished for idolatry, for he assigns the reason why Babylon was destroyed. It was because the Lord could not endure that she should glory in her "graven images."

10. *My thrashing, and the son of my floor.* [337] The wealth of that powerful monarchy having dazzled the eyes of all men by its splendor, what Isaiah foretold about its destruction might be reckoned fabulous. He therefore leads their minds to God, in order to inform them that it was God who had undertaken to destroy Babylon, and that it is not by the will of men, but by divine power, that such loftiness will fall to the ground. The "thrashing" and "the son of the floor" mean the same thing; for this mode of expression is frequently employed by Hebrew writers, who often repeat the same statement in different language.

This passage ought to be carefully observed, that we may correct a vice which is natural to us, that of measuring the power of God by our own standard. Not only does our feebleness place us far below the wisdom of God; but we are wicked and depraved judges of his works, and cannot be induced to take any other view of them than of what comes within the reach of the ability and wisdom of men. But we ought always to remember his almighty power, and especially when our own reason and judgment fail us. Thus, when the Church is oppressed by tyrants to such a degree that there appears to be no hope of deliverance, let us know that the Lord will lay them low, and, by trampling on their pride and abasing their strength, will shew that they are his "thrashing-floor;" for the subject of this prediction was not a person of mean rank, but the most powerful and flourishing of all monarchies. The more they have exalted themselves, the more quickly will they be destroyed, and the Lord will execute his "thrashing" upon them. Let us learn that what the Lord has here given as a manifestation of inconceivable ruin, applies to persons of the same stamp.

That which I have heard from the Lord of hosts. When he says that he has "heard it from the Lord of hosts," he sets a seal, as it were, on his prophecy; for he declares that he has not brought forward his own conjectures, but has received it from the Lord himself. Here it is worthy of our notice, that the servants of God ought to be fortified by this boldness to speak in the name of God, as Peter also exhorts, "He that speaketh, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Peter 4:11.) Impostors also boast of the name of God, but his faithful servants have the testimony of their conscience that they bring forward nothing but what God has enjoined. Observe, also, that this confirmation was highly necessary, for the whole world trembled at the resources of this powerful monarchy.

From the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. It is not without reason that he gives to God these two appellations. As to the former, it is indeed a title which always applies to God; but here, undoubtedly, the Prophet had his eye on the matter in hand, in order to contrast the power of God with all the

[337] "The corn (Heb. son) of my floor." — Eng. Ver.

troops of the Babylonians; for God has not a single army, but innumerable armies, to subdue his enemies. Again, he calls him "the God of Israel," because by destroying Babylon he shewed himself to be the defender and guardian of his people; for the overthrow of that monarchy procured freedom for the Jews. In short, all these things were done for the sake of the Church, which the Prophet has here in view; for it is not the Babylonians, who undoubtedly laughed at these predictions, but believers, whom he exhorts to rest assured that, though they were oppressed by the Babylonians, and scattered and tossed about, still God would take care of them.

11. *The burden of Dumah.* It is evident from Genesis 25:14, that this nation was descended from a son of Ishmael, to whom this name was given, and hence his posterity are called Dumeans. [338] The cause of their destruction, which is here foretold, cannot be known with certainty, and this prophecy is obscure on account of its brevity. Yet we ought always to remember what I have formerly remarked, that it was proper that the Jews should be fortified against the dreadful stumbling-blocks which were approaching. When so many changes take place, particularly if the world is turned upside down, and if there is a rapid succession of events, we are perplexed and entertain doubts whether all things happen at random and by chance, or are regulated by the providence of God. The Lord therefore shews that it is he who effects this revolution, and renews the state of the world, that we may learn that nothing here is of long duration, and may have our whole heart and our whole aim directed to the reign of Christ, which alone is everlasting.

Since therefore these changes were near at hand, it was proper that the Jews should be forewarned, that when the event followed, they should call them to remembrance, contemplate the wisdom of God, and strengthen their faith. Besides, there is no room to doubt that the Jews were harassed by various thoughts, when they saw the whole world shaken on all sides, and desired to have some means of avoiding those storms and tempests; for we always wish to be in safety and beyond the reach of danger. Some might have wished to find new abodes, that they might better provide for their own safety; but when storms raged on every hand, they were reminded to remain at home, and to believe that no safer habitation could anywhere be found than in the company of the godly.

This example ought also to be a warning to many who separate themselves from the Church through fear of danger, and do not consider that a greater danger awaits them out of it. These thoughts might therefore distress the Jews, for we have seen in the eighth chapter that their minds were restless.

338 "Of Dumah there are two interpretations, J. D. Michaelis, Gesenius, Maurer, Hitzig, Ewald, and Umbreit understand it as the name of an Arabian tribe descended from Ishmael, (Genesis 25:14; 1 Chronicles 1:30,) or of a place belonging to that tribe, perhaps the same now called Dumah Eljandil, on the confines of Arabia and Syria. In that case, Seir, which lay between Judah and the desert of Arabia, is mentioned merely to denote the quarter whence the sound proceeded. But as Seir was itself the residence of the Edomites or children of Esau, Vitringa, Rosenmüller, and Knobel follow the Septuagint and Jarchi in explaining דומה (Dumah) as a variation of ,אדום (Edom,) intended at the same time to suggest the idea of silence, solitude, and desolation. --- Alexander

[339] When they were thus tossed about in uncertainty, and fleeing to foreign nations, they would naturally lose heart; and this, I think, is the chief reason why the destruction of the Dumeans is foretold, namely, that the Jews might seek God with their whole heart, and that above all things they might commit to his care the safety of the Church. Let us therefore learn to keep ourselves within the Church, though she be afflicted by various calamities, and let us bear patiently the fatherly chastisements which are inflicted on children, instead of choosing to go astray, that we may drink the dregs which choke the wicked. (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17.) What shall become of strangers and reprobates, if children are thus chastised? (1 Peter 4:17, 18.) Yet it is possible that the chosen people suffered some molestation from the people of God, when their neighbors assailed them on every side.

Out of Seir. Mount Seir, as we learn from the book of Genesis, was a mountain of the Edomites. (Genesis 14:6; 32:3; 36:8, 9.) Under the name of this mountain he includes the whole kingdom. In this place he represents, as in a picture, those things which called for an earnest address.

Watchman, what of the night? It is probable that the Edomites, who put the question, were not at a great distance from them, and that they were solicitous about the danger as one in which they were themselves involved. He introduces them as inquiring at the "watchman," not through curiosity, but with a view to their own advantage, what he had observed in "the night," just as when one has asked a question, a second and a third person follow him, asking the same thing. This is the meaning of the repetition, that the inquiry is made not by one individual only, but by many persons, as commonly happens in cases of doubt and perplexity, when every man is afraid on his own account, and does not believe what is said by others.

12. *The morning cometh.* This means that the anxiety will not last merely for a single day, or for a short time, as if the watchman had replied, "What I tell you to-day, I will tell you again to-morrow; if you are afraid now, you will also be afraid to-morrow." It is a most wretched condition when men are tortured with anxiety, in such a manner that they hang in a state of doubt between death and life; and it is that dismal curse which the Lord threatens against wicked men by Moses,

"Would that I lived till the evening; and in the evening, would that I saw the dawn!" (Deuteronomy 28:67.)

The godly indeed are beset with many dangers, but they know that they and their life are committed to the hand of God, and even in the jaws of death they see life, or at least soothe their uneasy fears by hope and patience. But the wicked always tremble, and not only are tormented by alarm, but waste away in their sorrows.

Return, come. These words may be explained in two ways; either that if they run continually, they will lose their pains, or in this way, "If any among you be more careful, let them go to Dumah, and there let them tremble more

[339] See vol. 1 p. 265

than in their native country, for nowhere will they be safe." But since God always takes care of his Church, nowhere shall we find a safer retreat, even though we shall compass sea and land.

13. *The burden upon Arabia.* He now passes on to the Arabians, and foretells that they too, in their own turn, will be dragged to the judgment-seat of God; so that he does not leave unnoticed any of the nations which were known to the Jews. He declares that they will be seized with such fear that they will leave their houses and flee into the woods; and he states the direction in which they will flee, that is, to "Dedanim."

14. *To meet the thirsty bring waters.* [340] He heightens the description of that trembling with which the Lord had determined to strike the Arabians in such a manner that they thought of nothing but flight, and did not take time even to collect those things which were necessary for the journey. Isaiah therefore declares that the Arabians will come into the country of Dedanim, empty and destitute of all things, and that they will not be provided with any food. On this account he exhorts the inhabitants to go out and meet them with bread and water, because otherwise they will faint through the want of the necessaries of life.

I am aware that this passage is explained differently by some commentators, who think that the Prophet mocks at the Arabians, who had been cruel and barbarous towards the Jews; as if he had said, "How gladly you would now bring water to the thirsty!" But that exposition is too constrained. And yet I do not deny that they received the reward of their cruelty, when they ran hither and thither in a state of hunger. But the meaning which I have given is twofold, [341] that the Arabians in their flight will be so wretched that they will not even have the necessary supply of water, and they will therefore faint with thirst, if they do not quickly receive assistance; and he intimates that there will be a scarcity both of food and of drink. He calls on the neighbors to render assistance; not to exhort them to do their duty, but to state the fact more clearly; and he enjoins them to give their bread to them, not because it is deserved, but because they are suffering extreme want. Yet as it is founded on the common law of nature and humanity, the Prophet indirectly insinuates that the hungry and thirsty are defrauded of their bread, when food is denied to them.

15. *For they flee from the face of the swords.* [342] He means that the calamity will be dreadful, and that the Arabians will have good reason for betaking themselves to flight, because the enemies will pursue them with arms and with swords, so that they will have no other way of providing for

[340] "Brought water (or, bring ye, or, prevent ye) to him that was thirsty." — Eng. Ver. Calvin's version follows closely that of the Septuagint, , and agrees with other ancient versions; but modern critics assign strong reasons for reading this verse in the preterite rather than in the imperative." — Ed

[341] It would appear that, instead of "geminus est sensus," some copies had read, "genuinus est sensus;" for the French version gives "Cependant l'exposition que j'ay mise en avant est plus simple;" "but the exposition which I have given is more simple." — Ed

[342] "From the swords," or, for fear (Heb. from the face.) — Eng. Ver. "From before the swords." — Stock. "From the presence of swords." — Alexander

their safety than by flight. The reason why he foretells this defeat is plain enough; for it was necessary that the Jews should obtain early information of that which should happen long after, that they might learn that the world is governed by the providence of God and not by chance, and likewise that they should be taught by the example of others to behold God as the judge of all nations, wherever they turned their eyes. We do not know, and history does not inform us, whether or not the Arabians were enemies of the Jews. However that may be, it is certain that these things are spoken for the consolation of the godly, that they may behold the justice of God towards all nations, and may acknowledge that his judgment-seat is at Jerusalem, from which he will pronounce judgment on the whole world.

16. *For thus hath the Lord said to me.* He adds that this defeat of the Arabians, of which he prophesied, is close at hand; which tended greatly to comfort the godly. We are naturally fiery, and do not willingly allow the object of our desire to be delayed; and the Lord takes into account our weakness in this respect, when he says that he hastens his work. He therefore declares that he prophesies of things which shall happen, not after many ages, but immediately, that the Jews may bear more patiently their afflictions, from which they know that they will be delivered in a short time.

Yet a year according to the years of the hireling. Of the metaphor of "the year of the hireling," which he adds for the purpose of stating the matter more fully, we have already spoken. [343] It means that the time will not be delayed. The same comparison is used by heathen authors, where they intend to describe a day appointed and desired; as appears from that passage in Horace, "The day appears long to those who must render an account of their work." [344]

17. *And the residue of the archers.* He threatens that this slaughter will not be the end of their evils, because if there be any residue in Arabia, they will gradually decrease; as if he had said, "The Lord will not merely impoverish the Arabians by a single battle, but will pursue to the very utmost, till all hope of relief is taken away, and they are utterly exterminated." Such is the vengeance which he executes against the ungodly, while he moderates the punishment which he inflicts on the godly, that they may not be entirely destroyed.

Of the mighty men. He means warlike men and those who were fit to carry arms, and says, that although they escaped that slaughter, still they will be cut off at their own time. He formerly threatened similar chastisements against the Jews, but always accompanied by a promise which was fitted to alleviate their grief or at least to guard them against despair. It frequently happens that the children of God are afflicted as severely as the

[343] See vol 1 p. 496

[344] "Diesque longa videtur opus debentibus." — Hor. Ep. I.21. Another reading of this passage, which gives "lenta" instead of "longa," is not less apposite to the purpose for which the quotation is made. "To those who perform task-work the day appears to advance slowly." — Ed

reprobate, or even with greater severity; but the hope of favor which is held out distinguishes them from the whole world. Again, when we learn that God visits on the wicked deadly vengeance, this is no reason why we should be immoderately grieved even at the heaviest punishments; but, on the contrary, we ought to draw from it this consolation, that he chastises them gently, and "does not give them over to death." (Psalm 118:18.)

The God of Israel hath spoken it. The Prophet shews, as we have frequently remarked on former occasions, that we ought not only to acknowledge that these things happened by divine appointment, but that they were appointed by that God whom Israel adores. All men are sometimes constrained to rise to the acknowledgment of God, though they are disposed to believe in chance, because the thought that there is a God in heaven comes into their minds, whether they will or not, and that both in prosperity and in adversity; but then they imagine a Deity according to their own fancy, either in heaven or on earth. Since therefore irreligious men idly and foolishly imagine a God according to their own pleasure, the Prophet directs the Jews to that God whom they adore, that they may know the distinguished privilege which they enjoy in being placed under his guardianship and protection. Nor is it enough that we adore some God as governor of the world, but we must acknowledge the true God, who revealed himself to the fathers, and hath manifested himself to us in Christ. And this ought to be earnestly maintained, in opposition to the profane thoughts of many persons who contrive some strange and confused notion of a Deity, because they dare not openly deny God.

Chapter 22

CHAPTER 22

Isaiah Chapter 22:1-25

1. The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the house-tops?

1. Onus vallis visionis. Quid tibi hic, (vel, nunc?) quia tu universa conscendisti super tecta?

2. Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.

2. Strepituum plena, urbs turbulenta, civitas exultans; interfecti tui non interfecti gladio, et non mortui in prælio.

3. All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far.

3. Cuncti principes tui profugerunt parita ab arcu; vincti sunt. Omnes, inquam, in te reperti vincti sunt pariter, qui a longinquo fugerunt.

4. Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

4. Propterea dixi, Desistite a me; amarus ero in fletu meo, ne contendatis me consolari super vastatione filiæ populi mei.

5. For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.

5. Quoniam dies perturbationis, et conculcationis, et anxietatis Domino Iehovæ exercituum in valle visionis, diruenti urbem, et clamor ad montem.

6. And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.

6. Atqui Elam portans pharetram in curru hominis, equitum, inquam, et Ceir nudans clypeum.

7. And it shall come to pass, that thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

7. Et fuit ut electio vallium tuarum repleta sit curribus, et equites instruendo instruerent ad portam.

8. And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.

8. Et transtulit operimentum Iuda; et respexisti in die illa ad armaturam domus saltus.

9. Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many; and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool:

9. Et interruptiones civitatis David vidistis, quæ multæ erant; et collegistis aquas piscinæ inferioris.

10. And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall.

10. Et domos Ierusalem numerastis; et domos diruistis ad muniendum murum.

11. Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.

11. Fossam quoque fecistis inter muros, aquis piscinæ veteris, et non respexistis ad fictorum ejus, et opificem ejus ab antiquo (vel, eminus) non vidistis.

12. And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

12. Porro vocavit Dominus Iehova exercituum in die isto ad fletum et lamentum, ad calvitium et cincturam sacci.

13. And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.

13. Et ecce gaudium et lætitia, occidere bovem, mactare ovem, edere carnes, et bibere vinum, comedere, inquam, et bibere; quia cras moriemur.

14. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts.

14. Id revelatum est auribus Iehovæ exercituum, Si remittetur vobis hæc iniquitas, donec moriamini, dicit Dominus Iehova exercituum.

15. Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say,

15. Sic dicit Dominus Iehova exercituum, Vade, ingredere ad fautorem istum, ad Sabna præfectum domus.

16. What hast thou here, and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?

16. Quid tibi hic? et quis tibi hic? quod tibi hic excideris sepulchrum, sicut qui in excelso excidit sepulchrum suum, aut qui in rupe sculpit habitaculum sibi.

17. Behold, the Lord will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.

17. Ecce Iehova traducet te traductione insigni, et operiendo operiet te.

18. He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.

18. Convolvendo volvet te convolutione, quasi globam in terram longinquam manibus; ibi morieris; et ibi currus gloriæ tuæ ignominia domus domini tui.

19. And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

19. Et propulsabo te de statione tua, et de sede tua te expellet.

20. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah;

20. Et erit in die illa: vocabo servum meum Eliakim, filium Helciæ.

21. And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

21. Et induam eum vestibus tuis, et balteo tuo roborabo eum; et potestatem tuam tradam in manum ejus, et erit pater incolæ Ierusalem et domi Iuda.

22. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder: so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

22. Et ponem clavem domus David super humerum ejus; aperiet, et nemo claudet; claudet, et nemo aperiet.

23. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

23. Et figam eum veluti clavum in loco fideli; eritque in solium gloriæ domui patris sui.

24. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

24. Et suspendent ab eo omnem gloriam domus patris sui, nepotes et pronepotes, omnia vasa minora, a vasis craterarum ad cuncta vasa melodiarum.

25. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it

25. In die illa, dicit Iehova exercituum, recedet clavus fixus in loco fideli, frangetur et cadet, et dissipabitur onus quod fuit super ipsum; quia Iehova loquutus est.

1. *The burden of the valley of vision.* Isaiah again prophesies against Judea, which he calls *the valley of vision.* He gives this appellation to the

whole of Judea rather than to Jerusalem, of which he afterwards speaks; but now in the preface he includes the whole of Judea. He appropriately calls it a "valley," for it was surrounded on all sides by mountains. It is a harsher view of the metaphor, which is adopted by some, that Jerusalem is called "a valley," because it was thrown down from its loftiness. The reason why he adds the words, *of vision*, is plain enough. The Lord enlightened the whole of Judea by his word; the prophets were continually employed in it, and that was the reason why they called them *seers*. (1 Samuel 9:9.) There is also an implied contrast here, for valleys have less light than open plains, because the height of the mountains intercepts the light of the sun. Now, this valley, he tells us, is more highly enlightened than those countries which were exposed on all sides to the sun. It was by the extraordinary goodness of God that this happened; for he means, that it was enlightened, not by the rays of the sun, but by the word of God.

Besides, the Prophet unquestionably intended to beat down that foolish confidence with which the Jews were puffed up, because God had distinguished them above others by remarkable gifts. They abused his word and prophecies, as if by means of them they had been protected against all danger, though they were disobedient and rebellious against God. He therefore declares that visions will not prevent God from punishing their ingratitude; and he even aggravates their guilt by this mark of ingratitude, that amidst such splendor of heavenly doctrine they still continued to stumble like the blind.

What hast thou here? or, What hast thou now? He now addresses Jerusalem; not that this defeat affects Jerusalem alone, but because the whole country thought it safe to take refuge under the shadow of the sanctuary which then existed, and to lead the Jews to reflect, since this befell a fortified city, what would become of other cities which had no means of defense. He asks in astonishment, "What does it mean that every person leaves his house and flies to the house-top for the purpose of saving his life?" Among the Jews the form of house-tops was different from what is now customary with us, and hence arose that saying of Christ,

"What you have heard in the ear proclaim on the housetops." (Matthew 10:27.)

When the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled to the house-tops, they left their houses open to be a prey to enemies, and this was a proof that they were exceedingly afraid. It is likewise possible that they went up to the house-tops for the purpose of throwing down javelins and other weapons against the enemies, whose arrival not only terrified them, but made them flee in consternation, and yet they did not escape danger.

2. *Thou that art full of noises.* He means that it was exceedingly populous; for where great multitudes of people are brought together, noise abounds; and therefore, amidst so crowded a population, there was less cause of fear. In order to make the representation still more striking, Isaiah has therefore

added this circumstance, that instead of being, as they ought to have been, walls and bulwarks to defend the city, when there was no scarcity of men, they ignominiously turned their backs on the enemies, and fled to the tops of their houses. By these words he urges the Jews more strongly to consider the judgment of God; for when such overwhelming fear has seized the hearts of men, it is certain that God has struck them with trembling; as if he had said, "How comes it that you have not greater firmness to resist? It is because God pursues and chases you."

These statements are taken from the writings of Moses, from which, as we have frequently remarked, the prophets borrow their instructions, but with this difference, that what Moses spoke in general terms they apply to the matter in hand.

"The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and shalt flee seven ways before them. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart."
(Deuteronomy 28:25, 28.)

He reproaches the Jews for their distressed condition, and with good reason; for it was proper to press the accusation more closely home, that they might learn to ascribe to their sins and transgressions all the afflictions and sufferings that they endured. The Lord had promised that he would continually assist them; and when they are now left destitute, let them acknowledge that they do not deserve such assistance, and that God has cast them off on account of their rebelliousness. The Lord does not deceive or make false promises, but by their own fault those wretched persons have shut themselves out from his aid and favor; and this is still more strongly expressed by the question, *What hast thou here?* It means that God gave practical evidence that Jerusalem had been deprived of her protector and guardian; for this mode of expression denotes something strange and extraordinary.

Thy slain men are not slain by the sword. To exhibit still more clearly the vengeance of God, he affirms that they who were slain there did not die bravely in battle. Thus he shews that all that they wanted was manly courage; for a timid and cowardly heart was a sure proof that they had all been forsaken by the Lord, by whose assistance they would have bravely and manfully resisted. He therefore does not mean that the defeat would be accompanied by shame and disgrace, but ascribes it to the wrath of God that they had not courage to resist; and unquestionably by this circumstance he beats down their foolish pride.

3. *All thy rulers are fled together.* This verse has been interpreted in various ways. The fact is abundantly plain, but there is some difficulty about the words. As מ (*mem*) signifies *before* and *more than*, some explain מרחוק (*mĕrāchōk*) [345] to mean, "They fled before others, though they were situated in the most distant parts of the country, and were in greater danger."

[345] Rendered in the English version, "from afar."

Others render it, "Although they were at a great distance from Jerusalem, still they did not cease to flee like men who are seized with terror, and never stop in their flight, because they continually think that the enemy is at their heels."

But a more natural interpretation appears to me to be. *They have fled from afar;* that is, "they who have resorted to Jerusalem as a safe retreat will be seized by enemies and vanquished;" for Jerusalem might be regarded as the general protection of the whole of Judea, and therefore, when a war broke out, the inhabitants rushed to it from every quarter. While they looked upon their habitation in Jerusalem as safe, they were taken prisoners. Others suppose it to refer to the siege of Sennacherib. (2 Kings 18:13; 2 Chronicles 32:1.) But I cannot be persuaded to expound the passage in this manner, for he speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem. When it was besieged by Sennacherib, the Lord immediately delivered it; none were taken or made prisoners, and there was no slaughter of men. These events therefore happened long after the death of the Prophet, and sacred history relates them, and informs us that in that destruction even the rulers betook themselves to flight; but they derived no advantage from their flight, nor did Jerusalem afford them any defense, for they fell into the hands of their enemies.

When he expressly mentions the *rulers*, this shews more strongly the shamefulness of the transaction, for they ought to have been the first to expose their persons for the safety of the people. They might be viewed as the shields which ought to have guarded and defended the common people. So long as Jerusalem kept its ground and was in a prosperous condition, these statements might be thought incredible, for it was a very strong and powerfully fortified city. But they chiefly boasted of the protection of God, for they thought that in some way God was bound to his "Temple;" and their pride swelled them with the confident hope that, though all should be leagued against it, no power and no armies could bring it down. (Jeremiah 7:4.) This prophecy might therefore be thought very strange, that they would have no courage, that they would betake themselves to flight, and that even in that manner they could not escape.

4. *Therefore I said.* Here the Prophet, in order to affect more deeply the hearts of the Jews, assumes the character of a mourner, and not only so, but bitterly bewails the distressed condition of the Church of God. This passage must not be explained in the same manner as some former passages, in which he described the grief and sorrow of foreign nations; but he speaks of the fallen condition of the Church of which he is a member, and therefore he sincerely bewails it, and invites others by his example to join in the lamentation. What has befallen the Church ought to affect us in the same manner as if it had befallen each of us individually; for otherwise what would become of that passage? "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." (Psalm 69:9.)

I will be bitter in my weeping. [346] He does not mourn in secret, or without witnesses; first, because he wishes, as I have already said, to excite others by his example to lamentation, and not to lamentation only, but much more to repentance, that they may ward off the dreadful judgment of God against them, which was close at hand, and henceforth may refrain from provoking his displeasure; and secondly, because it was proper that the herald of God's wrath should actually make evident that what he utters is not mockery.

Because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people. That he expresses the feelings of his own heart may be inferred from what he now declares, that he is bitterly grieved "on account of the daughter of his people." Being one of the family of Abraham, he thought that this distress affected his own condition, and intimates that he has good grounds for lamentation. By a customary mode of expression he calls the assembly of his people a *daughter.* Hence it ought to be observed, that whenever the Church is afflicted, the example of the Prophet ought to move us to be touched (συμπαθείᾳ) with compassion, if we are not harder than iron; for we are altogether unworthy of being reckoned in the number of the children of God, and added to the holy Church, if we do not dedicate ourselves, and all that we have, to the Church, in such a manner that we are not separate from it in any respect. Thus, when in the present day the Church is afflicted by so many and so various calamities, and innumerable souls are perishing, which Christ redeemed with his own blood, we must be barbarous and savage if we are not touched with any grief. And especially the ministers of the word ought to be moved by this feeling of grief, because, being appointed to keep watch and to look at a distance, they ought also to groan when they perceive the tokens of approaching ruin.

The circumstance of his weeping publicly tended, as we have said, to soften the hearts of the people; for he had to deal with obstinate men, who could not easily be induced to lament. There is a passage that closely resembles it in Jeremiah, who bewails the miserable and wasted condition of the people, and says, that through grief "his heart fainteth," [347] (Jeremiah 4:31;) and in another passage, "O that my head were full of waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might bewail the slain of my people!" (Jeremiah 9:1.) When the prophets saw that they labored in vain to subdue the obstinacy of the people, they could not avoid being altogether overwhelmed by grief and sorrow. They therefore endeavored, by their moving addresses, to soften hard hearts, that they might bend them, if it were at all possible, and bring them back to the right path.

5. *It is a day of trouble.* He again declares that the Lord is the author of this calamity, and that the Jews may not gaze around in all directions, or wonder that their enemies prevail against them, he pronounces that they are fighting against God. Though this doctrine is frequently taught in Scripture,

[346] "I will weep bitterly. (Heb. I will be bitter in weeping.)" — Eng. Ver.

[347] "My soul is wearied because of murderers." — Eng. Ver. See our Author's view of that passage in his Commentary on Jeremiah, vol. 1 p. 249

still it is not superfluous, and cannot be so earnestly inculcated as not to be forgotten when we come to practice. The consequence is, that we are not humbled in the presence of our Judge, and that we direct our eyes to outward remedies rather than to God, who alone could cure our distresses. He employs the word *day*, as is usual in Scripture, to signify an appointed time; for when God winks at the transgressions of men, he appears to make some abatement of the claims of his rank, which, however, he may be said to receive back again at the proper and appointed time.

In the valley of vision. It is not without good reason that he again calls it "the valley of vision," for the Jews believed that they would be protected against every calamitous event, because the Lord shone on them by the word. But having ungratefully rejected his instruction, they vainly trusted that it would be of avail to them; and indeed the Lord punishes the unbelief of men, not only out of the Church, but within the Church itself; and not only so, but he begins his chastisement at the Church, so that we must not abuse the gifts of God, or vainly glory in his name. (1 Peter 4:17.)

And crying to the mountain. [348] This may refer either to God or to the Babylonians, or even to the exiles themselves. Conquerors raise a cry for the sake of increasing terror, and the vanquished either utter what is fitted to awaken compassion, or give vent to their grief by lamentation. The singular number may be taken for the plural, or rather it denotes that part of the city in which the temple was situated. Both meanings will agree well with the context, and it makes little difference whether we say that the enemies cried to Mount Zion, in order to encourage each other, or that, while they were destroying and plundering the city, a cry was heard in the neighboring mountains, or that the citizens themselves caused their lamentations to resound to the mountains which surrounded the plain of Judea. [349]

6. *But Elam carrying the quiver.* Here commentators think that the discourse proceeds without any interruption, and that he makes known to the Jews the same judgment which he formerly proclaimed. But when I examine the whole matter more closely, I am constrained to differ from them. I think that the Prophet reproaches the Jews for their obstinacy and rebellion, because, though the Lord had chastised them, they did not repent, and that he relates the history of a past transaction, in order to remind them how utterly they had failed to derive advantage from the Lord's chastisements. Such then is the manner in which these statements ought to be separated from what came before. First, he foretold those things which would come on the Jews, and now he shews how justly they are punished, and how richly they deserve those sharp chastisements which the Lord inflicts on them; for the Lord had formerly called them to repentance, not only by words, but by deeds, and yet no reformation of life followed, though their riches were exhausted, and the kingdom weakened, but they obstinately

[348] "To the mountains." — Eng. Ver.

[349] "La plaine du Jordain;" — "The plain of the Jordan."

persisted in their wickedness. Nothing therefore remained but that the Lord should miserably destroy them, since they were obstinate and refractory.

The copulative ו (*vau*) I have translated *But*, which is the meaning that it frequently bears. Those who think that the Prophet threatens for a future period, preserve its ordinary meaning, as if the Prophet, after having mentioned God, named the executioners of his vengeance. But I have already given the exposition which I prefer, and the context will make it still more clear, that I had good reasons for being of that opinion.

When he speaks of the "Elamites" and the "Cyrenaeans," this applies better, I think, to the Assyrians than to the Babylonians; for although those nations had never make war against the Jews by troops under their own command, yet it is probable that they were in the pay of the Assyrian king, and that they formed part of his army while he was besieging Jerusalem. We have already remarked that, taking a part for the whole, by the "Elamites" are meant the eastern nations.

And Kir making bare the shield [350] By *Kir* he undoubtedly means the inhabitants of Cyrenaica. [351] Because they were (πελτασταὶ) shieldsmen, he says that they "laid bare the shield;" for when they enter the field of battle, they draw the shields out of their sheaths.

7. *And the choice of the valleys* [352] *was full of chariots.* I do not find fault with the translation given by some interpreters, "in a chariot of horsemen," but I have chosen rather to translate literally the words of the Prophet; for I think that he means "a military chariot." At that time they made use of two kinds of chariots, one for carrying baggage, and another for the field of battle. Here he means those chariots in which the horsemen rode.

Had it been a threatening, it would have been proper to translate it in the future tense, "And it shall be;" but as the words which immediately follow are in the past tense, and as there is reason to believe that the Prophet is relating events which have already taken place, I have not hesitated to make this beginning agree with what follows. "The choice of the valleys" means "the choicest valleys." He reminds the Jews of those straits to which they were reduced when the enemies were at their gates. They ought at that time to have sought help from God; but those wretched people became more strongly alienated from God, and more shamefully manifested their rebellion, which shewed them to be men utterly abandoned, and therefore he reproaches them with this hardened obstinacy.

8. *And he took away the covering of Judah.* He shews in what distress of mind the Jews were when they were so closely besieged. Some refer this verb to God, and others to the enemy; but I rather think it ought to

350 "And Kir uncovered (Heb. made naked) the shield." — Eng. Ver.

351 "Kir is now agreed to be identical with K , the name of a river rising in the Caucasus, and emptying into the Caspian Sea, from which Georgia (Girgistan) is supposed to derive its name. Kir was subject to Assyria in the time of Isaiah, as appears from the fact that it was one of the regions to which the exiles of the ten tribes were transported. It may here be put for Media, as Elam is for Persia." — Alexander

352 "Thy choicest valleys, (Heb. the choice of thy valleys.)" — Eng. Ver.

be taken indefinitely, for by a mode of expression frequently used in the Hebrew language, "he took away," means that "the covering of Judah was taken away." By the word *covering* almost all think that either the Temple or God himself is meant, in whose name the Jews falsely boasted. But I interpret it more simply as denoting the armory, in which, as a secret place, they kept the instruments of war. He calls it a "covering," because they were not exposed to public view, but were concealed in a more sacred place. In short, he describes what commonly happens in a season of great alarm, because at such a time men run to arms, and the instruments of war, which had been formerly concealed, are brought forward.

And thou didst look in that day to the armory of the house of the forest. This latter clause agrees with what has been remarked, that they sought out, on such an occasion, every place which contained the means of arming themselves for a case of extreme urgency, the instruments of war having lain long concealed during peace. Sacred history informs us, that this "house of the forest" was built by Solomon, in order to contain the armory of the whole kingdom. [353] (1 Kings 7:2.) The change of person, *thou didst look*, does not obscure the meaning, but rather confirms what I have already remarked, that the Prophet relates how eagerly the Jews at that time made every preparation for defending the city.

9. *And you have seen the breaches.* He proceeds with his narrative, for during prosperity and peace no one cares about bulwarks or instruments of war. It is necessity alone that arouses men and makes them active; peace and quietness make us indolent and cowardly. So long as they thought that they were far from danger, they disregarded the breaches of the wall; but when a report of war arose, they began to be anxious about them, and to make arrangements for preventing the entrance of the enemy.

Of the city of David. By "the city of David," he means the interior part of the city; for, like many other cities which we see, the city was divided into two parts. The whole of Jerusalem was surrounded by walls and ramparts; but the interior part was more strongly fortified, and was called "the city of David." The Temple was afterwards fortified, in consequence of which the city might be said to consist of three parts. Isaiah means that the Jews had nearly despaired as to the safety of the whole city, when they withdrew to the inmost and best fortified part of it; and indeed it is evident from sacred history, that everything was in a desperate condition. Hence also we may infer, that the prophecies were not collected in a regular order, and that those who drew them up in one volume paid no attention to the arrangement of dates.

The waters of the lower pool. He adds, that water was collected for nec-

[353] "The name of 'the house of the forest' was given to it, because it was constructed of 'cedars' taken from the forest of Lebanon, and because it rested on four rows of fifteen large pillars of cedar. When the inhabitants of Jerusalem heard of the invasion by the Assyrian army, they looked to this armory to draw from it arms for defending the city." — Rosenmüller. "It was built by Solomon within the city as a cool retreat; and here he laid up his choicest armory. 1 Kings 7:2, 10:17. See Nehemiah 3:19." — Stock

essary purposes, that the besieged might not be in want of it, and that the pool served for cisterns.

10. *And you numbered the houses of Jerusalem.* He means that the city was closely examined on all sides, that there might not be a house or building which was not defended. Others think that the houses were numbered, that they might have a supply of watchmen. But the former interpretation is preferable, and is confirmed by what the Prophet afterwards adds, that the houses were thrown down for the purpose of rebuilding the walls of the city. This is commonly neglected in the time of peace, and the houses of private individuals are often built on the very walls, and, on that account, must be thrown down in the time of war, to supply the means of fighting and of repelling the enemy, and also lest, by means of houses so near the wall, secret communications with the enemy should be maintained.

11. *You made also a ditch.* The first clause of this verse relates to the former subjects; for he means that they were reduced to the last necessity, and that the great approaching danger struck them with terror, so that they adopted every method in their power for defending themselves against the enemy.

And you have not looked to its maker. This second clause reproves them for carelessness, because they had given their whole attention to earthly assistance, and had neglected that which is of the greatest importance. Instead of resorting first of all to God, as they ought to have done, they forgot and despised him, and directed their attention to ramparts, and ditches, and walls, and other preparations of war; but their highest defense was in God. What I said at first is now more evident, that the Prophet does not foretell the destruction of the Jews, but declares what they have experienced, in order to shew how justly the Lord was angry with them, because they could not be amended or reformed by any chastisement. The alarming dangers to which they were exposed ought to have warned them against their impiety and contempt of God; but those dangers have made them still more obstinate. Though there is hardly any person so obstinate as not to be induced by adversity, and especially by imminent dangers, to bethink himself, and to consider if they have justly befallen him, if he has offended God and provoked his wrath against himself; yet the Prophet says, that there was not one of the Jews who remembered God in the midst of such distresses, and that therefore God justly ceased to take any concern about them.

Hence infer that it is a token of extreme and desperate wickedness, when men, after having received chastisements or afflictions, are not made better. We ought, first, to follow God and to render to him cheerful obedience; and secondly, when we have been practically warned and chastised, we ought to repent. And if stripes do us no good, what remains but that the Lord shall increase and double the strokes, and cause us to feel them heavier and heavier till we are hurled down to destruction? For it is vain to apply remedies to a desperate and incurable disease. This doctrine is highly applicable to our

own times, in which so many strokes and afflictions urge us to repentance. Since there is no repentance, what remains but that the Lord shall try to the very utmost what can be done until he destroy us altogether?

To its maker. By these words he indirectly acknowledges that God does not blame our eagerness to repel the enemy and to guard against dangers; but that he blames the vain confidence which we place in outward defences. We ought to have begun with God; and when we disregard him, and resort to swords and spears, to bulwarks and fortifications, our excessive eagerness is justly condemned as treason. Let us therefore learn to flee to God in imminent dangers, and to betake ourselves, with our whole heart, to the sure refuge of his name. (Proverbs 18:10.) When this has been done, it will be lawful for us to use the remedies which he puts into our hand; but all will end in our ruin if we do not first commit our safety to his protection.

He calls God the *maker* and *fashioner* of Jerusalem, because there he had his dwelling, and wished that men should call upon him. (1 Kings 9:3.) As Jerusalem was a lively image of the Church, this title belongs also to us, for in a peculiar manner God is called the Builder of the Church. (Psalm 132:13, 14.) Though this may relate to the creation of the whole world, yet the second creation, by which he raises up from death, (Ephesians 2:1,) regenerates, and sanctifies us, (Psalms 110:3,) is peculiar to the elect, the rest have no share in it. This title does not express a sudden but a continual act, for the Church was not at once created that it might afterwards be forsaken, but the Lord preserves and defends it to the last. "Thou wilt not despise the work of thy hands," says the Psalmist. (Psalms 138:8.) And Paul says,

"He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it till the day of Christ." (Philippians 1:6.)

This title contains astonishing consolation, for if God is the maker, we have no reason to fear if we depend on his power and goodness. But we cannot *look to* him unless we are endued with true humility and confidence, so that, being divested of all haughtiness and reduced to nothing, we ascribe the glory to him alone. This cannot be, unless we can also trust that our salvation is in his hand, and are fully convinced that we shall never perish, even though we be surrounded by a thousand deaths. It was an aggravation of their baseness, that the Lord's election of that city, which had been established by so many proofs, could not arouse the Jews to rely on the protection of God. As if he had said, What madness is it to think of defending the city when you despise him who made it!

From a distance, or *long ago.* The Hebrew word denotes either distance of place or length of time. If we refer it to place, the meaning will be, that the Jews are doubly ungrateful, because they have not beheld the Lord even at a distance. Here it ought to be observed, that we ought to look to God not only when he is near, but also when he appears to be at a very great distance from us. Now, we think that he is absent, when we do not perceive

his present aid, and when he does not instantly supply our wants. In short, he shews what is the nature of true hope; for it is a carnal and gross looking at God, when we do not perceive his providence unless by visible favor, since we ought to ascend above the heavens themselves. Strictly and truly, no doubt, the Lord is always present, but he is said to be distant and absent with respect to us. This must be understood therefore to refer to our senses, and not to the fact itself; and therefore, although he appear to be at a distance during those calamities which the Church endures, still we ought to elevate our minds towards him, and arouse our hearts, and shake off our indolence, that we may call on him.

But the other meaning is equally admissible, that they did not look to God who created his Church, not yesterday or lately, but long ago, and who had proved himself to be her Maker during many ages. He is therefore called the ancient Maker of his Church, because if the Jews will apply their thoughts and careful search to the long succession of ages, they will perceive that he is the perpetual preserver of his workmanship; and this makes their ingratitude the less excusable.

12. *And the Lord of hosts called.* The wicked obstinacy of the people is exhibited by the Prophet with additional aggravations. What left them altogether without excuse was the fact, that while they were exposed to so great dangers, they despised the godly remonstrances of the prophets, and rejected the grace of God, when he wished to heal and restore them. It is a proof of consummate depravity, when men have so completely laid aside all feeling that they fearlessly despise both instruction and chastisements, and obstinately "kick against the pricks," (Acts 9:5,) and this makes it evident that they have been "given over to a reprobate mind." (Romans 1:28.)

When he says, that "the Lord called" them, this may be explained in two ways; for although the Lord does not speak, still he calls loudly enough by stripes and chastisements. Let it be supposed that we are destitute of all Scripture, of prophets, teachers, and advisers, still he instructs us by distresses and afflictions, so that we may state, in a few words, that every chastisement is a *call* to repentance. But, unquestionably, the Prophet intended to express something more, namely, that in despising godly warnings, they did not scruple to treat with scorn God's fatherly invitation.

In that day. There is great weight also in mentioning *the day* of affliction, when danger threatened them, for they were admonished at the same time by the word and by strokes. The signs of God's anger were visible, the prophets uttered incessant cries, and still they became no better.

To baldness and girding with sackcloth. When he mentions *sackcloth* and *baldness*, [354] he employs the signs themselves to describe repentance; for repentance does not consist in sackcloth or haircloth, [355] or anything outward, but has its place in the heart. Those who sincerely repent are displeased

[354] "Le sac et l'arrachement des cheveux;" — "Sackcloth and pulling out the hair."
[355] "En sac ou cendre;" — "In sackcloth or ashes."

with themselves, hate sin, and are affected with such a deep feeling of grief, that they abhor themselves and their past life; but as this cannot be done without, at the same time, making itself known by confession before men, on this account he describes the outward signs by which we give evidence of our conversion. Now, these things were at that time cast away among the Jews, when they made public declarations of repentance. The Prophet therefore means that they were called to repentance, to humble themselves before God, and to exhibit the evidences of repentance before men. Of themselves, indeed, the signs would not be sufficient, for repentance begins at the heart; and Joel gives warning to that effect,

"Rend your hearts, and not your garments." (Joel 2:13.)

Not that he wished signs to be laid aside, but he shewed that they are not sufficient, and that of themselves they are not acceptable to God.

Hence infer what is our duty, when the tokens of God's anger are visible to us. We ought to declare publicly our repentance, not only before God, but also before men. The outward ceremonies, indeed, are of little consequence, and we are not commanded to wear sackcloth or to pull out our hair; but we must practice honestly and sincerely what is actually meant by these signs, disapprobation and confession of our guilt, humility of the heart, and reformation of the life. If we do not confess that we are guilty, and that we deserve punishment, we shall not return to a state of favor with God. In short, as culprits allow their beards to grow, and wear tattered clothes, in order to affect the hearts of the judges, so we ought to betake ourselves as suppliants to the mercy of God, and make a public declaration of our repentance.

But here we ought also to observe the usefulness of outward signs of repentance; for they serve as spurs to prompt us more to know and abhor sin. In this way, so far as they are spurs, they may be called causes of repentance; and so far as they are evidences, they may be called effects. They are causes, because the marks of our guilt, which we carry about us, excite us the more to acknowledge ourselves to be sinners and guilty; and they are effects, because, if they were not preceded by repentance, we would never be induced to perform them sincerely.

13. *And, behold, joy and gladness.* The Prophet does not here find fault with *joy* viewed in itself; for we see that Paul exhorts the godly to true joy, the "joy" which is "in the Lord," (Philippians 4:4;) but now he censures the joy which is opposite to that sadness which commonly springs from repentance, of which Paul also speaks. (2 Corinthians 7:10.) No man can be under the influence of repentance and of a sincere feeling of the wrath of God, without being led, by the grief which accompanies it, willingly to afflict himself. The joy which is opposite to this grief is therefore sinful, because it proceeds from brutish indifference, and is justly blamed, since the Lord curses it. (Luke 6:25.)

Slaying oxen and killing sheep. From what has been said, it is easy to

see the reason why he censures them for "slaying oxen and killing sheep." These things are not in themselves sinful, and are not displeasing to God; but as fasting is a part of a solemn declaration of repentance, which we make before men, so to slay cattle for feasting, when we ought to fast, is a proof of obstinacy and contempt of God; for in this way men despise God's threatenings, and encourage themselves in their crimes.

Such is the statement which Isaiah intended to make in general terms. But it is absurd in the Papists to think of drawing from it an approbation of abstinence from eating flesh. Why do they not also include what the Apostle adds about wine? They are so far from abstaining from the use of wine, that they freely indulge in drinking it, as a compensation for the want of flesh. But let us pass over these absurdities. Isaiah does not absolutely condemn the use of flesh or the drinking of wine, but he condemns the luxury and wantonness by which men are hardened in such a manner that they obstinately set aside God's threatenings, and treat as false all that the prophets tell them.

This ought to be carefully observed, for we do not always wear sackcloth and ashes; but we cannot have true repentance without making it manifest by the fruits which it must unavoidably produce. In short, as he had described repentance by its signs, so he marks out obstinacy by its signs; for as by fasting and other outward acts we testify our repentance, so by feasting and luxury we give proofs of an obstinate heart, and thus provoke more the wrath of God, in a similar manner to what we read about the days of Noah. (Genesis 6:5; Matthew 24:38, 39; Luke 17:27.) After having described intemperance and luxury in general terms, he particularly mentions eating and drinking, in which the Jews indulged to such an extent as if they had been able, in some measure, to combat the wrath of God, and to obliterate the remembrance of his threatening.

For to-morrow we shall die. This clause shews plainly enough why the Prophet complained so loudly about eating flesh and drinking wine. It was because all the threatenings uttered by the prophets were turned by them into a subject of jesting and laughter. It is supposed that Paul quotes this passage, when, in writing to the Corinthians, he uses nearly the same words. (1 Corinthians 15:32.) But I am of a different opinion; for he quotes the opinion of the Epicureans, who lived for the passing day, and gave themselves no concern about eternal life, and therefore thought that they should follow their natural disposition, and enjoy pleasures as long as life lasted. Isaiah, on the other hand, relates here the speeches of wicked men, who obstinately ridiculed the threatenings of the prophets, and could not patiently endure to be told about chastisements, banishment, slaughter, and ruin. They employed the words of the prophets, and in the midst of their feasting and revelry, turned them into ridicule, saying, in a boasting strain, "*To-morrow we shall die.* If the prophets tell us that our destruction is at hand, let us pass the present day, at least, in cheerfulness and mirth."

Thus, obstinate minds cannot be struck with any terror, but, on the contrary, mock at God and the prophets, and give themselves up more freely to licentiousness. It certainly was frightful madness when, through indignation and wrath, they quoted with bitter irony the words which not only ought to have affected their minds, but ought to have shaken heaven and earth. Would that there were not instances of the same kind in the present day! For whenever God threatens, the greater part of men either vomit out their bitterness, or sneeringly ridicule everything that has proceeded from God's holy mouth.

14. *This is revealed.* [356] As if he had said, "Do you think that you can escape punishment for your wantonness, when God calls you to repentance?" It might be thought that here the Prophet says nothing that is new; for undoubtedly all things are known to God. But he adds this for the purpose of shaking off the indolence of men, who never would rise so fiercely against God, if they did not think that they could deceive him; for whosoever knows that God is his witness, must also acknowledge that God is his judge. Hence it follows that wicked men, in their wantonness, rob God of his power; and therefore it is not without reason that they are summoned to his tribunal, that they may know that they must render an account to him.

If this iniquity shall be forgiven you till you die. He adds a dreadful threatening, that this wickedness shall never be forgiven. In the Hebrew language, the conditional particle, *if*, contains a denial, as if the Lord had said, "Do not think that I am true, or that I have any divine perfections, *if* I do not take vengeance on so great wickedness." The reason why the Jews, in their oaths, reserve something which is not expressed, is to accustom us to deeper reverence in this matter; for we entreat God to be our Judge and avenger if we speak falsely, and therefore we ought to restrain ourselves, so as not to make oaths at random. Here Isaiah states generally, that nothing is so displeasing to God as impenitence, by which, as Paul says, (Romans 2:5,) we "heap up for ourselves the treasures of God's wrath," and shut out all hope of pardon.

15. *Thus saith the Lord.* This is a special prediction against a single individual; for, having spoken of the whole nation, he turns to Shebna, whom he will afterwards mention. (Isaiah 37:2.) To this person the Prophet gives two titles, that of "scribe" or "chancellor," and that of "steward of the house," for while in this passage he calls him "steward," in the thirty-seventh chapter he calls him "scribe." This has led some to think that, at the time of this prediction, he had resigned his office as steward, and that Eliakim was put in his room. But this is uncertain, though the words of the Prophet, in reference to Shebna himself, lead us to conclude that he cherished wicked

[356] Rosenmüller, who is followed in this instance by Stock and Alexander, renders this clause, "Jehovah was revealed in my ears," remarking that נגלה (niglah) must here be taken for a reflective verb, and quoting as parallel passages, 1 Samuel 2:27, 3:21, in the former of which instead of the literal rendering, ``Revealing was I revealed?'' our translators say, ``Did I plainly appear?'' while in the latter they make נגלה (niglah) a reflective verb, ``The Lord revealed himself.'' --- Ed

envy, which led him to attempt to degrade Eliakim from his rank. Nor is it improbable that this prediction was uttered, when Sennacherib's army was discomfited, and Jerusalem was saved in a miraculous manner. (2 Kings 19:35; Isaiah 37:36.) During the interval, many things might have happened which are now unknown to us; and it is not improbable that this treacherous scoundrel, having obtained the highest authority, made an unjust use of it to the injury of Eliakim. It is evident, from the history of the Book of Kings, that Shebna was a "scribe" or "secretary," and one of high rank, such as we now call chancellor.

There is greater difficulty about the word סכן, (*sōchēn.*) Some think that it means "treasurer," because סכן (*sāchăn*) signifies *to store up*; but, as he elsewhere calls him "chancellor," I think it is not probable that he was treasurer. Besides, the Prophet shews plainly enough that his office as governor was such as allowed others to have scarcely any share of authority along with him. Such a rank could not belong to a treasurer, and therefore I think that the Prophet means something else. As סכן (*sāchăn*) sometimes signifies "to abet," and "to foment," סכן (*sōchēn*) may here mean "an abettor," or, as we commonly say, "an accomplice." It is certain that this Shebna had communications with the enemy, and was a cunning and deceitful person; for he cherished a concealed friendship with the Egyptians and Assyrians, and held treacherous communications with them, so as to provide for his own safety in any event that might arise, and to maintain his authority.

Others think that סכן (*sōchēn*) is a word denoting the country to which he belonged, and that he was called a Sochnite from the city of which he was a native; for he is said to have been an Egyptian. I certainly do not reject that opinion, but I prefer the former; for he *abetted* both sides, and thought that, by his cunning, he would be preserved, even though everything should be turned upside down.

The particle הזה, (*hăzzēh,*) *this*, is evidently added in contempt. It is as if he had said, "*That* cunning man, ready for all shifts, (πανοῦργος,) who abets various parties, who curries favor on all sides." In this sense סכן (*sōchēn*) is used (1 Kings 1:2) when it relates to a maid who was about to be brought to the aged king in order to *cherish* him. Yet, if it be thought preferable to understand it as meaning a hurtful and injurious person, I do not object, for the word signifies also "to impoverish."

16. *What hast thou here?* Shebna had built a sepulcher at Jerusalem, as if he were to live there continually, and to die there. The Prophet therefore asks why he built a splendid and costly sepulcher in a lofty and conspicuous place, as is commonly done by those who wish to perpetuate the memory of their name in the world. He appears to glance at the ambition of a foreigner and a stranger in longing to be so magnificently buried out of his country, and yet eagerly joining with enemies for the destruction of Judea. What could have been more foolish than to erect a monument in that country for whose ruin he was plotting? And therefore he adds —

17. *Behold, the Lord will carry thee away.* As if he had said, "Thou shalt be cast out of that place into a distant country, where thou shalt die ignominiously." גבר (*gĕbĕr*) is commonly translated as in the genitive case; that is, "with the casting out of a man thou shalt be cast out." Again, גבר (*gĕbĕr*) denotes not an ordinary man, but a strong and brave man, and thus it comes to mean, "with a mighty and powerful casting out." Others render it in the vocative case, "O man!" as if he were addressing Shebna in mockery, "O illustrious man, who so proudly vauntest of thy greatness, who thinkest that thou art some hero!" But the former reading will be more appropriate. Yet here also commentators disagree; for, besides the exposition which I have mentioned, another is brought forward, that *men* will be carried to a greater distance than women. But I rather think that he alludes to the pride of Shebna, who had built so splendid a sepulcher, in order that his memory, like that of some distinguished man, might be handed down to posterity. "Thou wishest to be renowned after thy death: I will ennoble thee in a different manner. By a remarkable transportation will I remove thee to a foreign and distant country, where thou shalt be buried in an extraordinary manner."

First, on the word סכן (*sōchēn*) it is proper to remark how much God is displeased with a false and deceitful heart; for there is nothing which God more earnestly recommends to us than simplicity. He is called a ruler, because, being placed above others, he was likely to be dazzled by the luster of his present greatness, as happens to those who, elated and puffed up by their success, dread no adversity, as if they had been placed beyond the reach of all danger. The Lord threatens that he will be the judge of such persons. Here it also deserves notice, that Isaiah could not, without making himself the object of strong dislike, utter this prediction, especially when addressed to a man of such an elevated station and so haughty; and yet he must not refuse this office, but must approach and threaten this man, as God had commanded him.

As to the *sepulcher*, we know that solicitude about burying the dead is not wholly condemned; for although "the want of burial," as one remarks, "is of little importance, yet the desire of being buried is natural to man, and ought not to be entirely disregarded." He does not blame him, therefore, for wishing to be buried, but for his ambition in building a tomb, by which he shewed his eagerness to obtain vain and empty renown. But there is another circumstance connected with Shebna that must be observed; for, having wished to deliver the city into the hands of the Assyrians by treachery, he thought that he would reign permanently. He hoped that the Assyrians, if they were successful, would bestow on him the government of the kingdom as the reward of his treachery, and that, if they were defeated, he would permanently retain his rank and authority.

But this will appear more clearly from the words themselves, *What hast thou here?* He was a foreigner, and as such he could honestly become united

to the people of God; but, being a traitor and a foreigner, he had no right to that city or country which the Lord had specially assigned to his own people. Isaiah therefore asks, "Of what country art thou? Though thou hast no connection with the people of God by blood or relationship, dost thou wish not only to reign in this country during thy life, but to procure for thyself a settled abode in it after thou art dead? Wilt thou betray us to the Assyrians, and drive out the actual possessors, that thou, who art a foreigner, mayest enjoy that country, of which not even an inch belongs to thee?"

Hence infer that God is highly displeased with that ambition by which men endeavor to obtain undying renown in the world, instead of being satisfied with those honors which they enjoy during their life. They wish to be applauded after death, and in some measure to live in the mouth of men; and although death sets aside everything, they foolishly hope that their name will last through all ages. But God punishes their haughtiness and presumption, and causes those things which they wished to be the records of their glory to become their disgrace and shame. Either their memory is abhorred, so that men cannot see or hear anything connected with them without utter loathing, or he does not even permit them to be laid in their graves, but sends them to gibbets and to ravens, of which we read many instances in history, (Esther 7:10,) and we have seen not a few in our own times.

Whenever I read this passage, I am forcibly reminded of a similar instance, resembling it indeed more closely than any other, that of Thomas More, who held the same office as Shebna; for it is well known that he was Lord Chancellor to the king of England. Having been a very bitter enemy of the gospel, and having persecuted good men by fire and sword, he wished that on this account his reputation should be extensive, and his wickedness and cruelty permanently recorded. He therefore ordered the praises of his virtue to be inscribed on a tomb which he had caused to be built with great cost and splendor, and sent his epitaph, which he had drawn up, to Basle, to Erasmus, along with a palfrey which he gave him as a present, to get it printed. He was so desirous of renown, that he wished to obtain during his life the reputation and praises which he hoped to enjoy after his death. Among other applauses the most conspicuous was, that he had been a very great persecutor of the Lutherans, that is, of the godly. [357] What happened? He was accused of treason, condemned, and beheaded; and thus he had a gibbet for his tomb. Do we ask more manifest judgments of God, by which he punishes the pride, the unbounded eagerness for renown, and the blasphemous vaunting, of wicked men? In this inveterate enemy of the people of God, not less than in Shebna, we ought undoubtedly to acknowledge and adore God's overruling providence.

Another circumstance worthy of notice is, that this Shebna was a foreigner. Thus, all the tyrants and enemies of the people of God, though they be

[357] "C'est à dire, des enfans de Dieu;" — "That is, of the children of God."

foreigners, would wish to cast out the actual lords of the soil, that they alone might possess the land; but at length the Lord drives them out, and strips them of all possession, so that they do not even continue to have a tomb. [358] There are innumerable instances in history. True, this does not always happen; but the instances which the Lord holds out to us, ought to lead our thoughts farther to consider his judgments against tyrants and wicked men, who wished to be applauded and celebrated, but are distinguished by some remarkable kind of death, so that their infamy becomes universally known. Thus, the renown of that sepulcher which Shebna had built is indirectly contrasted with the ignominy which quickly followed it.

18. *Turning he will turn thee.* [359] Isaiah continues the same discourse, in which he ridiculed the pride of Shebna, who had bestowed so much cost on building a sepulcher. This statement is connected with the first clause of the former verse; for, as he formerly said "He will remove thee by an extraordinary removal," so he now says, "He will toss thee as a ball into an open plain." By this comparison he means that nothing will prevent the Lord from casting him out into a distant country, though he thinks that his power is firmly established; and since he had been so careful about his sepulcher, and had given orders about it, as if he had been certain as to his death, Isaiah declares that he will not die in Jerusalem, but in a foreign country, to which he shall be banished.

The chariot of thy glory. Under the word *chariot* he includes all the fame and rank of Shebna; as if he had said that disgrace would be his reputation among foreigners. Thus, the Lord ridicules the mad ambition of those who look at nothing but the world, and who judge of their happiness by the glory of fading and transitory objects.

The shame of thy lord's house. He calls it "the shame of" the royal "house," either because he had polluted that holy place which might be regarded as the sanctuary of the Lord, or because Hezekiah had judged ill in elevating him to that station. That the mask of his high rank might not screen him from this prediction, the Prophet expressly states, that the office which he holds aggravates his guilt and renders him more detestable. Let princes, therefore, if they do not wish to expose themselves and their houses to reproaches, learn to act with judgment in appointing men to hold office.

19. *And I will cast thee out.* He says nothing new, but concludes the former prediction. Though in the next verse he will again mention Shebna, yet now he gives a brief summary of what has been already said. Shebna thought that he had a fixed abode in Jerusalem, so that, whatever might happen, he thought that he could not be driven or removed from it. But the Lord threatens that he will cast him out, and will banish him to a distant country. Thus, the Lord frequently overturns the thoughts of the wicked, (Psalm 33:10,) who, relying on their cunning and dexterity, toss about public

[358] "Tellement qu'ils n'ont pas mesme un pied de terre pour estre interrez;" — "So that they have not even a foot of earth for a grave."

[359] "He will surely violently turn." — Eng. Ver.

affairs according to their own pleasure. The change of person shews that the Prophet speaks sometimes in his own name, and sometimes in the name of God.

20. *And it shall come to pass in that day.* It is uncertain at what time Eliakim was substituted in the room of Shebna; for we shall see, in the thirty-seventh chapter, that Eliakim was steward of the king's house when Shebna was chancellor. Whether or not any change took place during the interval cannot with certainty be affirmed; yet it is probable, as I lately hinted, that through the stratagems of this wicked man, Eliakim was afterwards driven from his office, and that Shebna, after having triumphed, was punished for his frauds which had been detected, and, having been driven or banished from Judea, fled to the Assyrians, and there received the reward of his treachery. In like manner does it frequently happen to traitors, who, when they cannot fulfill their engagements, are hated and abhorred by those whom they have deceived; for, having been bold and rash in promising, they must be discovered to be false and treacherous.

The Jews allege that at last he was torn in pieces on account of his treachery, but no history supports that statement. Leaving that matter doubtful, it is certain that he was cast out or banished, and that he ended his days in a foreign country, and not at Jerusalem. It is probable that, after his banishment, Eliakim was again placed in his room.

I will call. It is certain that all princes and magistrates are called by the Lord, even though they be wicked and ungodly; for "all authority is from God," as Paul affirms. (Romans 13:1.) But here the Prophet speaks of a peculiar *calling*, by which the Lord manifests his goodness towards his people, when he appoints such persons to be his servants, that it may be known that God governs by them; and they, on the other hand, are well aware of the purpose for which they have been appointed by God, and faithfully discharge the office assigned to them. Shebna had indeed been *called* for a time, but it was that he might be God's scourge; for nothing was farther from his thoughts than to obey God. Eliakim was a different kind of person; for he acknowledged himself to be a servant of God, and obeyed the holy calling.

I will call, means, therefore, "I will give a sign to my servant, that he may know that it is I who have raised him to that honorable rank." There is in this case a peculiar relation between the master and the servant, which does not apply to ungodly men when they obey their own inclination and wicked passions; but this man acknowledged the Lord and sincerely obeyed him. Lastly, this mark distinguishes the true servant of God from a wicked and hypocritical person, who had risen to honor by wicked practices.

21. *And I will clothe him.* He now explains more fully what he had briefly noticed in the former verse, that it was only by the purpose of God that Shebna was deposed, in order that Eliakim might succeed him. It is true, indeed, that all the changes that happen in the world are directed by the providence of God; for he "girds kings with a girdle," as we are told in

the book of Job, "and ungirds them, according to his pleasure." (Job 12:18.) A witty saying was at one time current about the Roman emperors, "that they were theatrical kings;" because, as players, who perform their parts in the theater, no sooner have laid aside the rank of a king, than they presently become poor mechanics; so the emperors, after having been thrown down from their lofty station, were speedily hurried to a disgraceful punishment. And yet it is certain that those insurrections did not take place by chance, or merely through the designs of men, or by military forces, but by the purpose of God, which directed the whole. But the Prophet declares, that there is this peculiarity in the case of Shebna, that his deposition will be a clear proof of the vengeance of God, and that the restoration of Eliakim will be regarded as a lawful form of government.

With thy robes and with thy girdle. By the *robes* and *girdle* are meant the badges of the magistrates' office. The *girdle* was an emblem of royalty, and the chief magistrates undoubtedly wore it as an honorable distinction. At Rome, also, the prætors wore this badge. Job says, that God ungirds kings when he deprives them of their royal rank. (Job 12:18.) These things were foretold by the Prophet, that all might not only see clearly in this instance the providence of God, and acknowledge his purpose, but might perceive that this wicked man, who had raised himself improperly and by unlawful methods, was justly deposed.

He shall be Father. Wicked magistrates are indeed appointed by God, but it is in his anger, and because we do not deserve to be placed under his government. He gives a loose rein to tyrants and wicked men, in order to punish our ingratitude, as if he had forsaken or ceased to govern us. But when good magistrates rule, we see God, as it were, near us, and governing us by means of those whom he hath appointed. The Prophet means that Eliakim will perform the part of a father, because he has been endued with the Spirit of God. At the same time he reminds all godly persons that they will have good reasons for wishing the government of Eliakim, because it tends to the general advantage of the Church.

By the appellation *father*, he shews what is the duty of a good magistrate. The same thing has been taught by heathen writers, that "a good king holds the place of a father;" and when they wished to flatter those who crushed the commonwealth by the exercise of tyranny, nature suggested to them to call the tyrants by the honorable title of "fathers of their country." In like manner, philosophers, when they say that a family is the picture of a kingdom, shew that a king ought to hold the place of a father. This is also proved by the ancient titles given to kings, such as "Abimelech," (Genesis 20:2, 8,) that is, "my father the king," and others of the same kind, which shew that royal authority cannot be separated from the feelings of a father. Those who wish to be regarded as lawful princes, and to prove that they are God's servants, must therefore shew that they are fathers to their people.

22. *And the key of the house of David.* [360] This expression is metaphorical, and we need not spend much time, as some do, in drawing from it an allegorical meaning; for it is taken from an ordinary custom of men. The keys of the house are delivered to those who are appointed to be stewards, that they may have the full power of opening and shutting according to their own pleasure. By "the house of David" is meant "the royal house." This mode of expression was customary among the people, because it had been promised to David that his kingdom would be for ever. (2 Samuel 7:13; Psalm 132:11, 12.) That is the reason why the kingdom was commonly called "the house of David."

The key is put in the singular number for *keys.* Though "keys" are usually carried in the hands, yet he says that they are laid on the shoulders, [361] because he is describing an important charge. Yet nothing more is meant than that the charge and the whole government of the house are committed to him, that he may regulate everything according to his pleasure; and we know that the delivering of keys is commonly regarded as a token of possession.

Some commentators have viewed this passage as referring to Christ, but improperly; for the Prophet draws a comparison between two men, Shebna and Eliakim. Shebna shall be deprived of his office, and Eliakim shall succeed him. What has this to do with Christ? For Eliakim was not a type of Christ, and the Prophet does not here describe any hidden mystery, but borrows a comparison from the ordinary practice of men, as if the keys were delivered to one who has been appointed to be steward, as has been already said. For the same reason Christ calls the office of teaching the word, (Matthew 16:19,) "the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" so that it is idle and foolish to spend much time in endeavoring to find a hidden reason, when the matter is plain, and needs no ingenuity. The reason is, that ministers, by the preaching of the word, open the entrance into heaven, and lead to Christ, who alone is "the way." (John 14:6.) By *the keys*, therefore, he means here the government of the king's house, because the principal charge of it would be delivered to Eliakim at the proper time.

23. *And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place.* The particle of comparison must here be supplied, and therefore I have inserted in the text the word *as.* By נאמן, (*nĕĕmān,*) *faithful*, he means what is "firm and sure." The original idea of the word is "truth;" for where "truth" is, there firm-

[360] "As the robe and the baldric, mentioned in the preceding verse, were the ensigns of power and authority, so likewise was the key the mark of office, either sacred or civil." — Lowth

[361] "To comprehend how the key could be borne on the shoulder, it will be necessary to say somewhat of the form of it; but, without entering into a long disquisition, and a great deal of obscure learning, concerning the locks and keys of the ancients, it will be sufficient to observe, that one sort of keys, and that probably the most ancient, was of considerable magnitude, and, as to the shape, very much bent and crooked. Homer, Odyss. 21:6, describes the key of Ulysses's store-house as , of a large curvature; which Eustathius explains by saying it was , in shape like a reap-hook. The curve part was introduced into the key-hole, and, being properly directed by the handle, took hold of the bolts within, and moved them from their places. We may easily collect from this account, that such a key would lie very well upon the shoulder; that it must be of some considerable size and weight, and could hardly be commodiously carried otherwise. Ulysses's key was of brass, and the handle of ivory; but this was a royal key; the more common ones were probably of wood." — Lowth

ness and certainty are found; [362] and therefore Hebrew writers employ the word "truth" to denote what is firm and certain. Isaiah employs an elegant metaphor, from which godly magistrates, who are few in number, ought to draw large consolation. They may conclude that not only has God raised them to that honorable rank, but they are confirmed and established, as if they had been *fixed* by his hand. And indeed, where the fear of the Lord dwells, there the stability, and power, and authority of kings, as Solomon says, are established by justice and judgment. (Proverbs 16:12; 25:5; 29:14.)

This consolation ought to be of advantage to princes, not only that they may meet all danger courageously, but likewise that they may firmly and resolutely proceed in their office, and not turn aside on any account, or shrink from any danger. But there are very few who can actually relish this doctrine. Almost all are like Jeroboam, (1 Kings 12:28,) and think that religion should yield to them, and, so far as they imagine, that it will be of service to them, follow it, or rather bend and change it for their own convenience. Their last thought is about God and religion; and we need not wonder if they are always in doubt about their own affairs, and are scarcely ever at rest; for they do not direct their thoughts to him from whom all authority proceeds. (Romans 13:1.) Hence springs treachery, hence springs cruelty, covetousness, violence, and frauds and wrongs of every kind, in which the princes of the present day indulge with less restraint and with greater impudence than all others. Yet there are some in whom we see what is here said of Eliakim. The Lord guards and upholds them, and blesses that regard to equity and justice which he had bestowed upon them. If the Lord permits even tyrants for a time, because they have some appearance of regular government, what shall happen when a prince shall endeavor, to the utmost of his power, to defend justice and judgment, and the true worship of God? Will he not be still more confirmed and established by him who is the continual guardian of righteousness?

24. *And they shall hang upon him.* It is as if he had said that Eliakim would be fully qualified for discharging his duties, and would not be indolent in his office. Hence we infer that God does not exalt princes to honor, in order that they may live in indolence or gratify their own passions. The office of a prince is very labourious, if he discharges it properly, and if he do not copy the unmeaning countenances of those who imagine that they have been raised to that honor, that they may live in splendor and may freely indulge in every kind of luxury. If a prince wish to discharge his office in a proper manner, he must endure much toil. It must not be thought that the comparison of a *nail* is inapplicable to princely government, since it denotes an office full of activity and cares; and we know that metaphors do not apply at all points, but we ought to observe the purpose for which they are introduced.

[362] "Ce mot est deduit de verité, laquelle est tousjours accompagnee de fermeté et asseurance;" — "This word is derived from truth, which is always accompanied by firmness and certainty."

All the glory of his father's house, [363] *the grandchildren and great-grandchildren.* [364] The expression, "his father's house," leaves no room to doubt that Eliakim was of royal blood; and therefore by his successors I understand not only those who were nearly related to him, but the whole family of David. He will have the charge of all that shall be in the king's house. By adding *grandchildren*, he likewise shews that this princely government will be of long duration, that it will not only last during the life of one individual, but will also extend to his successors. [365] For good princes are useful not only to their own age, but also to posterity, to whom they leave good laws, salutary regulations, and the traces of good government; so that their successors, even though they be wicked men, are ashamed to give themselves up all at once to abandoned wickedness, and, even against their will, are compelled through shame to retain something that is good. He shews that this will be the case with Eliakim, whose government will be so righteous that even posterity shall reap advantage from it.

The smaller vessels. [366] Metaphorically it denotes that there will be uniform justice, or equal laws, as the phrase is; and it is as if he had said, "He will not only support the nobles, but will likewise attend to the interests of the lowest rank." The more rarely this is found in a prince, so much higher praise does he deserve than if he favored none but the rich and powerful; for these can guard and protect themselves, but the poor and feeble lie open as a prey to the attacks of others, and there is hardly any one that pleads their cause.

To all vessels of music. [367] By *vessels* the Hebrew writers denote instruments of all kinds, and the meaning is very extensive. When he speaks of *musical* [368] vessels, he follows out what he had said in a single word; for it

[363] "In ancient times, and in the eastern countries, as the way of life, so the houses were much more simple than ours at present. They had not that quantity and variety of furniture, nor those accommodations of all sorts with which we abound. It was convenient and even necessary for them, and it made an essential part in the building of a house, to furnish the inside of the several apartments with sets of spikes, nails, or large pegs, upon which to dispose of, and hang up, the several moveables and utensils in common use, and proper to the apartment. These spikes they worked into the walls at the first erection of them — the walls being of such materials that they could not bear their being driven in afterwards; and they were contrived so as to strengthen the walls, by binding the parts together, as well as to serve for convenience. Sir John Chardin's account of this matter is this, 'They do not drive with a hammer the nails that are put into the eastern walls; the walls are too hard, being of brick; or if they are of clay, too mouldering; but they fix them in the brick-work as they are building. They are large nails with square heads like dice, well-made, the ends being so bent as to make them cramp-irons. They commonly place them at the windows and doors, in order to hang upon them, when they like, veils and curtains.' (Harmer, Obser. 1 p. 191.) And we may add, that they were put in other places too, in order to hang up other things of various kinds; as it appears from this place of Isaiah, and from Ezekiel 15:3, who speaks of a pin, or nail, to hang any vessel thereon." — Lowth

[364] "The offspring and the issue." — Eng. Ver.

[365] "Mais s'estendra jusqu' a ceux qui viendront long temps apres;" "But will extend to those who shall live long afterwards."

[366] "Here follow the names of utensils hung up in an eastern house, concerning which we must needs be uncertain. The meaning of the whole figure is, Eliakim shall be the support of all ranks in the state, of the meanest people as well as the highest." — Stock

[367] "Even to all the vessels of flagons, (or, instruments of violins.)" — Eng. Ver.

[368] "The old interpretation of נבלים (nĕbūlīm) as denoting musical instruments," says Professor Alexander, ``though justified by usage, is forbidden by the context.''

serves to explain the word קטן, (*kātān,*) *little*; as if he had said that there would be nothing so small, or minute, or insignificant, that he would not take charge of it.

25. *In that day.* It might be thought that this is inconsistent with what he had formerly said; but he no longer speaks of Eliakim, for he returns to Shebna, who was about to be cast down from his rank, as Isaiah had said. But for this, it might have been thought that there was no way by which Eliakim could arrive at that honor, but by the deposition of Shebna, who had arranged his matters so well, that no person thought it possible that he could be driven from his position. Yet though he has fortified himself by many defences, and thinks that he is at a great distance from all danger, still he shall be deprived of his office, and Eliakim shall be placed in his room.

In a sure place. When he calls it "a sure place," this must be understood with respect to men; for men judge that what is defended on all sides will be of long duration; but God casts it down with the smallest breath. It was only by way of concession that he called it "a sure place." Hence it ought to be inferred how foolishly men boast, and rely on their greatness, when they have been exalted to a high rank of honor; for in a very short time they may be cast down and deprived of all honor.

And the burden that was upon it shall be cut off. When wicked men are ruined, all who relied on their authority must also be ruined; and indeed it is in the highest degree reasonable that they who were united by the same bond of crimes, and who aided this wicked man as far as lay in their power, should share in the same punishment. It is difficult for those who place themselves under the protection of wicked men, and employ all their influence in behalf of them, not to be also partakers of their crimes; and if they were guiltless of crime, (which seldom, or rather, we may say, never happens,) still they are justly punished on this ground, that they have placed their trust on them as a very sure defense, and have depended wholly on their will and authority.

Chapter 23

CHAPTER 23

Isaiah Chapter 23:1-18

1. The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.

1. Onus Tyri. Ululate, naves Tharsis; quia devastatio facta est, ut non sit domus, non sit commeatus e terra Cittim. Revelatum est hoc eis.

2. Be still, ye inhabitatnts of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.

2. Tacete incolæ insularum: negotiator Sidonis, trajicientes mare, qui te replebant.

3. And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations.

3. In aquis multis semen Nili, messis fluminis fruges ejus; et fuit emporium gentium.

4. Be thou ashamed, O Zidon; for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins.

4. Erubesce, Sidon; quia dixit mare, fortitudo maris, dicens, Non parturivi, neque peperi, neque educavi adolescentes, neque extuli virgines.

5. As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.

5. Simul atque rumor pervenerit ad Ægyptios, dolebunt secundum rumorem Tyri.

6. Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle.

6. Transite in Tharsis; ululate, habitatores insularum.

7 Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? Her own

feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.

7. An hæc vobis exultans? a diebus antiquis vetustas ejus. Ducent eam pedes ejus, ut peregrinetur in terram longinquam.

8. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?

8. Quis cosultavit hoc super Tyrum coronantem? cujus negotiatores sunt Principes, cujus institores nobiles terræ?

9. The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.

9. Iehova exercituum ita decrevit ad profanandam superbiam omnium magnificorum, ut vilipendat omnes gloriosos terræ.

10. Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength.

10. Transi instar fluminis e terra tua ad filiam Tharsis, quia non amplius cingulum.

11. He stretched out his hand over the sea; he shook the kingdoms: the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant-city, to destroy the strongholds thereof.

11. Manum suam posuit super mare, concussit regna. Iehova mandavit super Canaan ut enervet robur ejus.

12. And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest.

12. Et ait, Non adjicies ultra ut exultes, ubi oppressa fueris, virgo filia Sidon. Surge, ut transeas in Cittim. Atqui etiam illic non erit tibi requies.

13. Behold the land of the Chaldeans: this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he brought it to ruin.

13. Ecce terra Chaldæorum, hic non fuit populus, Assur fundavit eam deserti incolis; erexerunt arces ejus; excitarunt palatia ejus; redegit eam in vastitatem.

14. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.

14. Ululate, naves Tharsis; quia vastata est fortitudo vestra.

15. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

15. Accidet in die illa, ut sit in oblivione Tyrus septuaginta annis, secundum dies regis unius; a fine septuaginta annorum erit Tyro quasi canticum meretricis.

16. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.

16. Sume citharam, circui urbem, meretrix oblivioni tradita, suavem fac melodiam, multiplica carmen, ut in memoriam revoceris.

17. And it shall come to pass, after the end of seventy years, that the Lord

will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

17. Erit ergo a fine septuaginta annorum, ut visitet Iehova Tyrum; et tunc redibit ad mercedem suam, fornicabiturque cum omnibus regnis terræ quæ sunt super terram.

18. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

18. Sed (tandem) erit negotiatio ejus et merces ejus sancta Iehovæ; non reponetur neque recondetur; sed negotiatio ejus (addicta) erit iis qui habitabant coram Iehovæ, ut comedant ad satietatem, et habeant densum operimentum.

1. *The burden of Tyre. Tyre* was very wealthy, and highly celebrated, both on account of the variety and extent of its commercial intercourse with all nations, and on account of the flourishing colonies which sprang from it: Carthage, which was the rival of the Roman Empire, Utica, Leptis, Cadiz, and other towns, which also sent every year a present to Tyre, by which they acknowledged that they looked on Tyre as their mother. Isaiah threatens its destruction, because it had been hostile to the people of God, as we may infer from what is said by Ezekiel; for we ought carefully to attend to the cause of the destruction, because it was the design of the Prophet to shew that God testifies his fatherly regard to his people by opposing all her enemies. (Ezekiel 26:2.) Some think that this refers to the storming of Tyre by Alexander, who took it with great difficulty. But the argument on which they rely, that Isaiah mentions *Chittim*, [369] has little force. By that name the Hebrew writers unquestionably denote the Macedonians, but under this word they likewise include other nations, such as the Greeks, and the countries that were beyond the sea. Nebuchadnezzar employed in that siege not only his own soldiers, but also foreigners, whom he brought from Greece and other places. It is for a reason altogether different, as we shall immediately see, that he mentions the Greeks, namely, that henceforth they will not take their ships to Tyre for the sake of carrying on merchandise.

But from the conclusion of this chapter I draw an argument for a contrary opinion, for Isaiah speaks of the restoration of Tyre, and it was never restored after having been stormed by Alexander. Besides, when I compare Ezekiel's words with those of Isaiah, I think that I see one and the same prediction. Now, he does not speak of Alexander, but of Nebuchadnezzar; and I cannot doubt that it must be explained in that manner. Not only so, but in the days of Ezekiel and Isaiah that city was under the dominion of a king, but historians relate that, when it was stormed by Alexander, it had been brought to the form of a republic. And if we consider the object of the

[369] A slight change of spelling makes it necessary to remind the reader of the English Bible, that the "Chittim" were the descendants of Kittim, (Genesis 10:4,) a son of Javan, and grandson of Japheth. — Ed.

prophecy, we shall be sufficiently confirmed in this opinion, for his aim is to comfort the Jews by threatening that the inhabitants of Tyre, by whom they had been oppressed, will not pass unpunished. For it would have been highly inconsistent that the Lord should punish other nations, and that this nation, which had been not less hostile, should escape punishment altogether, or be punished five hundred years afterwards. Every conjecture, therefore, leads us to this conclusion, that we should expound this passage as relating to Nebuchadnezzar.

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish. He employs various figures of speech, according to his custom, in illustrating the ruin of Tyre, in order to obtain greater credit to the prediction; for a plain narrative would have been ineffectual, or would not have exerted a powerful influence on minds naturally dull and sluggish, and therefore he sets before their eyes a lively portrait. This calamity, he declares, will be very grievous, because it will be felt even in distant countries. He bids the "ships howl," because, when Tyre has been destroyed, they will have nothing to do. The ships of the Cilicians are particularly mentioned by him, because, being neighbors, they traded often and extensively with the inhabitants of Tyre; and Cilicia is called by the Hebrews "Tarshish." It was impossible that there should not have arisen great inconvenience to that country at the destruction of Tyre; not only because commerce ceased for a time, but also because the articles of merchandise were carried off, and there was a disturbance of commercial relations [370] as usually happens when the fortunes of rich men have been overthrown.

That there may be no entering in from the land of Chittim. What I have translated "that there maybe no entering in," is explained by some to signify, that there may be no house "into which you can enter," but I think that I have faithfully conveyed the Prophet's meaning. And yet he does not mean that the Cilicians or the Greeks will be hindered from entering, but that they will not hold intercourse with Tyre as they were formerly accustomed to do, because it will not be, as formerly, a mart of nations.

Those who think that the Prophet speaks of the defeat accomplished by Alexander, separate this clause of the verse "from the land of Chittim" from what goes before, and connect it thus, "from the land of Chittim it was revealed to them." But, on the contrary, I join it differently in this way, "From not going from the land of Chittim;" that is, that the Greeks may no more enter as they were formerly accustomed to do. By the word "Chittim," he means both the Greeks and the western nations; as if he had said "There will be an end put to commerce with the Greeks, so that they will no longer take their ships thither." Under this designation he includes also the inhabitants of Cyprus, [371] Sicily, and Italy, and other nations.

This was revealed to them. These words may be understood to refer both to the Greeks and to the inhabitants of Tyre. If they refer to the inhabitants

[370] "Et les papiers des marchans espars çà et là;" — "And the merchants' accounts scattered hither and thither."

[371] "Les Egyptiens;" — "The Egyptians."

of Tyre, the meaning will be, "When the report of the ruin of the city shall reach them, they will put an end to their wonted voyages, for they will avoid that harbour as they would avoid a rock;" and this is the meaning which I more readily adopt. Yet I do not reject the other interpretation, that the Prophet confirms his prediction, as we commonly speak of a thing that is certain, "Let this be regarded as addressed to you."

2. *Be silent, ye inhabitants of the islands.* This is intended to place in a more striking light the ruin of Tyre. There is a change of number in the word *island;* for although he uses the singular number, yet he means the islands of the Mediterranean sea, and the countries beyond the sea, especially the neighbors who frequently performed voyages to Tyre, and traded with it. He enjoins on them silence and stillness, because they will perform no more voyages to Tyre. He bids them "be silent" like persons who are stunned, on account of the grievous calamity which has befallen them, so that they do not even venture to open their mouth; for it was impossible that the nations who traded there should not feel it to be a heavy stroke, when a mercantile city like this was ruined, just as at the present day Venice or Antwerp could not be destroyed without inflicting great injury on many nations.

The merchants of Sidon. He mentions the inhabitants of *Sidon* in an especial manner, not only on account of their vicinity, but because they had a common origin. *Sidon* was highly celebrated, but greatly inferior to Tyre. Situated on the sea-shore, it was two hundred furlongs [372] distant from Tyre, and appeared both to be so near it, and to be so closely connected with it by trade, that the poets frequently took Tyre for Sidon, and Sidon for Tyre. The Sidonians, therefore, were unquestionably greater gainers than others by imports and exports, and also by sales and merchandise, in consequence of being so near, and trading with it continually; for the wealth of Tyre overflowed on them, and, as the saying is, they flew under its wings. The result was, that they suffered more severely than others by the destruction of Tyre, and therefore the Prophet afterwards says, (verse 4,) *Be ashamed, O Sidon.*

Who replenished thee. He adds this general expression, either because it was filled with crowds and multitudes of men, when strangers flocked to it from various and distant countries, or because they who performed voyages to it for the sake of gain did, in their turn, enrich the city.

3. *And by great waters.* He intimates that the riches of Tyre will not prevent it from being destroyed; and therefore he extols its wealth, in order that the judgment of God may be more manifest, and that all may know that it was no ordinary calamity that befel it; and the more unexpected it was, the more evidently would it appear to be the work of God.

[372] The Roman stadium or furlong = 125 paces = 625 feet. A Roman mile = 1000 paces = 5000 feet. An English mile = 1760 yards = 5280 feet. Therefore a Roman mile is to an English mile as 5000 to 5280, or as 125 to 132; and the number of English miles is to that of Roman miles in the inverse ratio of 132 to 125; so that 200 stadia = 25 Roman miles = somewhat less than 24 English miles. It ought to be remembered, that the author does not profess to state the exact distance, but gives it in round numbers. — Ed

The seed of the Nile. [373] By an elegant expression he describes the wealth of Tyre; for since the Nile supplied it with wheat and other necessaries of life, and since a great quantity of corn was brought to it out of Egypt, he says that it had fields and *sowing* on the course of the Nile, just as the inhabitants of Venice say that their harvest is on the sea, because they have nothing that grows at home, but all that is necessary for food is brought to them by commerce. The Prophet speaks of the inhabitants of Tyre in the same manner; for it might be thought incredible that they whom the Nile so freely and abundantly supplied should be in want of food. He shews that this will be a vain boast, because they will be in want of all things; and these things, as we have already said, are described by Isaiah, that all may more fully acknowledge the avenging hand of God.

4. *Be thou ashamed, O Sidon; for the sea hath spoken.* This verse is added for the purpose of heightening the picture. We have explained the reason why he speaks particularly of Sidon. He calls Tyre, by way of eminence, (κατ ᾽ ἐξοχὴν,) *the sea*, as if she reigned alone in the midst of the sea.

I have not travailed. These words are immediately added, and belong (μιμητικῶς) to a fictitious address put into the mouth of Tyre, in which the Prophet wittily taunts the inhabitants of Tyre, who boasted of her colonies; for she "brought forth" other illustrious cities. "In ancient times," says Pliny, "she was famous for the cities which she built, Leptis, Utica, and that rival of the Roman empire, Carthage, which aspired to govern the whole world, besides Cadiz, which was built beyond the limits of the world. Her whole superiority now consists of scarlet and purple." (Plin. Hist. Nat., lib. v. c. 19.) Thus, Isaiah represents Tyre as bewailing her ancient glory, because she has ceased to be a mother, and because it is of no avail to her that she has brought forth so many children, and founded so many cities; for at an early period Carthage sent regularly every year a present to Tyre, for the purpose of doing homage to her as the mother. In this manner Tyre appeared to hold a higher rank than all other cities, since even Carthage, though a rival of the Roman empire, was in some respect subject to Tyre: but the Lord stripped her of all her ornaments in a moment, so that she bewailed her bereavement, as if she had never brought up any children.

5. *As soon as the report shall reach the Egyptians.* [374] In this verse he declares that this destruction will affect equally the inhabitants of Tyre and those of Egypt; and this confirms the exposition which we follow, that the present prophecy relates to a former devastation. The inhabitants of Tyre had been in alliance with the Egyptians, and both countries had been under kingly government; not as in Alexander's time, when Tyre was a free state,

[373] "The seed of Sihor." — Eng. Ver. שחר, (shīchōr,) and יאור, (yēōr,) are the Hebrew and Egyptian names of the Nile. The first, according to its etymology, means black, and corresponds to Μέλας and Melo, of Greek and Latin names of the same river, all derived from the color of the water, or the mud which it deposits." --- Alexander

[374] "As at the report concerning Egypt." — Eng. Ver. Luther's version runs thus:— "Gleichwie man erschrak, da man von Egyptian hörete; also wird man auch erschrecken, wenn man von Tyrus hören wird;" — "Like as they were terrified when they heard of Egypt; so will they also be terrified when they shall hear of Tyre." — Ed

and lived under its own laws. The alliance which existed between the inhabitants of Tyre and those of Egypt could not have been more appropriately described; and therefore he shews that this ruin extends also to the Egyptians, because they prompted the Jews to rebellion, and turned them aside from confidence in God. The former were open enemies; the latter, under the pretense of friendship, cherished dangerous hostility; and therefore both are justly punished.

6. *Pass ye over to Tarshish.* He addresses not only the inhabitants of Tyre, but foreigners who were connected with them by trading, and bids them go elsewhere and seek new harbours: and he mentions Cilicia, which was opposite to Tyre, as if he had said, "That shore, which was wont to be well supplied with harbours, will henceforth be forsaken, so that ships will sail in a very different direction;" for when a harbour or a mercantile city has been ruined, merchants commonly go in search of another.

Howl, ye inhabitants of the island. [375] "Island," as we have formerly explained, is here put for "islands;" for the change of number is very customary with Hebrew writers. He foretells that they will lament, because their support depended entirely on that traffic, and because their accounts and reckonings [376] were scattered about in all directions.

7. *Is this your exulting city?* The Prophet mocks at Tyre, and ridicules her pride, because she boasted of the antiquity of her name. He likewise confirms what all would suppose to be incredible; for this prediction was undoubtedly laughed at, seeing that the power of Tyre was unshaken, and her wealth was like a wall of brass. So much the more confidently does Isaiah speak, and threaten that her ruin is certain, and that, though she be more ancient than other cities, and though she be universally applauded on that ground, still this will not prevent her from being destroyed. The origin of Tyre is traced in profane history from time almost out of mind, and is so obscure and intricate, that hardly anything can be ascertained; though they allege that it was founded by the Phenicians, as those who boast of the fame of antiquity call themselves natives of the soil. With this antiquity the Prophet contrasts banishment, intimating that, when God had determined to inflict punishment on that nation, her stability would be at an end.

Her feet shall carry her, to travel into a distant country. To follow wherever "the feet carry," is nothing else than to have long wanderings. Yet he also means that they will be deprived of their wealth, and will be in want of all things during their banishment, so that they will not have a conveyance of any kind, or a beast to carry them. Banishment is a very hard condition, when poverty is added to it; for it may be more easily endured where there are the means of supporting life; but when men must dwell in unknown countries in the deepest poverty, the misery is extreme. He adds the finishing stroke to their miseries by saying, that they must "travel into a distant

[375] "Tyre at this time was seated on an island; after Alexander's conquest it was rebuilt on the continent." — Stock

[376] "Leurs registres et papiers de comtes;" — "Their records and account-books."

country;" for the greater the distance, the harder is the banishment.

8. *Against crowning Tyre.* He adorns with this title the city which enriched many, as may be easily learned from the context; for when he calls her merchants "kings," he plainly states that by the word *crown* he intended to express metaphorically the magnificence of kings. This refutes the opinion of those who refer it to other cities. The general meaning is, that she enriches her citizens as if she made them kings and princes.

Some think that the Prophet added this verse, as if he were assuming the character of one who is astonished at the destruction of Tyre, in order to strike others with amazement; as if he had said, "Is it possible that Tyre should be so speedily overthrown, where riches, and troops, and defences, and fortifications, are so abundant, and where there is so much pomp and magnificence?" and as if he suddenly stopped, as we are wont to do, when anything unexpected has occurred. But it is better to connect it with the following verse, which removes every difficulty; for in that verse the Prophet himself immediately answers his own question, by which he intended to arouse the minds of his hearers to closer attention. He might have simply said, that these things were done by the purpose of the Lord; but we are sluggish, and stupid men would have treated them with contempt. By this question, therefore, he arouses their minds, that all may know that he is not speaking about an ordinary event, and that they may consider it more carefully; for the farther the judgments of God are removed from the ordinary opinions of men, so much the more ought they to excite our astonishment.

He formerly spoke in the same manner about Egypt, when he intended to shew that the destruction of it could not be reckoned one of the ordinary changes. (Isaiah 19:1-25.) Since therefore it was incredible that Tyre could be overthrown by man, the Prophet justly infers that God is the author of its ruin. On this account he calls her the mother or nurse of kings, that he may place in a more striking light the glory of the divine judgment; for if it had been any ordinary state, its fall would have been viewed with contempt; but when it was adorned with the highest rank, who would think that this happened in any other way than by the purpose of God?

Whose merchants are princes. [377] In like manner the merchants of Venice in the present day think that they are on a level with princes, and that they

[377] "The trade carried on by the Phoenicians of Sidon and Tyre," says an able historian, "was extensive and adventurous; and both in their manners and policy, they resemble the great commercial states of modern times, more than any people in the ancient world." After mentioning the navigation to Tyre as the earliest route of communication with India, he goes on to say, "To this circumstance, which, for a considerable time, secured to them a monopoly of that trade, was owing, not only the extraordinary wealth of individuals, which rendered the 'merchants of Tyre, princes and her traffickers the honorable of the earth,' (Isaiah 23:8,) but the extensive power of the state itself, which first taught men to conceive what vast resources a commercial people possess, and what great exertions they are capable of making." He adds in a note, "The power and opulence of Tyre, in the prosperous age of its commerce, must have attracted general attention. In the prophecies of Ezekiel, who flourished two hundred and sixty years before the fall of Tyre, there is the most particular account of the nature and variety of its commercial transactions that is to be found in any ancient writer; and which conveys, at the same time, a magnificent idea of the extensive power of that state." — Robertson's Historical Disquisition concerning the Knowledge which the Ancients had of India

are above all other men except kings; and even the factors look on men of rank as beneath them. I have been told, too, that at Antwerp there are factors who do not hesitate to lay out expenses which the wealthiest of the nobility could not support. We are wont to put questions, when no reply can be given but what we wish; and this is an indication of boldness.

9. *To profane the pride,* or, *to profane the loftiness;* for it may be read either way, because loftiness leads to pride, and where loftiness or a high spirit is found, there seldom is humility. But it will be better to read it *Pride*, which alone provokes the vengeance of God, when men, under pretense of their excellence, vaunt themselves above measure. To "profane" and to "despise" mean the same thing; for those who are high in rank imagine that they are separated from others, and consider themselves to have something indescribably lofty belonging to them, as if they ought not to mingle with the crowd of human beings. But God strips them of their rank, degrades them, and treats them as vile and worthless.

From this passage let us learn, that we ought to contemplate the providence of God in such a manner as to ascribe to his almighty power the praise which it deserves for righteous government. Although the rectitude by which God regulates his judgments is not always apparent or made visible to us, still it is never lawful to separate his wisdom and justice from his power. But as the Scriptures very frequently state and clearly explain the reason why God does this or that, we ought carefully to examine the cause of his works.

That invention which the Schoolmen have introduced, about the absolute power of God, is shocking blasphemy. It is all one as if they said that God is a tyrant who resolves to do what he pleases, not by justice, but through caprice. Their schools are full of such blasphemies, and are not unlike the heathens, who said that God sports with human affairs. But in the school of Christ we are taught that the justice of God shines brightly in his works, of whatever kind they are, "that every mouth may be stopped," (Romans 3:19,) and that glory may be ascribed to him alone.

The Prophet therefore assigns the causes of so great an overthrow, that we may not think that God acts without a reason; for the inhabitants of Tyre were proud, ambitious, lewd, and licentious. These vices follow in the train of wealth and abundance, and commonly abound in mercantile cities. For this reason he shews that God is provoked on account of these vices, that all who are left may be taught by this example to pay greater attention to their own interests, and not to abuse the gifts of God for parade and luxury. Such is the benefit which we ought to draw from it, for we must not imagine that it is a bare history which is related to us.

But a question arises, Does God hate the exalted rank of princes and lords? For he raises on high princes, senators, nobles, and all classes of magistrates and rulers; and how then can he hate them? I reply, the high station occupied by princes is not in itself hateful to God, but only on account of the vice which is accidental to it, that when they have been highly exalted, they

despise others, and do not think that they are men. Thus, pride is almost always an attendant of high station, and therefore God hates it; and, in a word, he must rebuke that haughtiness of which he declares that he is an enemy.

10. *For there is not any longer a girdle.* [378] מזח (*mēzăch*) is translated by some *a girdle*, and by others *strength.* Those who translate it *girdle*, suppose the meaning to be that Tyre will be so completely plundered, that she will not even have a *girdle* left; and that the allusion is to the vast wealth laid out in merchandise, for the poorest of the merchants sell girdles. But I think that Isaiah alludes to the situation of the city, which was protected on all sides by ditches, mounds, ramparts, and the sea.

11. *He stretched out his hand over the sea.* It is thought that the prediction which the Prophet uttered, about the destruction of Tyre, is here confirmed by examples; namely, that the Lord has given so many examples of his power in overturning the greatest kingdoms, that we ought not to think it strange if he now overturn Tyre, however flourishing and wealthy it may be. And indeed this manner of speaking is frequently employed in Scripture, if it be not made plain by manifest examples and by actual demonstration. It is therefore believed that the Prophet here calls to remembrance the deliverance from Egypt, when the Lord divided the sea, (Exodus 14:21,22,) and again, when he drove out seven kings, and brought his people into the land of Canaan. (Joshua 6:1-27; 8:1-35; 10:1-43.) But when I take a closer view of the words of the Prophet, I am more disposed to explain them as referring to the present state of matters; for he speaks here of Tyre, whose riches covered the whole sea.

He shook the kingdoms. What he says about the *kingdoms* is, because she could not perish alone, but must at the same time involve many kingdoms in her ruin. Thus the whole world must have undergone some change, as appears from history; and finally, the Prophet himself draws the conclusion, that the Lord commanded that this mart of nations should be overthrown.

Jehovah hath given commandment concerning Canaan. [379] The word כנען (*chĕnāăn*) has led commentators to think that the Prophet here speaks of the Canaanites, and refers to the proof which God gave of his vengeance against them. But there is little force in that argument; for כנען (*chĕnāăn*) is often taken for a common noun, just as, a little before, (verse 8,) he used the word כנעניה (*chinyāneihā*) to mean *her factors.* The riches of Tyre having consisted of merchandise and trading, Isaiah described it by naming the principal part. By the expression, *hath given commandment*, he extols the providence of God, that the Jews may know that all that appears to be permanent in the world stands and falls according to the will of God, and that there is no need of the instruments of war for overturning the best fortified place, but the mere expression of the will of God is enough.

[378] "There is no more strength." — Eng. Ver. "There is no mound now left." — Stock

[379] "The Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant-city." — Eng. Ver. "Jehovah hath given a charge concerning Canaan." — Stock.

12. *And he said, Thou shalt not add any more to rejoice.* [380] All this belongs to one and the same object; for, since a plain description would not have had sufficient weight, the Prophet confirms his prediction by many words. It was incredible that a city so celebrated and powerful, so well defended and fortified, and associated with many allies and confederates, should be destroyed and overturned. When he says, *Thou shalt not add*, he does not intend to shut out the hope of restoration which he will give soon afterwards; for this threatening ought to be limited to the time of the ruin of Tyre, "Thou shalt not live wantonly, as formerly thou wert wont to do."

O virgin. Metaphorically he calls her *a virgin*, because, previous to that time, the riches of Tyre were untouched, and had suffered no injury. This is not praise of chastity, but a witty manner of saying that the treasures which had been laid up in faithful custody will be violated. "Formerly thou didst skip lightly, like heifers in the bloom of youth; but when thou hast suffered violence, there will be an end of thy mirth;" just as if one should say, that the city of Venice has not lost her virginity because it has not been taken by force since it was built.

Daughter of Sidon. He continues to speak of Tyre, but gives it this name, because it was built by the Sidonians, though the daughter excelled the mother, as frequently happens in human affairs. The convenience and situation of the place gave a superiority to the inhabitants of Tyre, and Sidon became but an appendage. From the book of Kings it is evident enough (1 Kings 5:1) that the monarchy of Tyre had a high reputation, but here the Prophet looked at its origin.

Pass over to Chittim. When he bids them *pass over to Chittim*, he banishes them not only into Cilicia, but into countries still more distant; for under this name he includes Greece, Italy, and other countries; as if he had said, "When thou shalt change thy residence on account of banishment, thou shalt have no settled habitation in neighboring countries; but thou must wander through the whole world, shalt be dragged into unknown countries, and even there thou shalt find no rest." Lastly, he means that the ruin will be so lamentable, that they will not have among neighbors, and, after crossing the sea, they will not have among foreigners, a place of rest.

13. *Behold, the land of the Chaldeans.* He now confirms by an example what he predicted about the taking of Tyre; for those things could scarcely obtain credit, especially among the inhabitants of Tyre, who thought that they were very far from such ruin. I am aware that this passage is explained in various ways, but I shall not spend time in refuting the opinions of others. It will be enough if I shall state, as far as I am able to form a judgment of it, the Prophet's real meaning.

The people of the Chaldeans was not; that is, they had no name; for, if we inquire into their origin, they were descended from the Assyrians, as is evident from Genesis 10:11. He therefore says truly, that they were not at

[380] "And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice." Eng. Ver.

first a nation, but were concealed under the name of another, so that they did not form a separate body.

Ashur founded it for the inhabitants of the wilderness. The words which we have rendered "inhabitants of the wilderness" others translate *ships*, but we do not approve of that exposition. What we at first stated is preferable, namely, that the Assyrians gave a settled condition to the Chaldeans, who formerly led a wandering life in the deserts under skins, [381] but were collected into cities, and trained to higher civilization, by the Assyrians. This is also the meaning of the word עוררו (*gnōrĕrū*,) namely, that they erected and built cities; for we cannot agree with those who render it "to destroy." [382] What happened?

He brought it to ruin. That is, to use a common expression, "The daughter has devoured the mother;" for the Assyrian monarchy was overturned by the Chaldeans, though it was more powerful and flourishing than all the others. It will be said, what has this to do with Tyre? We answer, it is because Tyre will be overthrown by the Assyrians and Chaldeans. Since therefore the Chaldeans, who formerly were no people, could conquer the Assyrians and subject them to their power, why should we wonder if both united should conquer Tyre? Since the Lord gave such a display of his power in the case of the Assyrians, why should Tyre rely on her riches? She will undoubtedly be made to feel the hand of God, and her power will be of no avail to her.

14. *Howl, ye ships of Tarshish.* He repeats what he formerly said; for the Cilicians, on account of their vicinity, constantly traded with the inhabitants of Tyre. He bids their ships *howl*, because, when that harbour is shut up, the merchants will be struck with amazement at not having their ordinary intercourse. He calls that harbour which they visited, *their strength*, not only because it was a place of resort that might be relied on, but because there was no other way in which their voyages could yield profit.

15. *And it shall come to pass in that day.* After having spoken of the taking of Tyre, he next declares how long her calamity shall endure. It happens that cities which have been ruined are suddenly restored, and regain their former position; but the Prophet testifies that this city will be desolate and ruinous for *seventy years*. By *being forgotten* he means that there will be no merchandise, because she will not have the ordinary course of trade.

According to the days of one king. [383] Some think that *the days of one king* relate to David, but that is exceedingly frivolous, for "the days of a king" are put for the age of a man, in the same manner as the age of a man is shewn by the Psalmist to be generally limited to seventy years. (Psalm 90:10.) But

[381] "Sous des tentes de peaux;" — "Under tents of skins."

[382] "They raised up the palaces thereof." — Eng. Ver. "Erected her palaces." — Stock. Professor Alexander renders it, "They have roused up her palaces;" but says, "According to the usual interpretation, the towers mentioned are those used in ancient sieges; the masculine suffix refers to עם, (gnām;) the feminine suffix to Tyre; and עורר (gnōrēr) may be taken either in the sense of raising, (from ערר, gnārăr,) or in that of rousing, (from עור, gnūr,) that is, filling with confusion and alarm."

[383] "That is, of one kingdom. See Daniel 7:17 8:20. Nebuchadnezzar began his conquests in the first year of his reign: from thence to the taking of Babylon by Cyrus are seventy years; at which time the nations conquered by Nebuchadnezzar were to be restored to liberty." — Lowth

why did he mention "a king" rather than any other man? It was because Tyre had a king, and reckoned time by the life of a king. This contributed greatly to establish the certainty of the prediction, for the Prophet could not have ascertained it by human conjectures.

Tyre shall have a song like that of a harlot. By "the song of a harlot" he employs a beautiful comparison to denote merchandise; not that in itself it ought to be condemned, for it is useful and necessary to a commonwealth, but he alludes to the fraud and dishonesty with which it frequently abounds, so that it may justly be compared to the occupation of a harlot.

16. *Take a harp.* He compares Tyre to a harlot, who, after having spent the whole period of her youth in debauchery, has at length grown old, and on that account is forsaken and despised by all, and yet cannot forget her former gain and lewdness, but desires to grow young again and renew her loves, and, in order to attract men, goes about the city, delighting their ears by songs and musical instruments. Such prostitutes are seized with some kind of madness, when they perceive that they are disregarded on account of their old age; and we see that Horace mocks at Lydia on this account. [384] Thus Tyre, after having been ruined, and as it were buried in oblivion, will again put forth her efforts, and schemes, and contrivances, for recovering her former condition.

Make sweet melody. By the "harp" and "sweet melody," he means the tricks, and frauds, and blandishments, and flatteries of merchants, by which they impose on men, and as it were drive them into their nets. In a word, he shews by what methods mercantile cities become rich, that is, by deceitful and unlawful methods; and therefore he says, that Tyre will regale their ears by pleasant melody.

Sing many songs. That is, Tyre will add fraud to fraud, and allurements to allurements, that at length she may attract all to her, may be again remembered by men, and recover her former celebrity. In short, as an old harlot contrives methods for regaining the favor of men, and allures them by painting, and ornaments, and dress, and songs, and musical instruments, so will Tyre recover her wealth and power by the same arts with which she formerly succeeded. And yet he does not on that account exhort Tyre to restore herself in this way, but proceeds with his prophecy.

17. *Jehovah will visit Tyre.* [385] Although the Lord will afflict Tyre in such a manner that she will appear to be ruined, yet he declares that she will

[384] "Que le poete Horace s'est moqué d'une putain nommee Lydia pour la mesme occasion;" — "That the Poet Horace mocked at a prostitute named Lydia for the same reason."

[385] "Tyre, after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, recovered, as is here foretold, its ancient trade, wealth, and grandeur; as it did likewise after a second destruction by Alexander. It became Christian early with the rest of the neighboring countries. St. Paul himself found many Christians there. (Acts 21:4.) It suffered much in the Diocletian persecution. It was an archbishopric under the patriarchate of Jerusalem, with fourteen bishoprics under its jurisdiction. It continued Christian till it was taken by the Saracens in 639; was recovered by the Christians in 1124; but in 1280 was conquered by the Mamalukes, and afterwards taken from them by the Turks in 1516. Since that time it has sunk into utter decay, is now a bare rock, 'a place to spread nets upon,' as the Prophet Ezekiel foretold it should be. (Ezekiel 26:14.) See Sandy's Travels; Vitringa on the place; Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, Dissert. xi." — Lowth

obtain mercy, because, rising at length out of her ruins, she will be restored to her former vigor. Such a restoration is justly ascribed to the favor of God; for otherwise the same thing must have happened to them as Malachi foretells would happen to the Edomites, that the Lord would overturn and destroy all that men would build. (Malachi 1:4.) Consequently they would never have returned to their former condition if the Lord had not aided them.

From these words we ought to draw a profitable doctrine, that though the Lord is a severe judge towards the wicked, yet he leaves room for the exercise of his compassion, and is never so harsh as not to mitigate his chastisements, and at length to put an end to them. And if he is such towards the wicked, what will he be towards those whom he has adopted, and on whom he determines to pour out his goodness? When kingdoms therefore are re-established, when cities are rebuilt, and nations regain their freedom, this is brought about solely by the providence of God, who, whenever he pleases, lays low what is high, (1 Samuel 2:7, Luke 1:52,) and quickly raises up and restores what was fallen.

And then she will return to her hire. This ought to be viewed as a contrast to the former statement, for the meaning is, that Tyre will be no better, and will not be reformed by so severe a chastisement, because she will quickly return to her natural disposition; for he accuses her of ingratitude. We see instances of the same kind every day. There is scarcely a corner of the world in which the Lord has not exhibited proofs of his judgment. To those whom he has chastised he allows time to breathe, but they become no better. Isaiah says that this will happen to Tyre.

She will commit fornication. "She will not repent, but, on the contrary, will return to her former courses. *She will commit fornication*, as she was formerly accustomed to do." He unquestionably speaks of buying and selling, but continues to employ the comparison which he had adopted; not that he wishes to condemn the occupation of a merchant, as we have already said, but that it is so largely mingled with the corruption of men as to resemble closely the life of a harlot; for it is so full of tricks, and hidden stratagems, and deep-laid traps, (as we often see,) that it appears to have been contrived for the purpose of ensnaring and deceiving men. How many new and unheard of contrivances for making gain and exacting usury are every day invented, which no one who has not been long trained in the school of merchandise can understand? We need not wonder, therefore, that the Prophet made use of this comparison, for it means that Tyre will have no more honesty than before in mercantile transactions.

18. *But her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord.* This was another instance of the divine compassion towards Tyre. Though she had been restored, yet she was not converted to God, but continued to follow dishonest practices, so that she justly deserved to be ruined. And indeed she was again punished severely, when Alexander took the city by storm; but still the kingdom of Christ, as Luke informs us, was erected there. (Acts

21:4.) This verse ought therefore to be viewed as contrasted with the former, as if he had said, "*And yet* the merchandise of Tyre shall be consecrated to God." Here we have an astonishing proof of the goodness of God, which penetrated not only into this abominable brothel, but almost into hell itself. The restoration of Tyre ought thus to be regarded as a proof of the goodness of God; but the former favor was small in comparison with the second, when God consecrated her to himself.

But a question arises, "Could that which the inhabitants of Tyre obtained by cheating and unlawful methods be offered to God in sacrifice?" For God abhors such sacrifices, and demands an honest and pure conscience. (Proverbs 21:27, Isaiah 1:13.) Many commentators, in expounding this passage, give themselves much uneasiness about this question, but without any good reason; for the Prophet does not mean that the merchandise of Tyre will be consecrated to God while she continues to commit fornication, but describes a time subsequent to her change and conversion. At that time she will not lay up riches for herself, will not amass them by unlawful methods, but will employ them in the service of God, and will spend the produce of her merchandise in relieving the wants of the godly. When he used a word expressive of what was disgraceful, he had his eye on the past, but intimated that she would unlearn those wicked practices, and change her disposition.

It shall not be treasured nor laid up. He describes, in a few words, the repentance of Tyre, who, having formerly been addicted to avarice, has been converted to Christ, and will no longer labor to amass riches, but will employ them in kind and generous actions; and this is the true fruit of repentance, as Paul admonishes, that "he who stole should steal no more, but, on the contrary, should labor that he might relieve the poor and needy." (Ephesians 4:28.) Isaiah foretells that the inhabitants of Tyre, who formerly, through insatiable avarice, devoured the riches of all, will henceforth take pleasure in generous actions, because they will no longer have an insatiable desire of gain. It is an evidence of brotherly love when we relieve our neighbors, as it is an evidence of cruelty if we suffer them to be hungry, especially when we ourselves have abundance.

Her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord. He next mentions a proper method of exercising generosity, which is, to employ their wealth in aiding the servants of God. Though he includes all godly persons, yet he alludes to the Levites and priests, some of whom sacrificed, while others made ready the sacrifices, and others kept watch, and, in short, all were ready to perform their duty; and therefore they were said to "dwell before the Lord." (Numbers 3 and 4.) The same thing may justly be said of all the ministers of the Church. But as all believers, of whatever rank they are, belong to the sanctuary of God, and have been made by Christ "a royal priesthood," (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6,) that they may stand in the presence of God, so I willingly regard this passage as relating to all "the household of faith," (Galatians 6:10,) to whom attention is especially due;

for Paul holds them out as having the highest claims, and enjoins that they shall be first relieved. If the tie which binds us universally to mankind ought to prevent us from "despising our own flesh," (Isaiah 58:7,) how much more the tie that binds the members of Christ, which is closer and more sacred than any natural bonds?

We ought also to attend to this mode of expression, by which we are said to "dwell before God;" [386] for though there is not now any "Ark of the Covenant," (Hebrews 9:4,) yet, through the kindness of Christ, we approach more nearly to God than the Levites formerly did. We are therefore enjoined to "walk before him," as if we were under his eye, that we may follow holiness and justice with a pure conscience. We are enjoined to walk before him, and always to consider him as present, that we may be just and upright.

That they may eat till they are satisfied. [387] The Prophet means that we ought to supply the wants of brethren with greater abundance and generosity than what is customary among men; for when neighbors ought to be relieved, men are very niggardly. Few men perform cheerfully any gratuitous duty, or labor, or kindness; for they reckon that they give up and take from their own property all that they bestow on others. For the purpose of correcting this error, God highly commends cheerfulness; for the command which Paul gives to deacons, "to distribute joyfully," (Romans 12:8,) ought to be applied to all; and all ought to remember that passage which declares that "God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7.)

It deserves our attention, also, that the Prophet says that what is bestowed on the poor is consecrated to God; as the Spirit elsewhere teaches, that "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:16; 2 Corinthians 9:12.) Never was it on his own account that he commanded sacrifices to be made, nor did he ever stand in need of them. But under the law he ordained such exercises of piety; and he now commands us to bestow and spend on our neighbors something that is our own, and declares that all that we lay out on their account [388] is "a sacrifice of sweet savor," (Philippians 4:18,) and is approved and accepted by him. This ought powerfully to inflame us to the exercise of kindness and generosity, when we learn that our alms are so highly applauded, and that our hands, as well as our gift, are consecrated to God.

[386] "The revenues of Tyre shall be employed in supporting the worshippers of the true God. The prophecy intimates that Tyre should be converted to the religion of Christ as it was in the earliest times of the gospel. Of the same event David also had prophesied in Psalm 45:12; 72:10; 87:4." — Stock

[387] "Afin qu'ils mangent leur saoul;" — "That they may eat their fill."

[388] "Tout ce que nous employons pour la necessité de nos freres;" — "All that we spend for relieving the want of our brethren."

Chapter 24

CHAPTER 24

Isaiah Chapter 24:1-23

1. Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

1. Ecce Iehova evacuat terram, denudat eam, evertit faciem ejus, et incolas ejus dissipat.

2. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

2. Et erit ut populus, ita sacerdos; ut servus, ita domina ejus; ut ancilla, ita domina ejus; ut emptor, ita venditor; ut mutuo dans, ita qui mutuo accipit; ut foenerator, ita qui accipit foenori, (vel, ut creditor, ita debitor.)

3. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.

3. Evacuando evacuabitur terra, et direptione diripietur; quoniam Iehova pronunciavit hoc verbum.

4. The earth mourneth and fadeth away; the world languisheth and fadeth away; the haughty people of the earth do languish.

4. Luxit, cecidit terra; elanguit, cecidit orbis; elanguerunt qui erant sublimis populus terræ.

5. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

5. Et terra fallax fuit sub incolis suis; quoniam transgressi sunt leges, mutarunt statutum, dissolverunt foedus seculi.

6. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell

therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

6. Itaque maledictio cosumpsit terram, et desolati sunt incolæ ejus; ideo combusti sunt, inquam, incolæ terræ; et pauci residui sunt facti homines.

7. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry hearted do sigh.

7. Periit vinum, elanguit vitis, gemuerunt omnes qui læto erant corde.

8. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

8. Cessavit gaudium tympanorum, desiit strepitus exultantium, quievit lætitia citharæ.

9. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

9. Cum cantico non bibent vinum; amara erit sicera bibentibus eam.

10. The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

10. Contrita est civitas vanitatis; clausa est omnis domus, ne quis ingrediatur.

11 There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

11. Clamor est super vino in plateis; obscuratum est omne gaudium; migravit lætitia terræ.

12. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

12. Residua est in urbe vastitas, et vastatione percussa est porta.

13. When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning-grapes when the vintage is done.

13. Quia sic erit in medio terræ, in medio populorum, quasi decussio olivæ, et quasi racemi, cum peracta est vindemia.

14. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

14. Hi levabunt vocem suam; jubilabunt in altitudine Iehovæ, vociferabuntur a mari.

15. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

15. Propterea in vallibus glorificate Iehovam, in insulis maris nomen Iehovæ Dei Israel.

16. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

16. Ab extremo terræ laudes audivimus, gloriam (vel, gratulationem) justo, et dixi, Macies mihi, macies mihi, væ mihi. Prævaricatores prævaricati sunt; prævaricatione, inquam, prævaricatores prævaricati sunt.

17. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

17. Pavor, et fovea, et laqueus super te, O icola terræ.

18. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

18. Et accidet ut qui effugerit a voce pavoris, incidat in foveam; et qui ascenderit e medio foveæ capiatur laqueo. Quoniam fenestræ de excelso apertæ sunt; et commota sunt fundamenta terræ.

19. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

19. Contritione contrita est terra; dissolutione dissoluta est terra; commotione commota est terra.

20. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

20. Agitatione agitata est terra, sicut ebrius; et transferetur sicut tabernaculum; et gravis erit super eam iniquitas ejus; et corruet, neque adjiciet ut resurgat.

21. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

21. Et erit in die illa, visitabit Iehova super exercitum excelsum in excelso, et super reges terræ super terram.

22. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

22. Et congregabuntur congregatione instar vinctorum in carcere, et claudentur in ergastulo; deinde post multos dies visitabuntur.

23. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

23. Erubescet luna, et pudefiet sol; cum regnaverit Iehova exercituum in monte Sion, et in Ierusalem; et coram senibus suis gloria.

1. *Behold, Jehovah maketh the earth empty.* This prophecy, so far as I can judge, is the conclusion of all the descriptions that have been given from the thirteenth chapter downwards, in which Isaiah foretold destruction not only to the Jews and to Israel, but to the Moabites, Assyrians, Egyptians, and other nations. In short, having, as it were, surveyed all the countries which were near the Jews and known to them, he gives a brief summary of the whole. Some view this as referring to Israel, and others to the Jews, and think that their destruction is foretold; but as he mentions *the world*,

I can view it in no other light than as a comprehensive statement of all that he formerly said about each of them, and at different times. Nor is this view contradicted by the fact that he immediately mentions *the priest*, which might lead us to believe that these things relate to none but the people of God; for although he speaks of all the nations, yet because the Jews always hold the highest rank, Isaiah must have had them especially in his eye, for he was appointed to them. It may be said to have been accidental that he mentions other nations; and therefore we ought not to wonder if, after having made reference to them, he speaks particularly about his own people in a single word.

Others suppose that he means "the whole world," but think that he refers to the last day, which I consider to be an excessively forced interpretation; for, after having threatened the Jews and other nations, the Prophet afterwards adds a consolation, that the Lord will one day raise up his Church and make her more flourishing; which certainly cannot apply to the last judgment. But by the term *the earth*, I do not think that the Prophet means the whole world, but the countries well known to the Jews; just as in the present day, when we speak of what happens in the world, we almost never go beyond Europe, or think of what is passing in India; for this may be said to be our world. Thus, Isaiah speaks of "the earth" known to himself and to all whom he addressed, and of the people who inhabited the neighboring countries. In short, we may limit the term "World" to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Moabites, Tyrians, and such like; as if he had said, "Hitherto I have spoken of various calamities, which threatened many nations, and still in part threaten some of them; but I may sum up all by saying, 'The Lord will overturn and strip the face of the earth of all its ornaments.' "

And maketh it bare. [389] Some translate בלקה, (*bōlĕkāch*,) *he uncovereth the earth,* that the enemies may have free entrance into it. But I choose rather to translate it, "he maketh bare the earth," because the earth is said to be "covered," when it is inhabited by a great multitude of men, and when it abounds in fruits and flocks; and it is said to be "uncovered" or "laid bare," when it is deprived of its inhabitants, and when its covering is taken away from it, as if one were stripped of his raiment and ornaments. Now, this must have happened not only to the Jews, but to the Assyrians, Egyptians, and other nations, which he had mentioned; and therefore to all of them together he threatens their ruin.

2. *And it shall be.* By these words he means the utmost desolation, in which there will be no longer any distinction of ranks or any appearance of a commonwealth; for so long as there is a tolerably regular form of government, some distinction continues to be maintained between "the people" and "the priests." By a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) he mentions one department instead of the whole class, as is frequently done in the Scriptures; though we might take כחנים, (*kōchănīm*,)

[389] "And maketh it waste." — Eng. Ver.

to mean those who hold any high rank; for Hebrew writers frequently give this name to princes, and especially to those who are of royal blood; but I have no reluctance to view it as an instance of the figure of speech which I have mentioned.

Since Isaiah reckons this confusion among the curses of God, and declares that, when the distinction of ranks is laid aside, it is a terrible display of the vengeance of God, we ought to conclude, on the other hand, how much God is pleased with regular government and the good order of society, and also how great a privilege it is to have it preserved among us; for when it is taken away, the life of man differs little from the sustenance of cattle and of beasts of prey. We ought therefore not only to acknowledge the dreadful vengeance of God, but also to lay it to the blame of our own sins, whenever he breaks down order and takes away instruction and courts of law; for when these fall, civilisation itself falls along with them. It ought also to be considered that, when the Lord executes his judgments, he spares no rank, not even the most sacred. What was this order of priests, which the Lord had so splendidly adorned, and had determined to consecrate to himself, and of which the people also boasted as if it had been unchangeable and eternal? Yet even the rank of priesthood is involved in the judgment of God, because there is no respect of persons, but, on the contrary, the more highly any have been favored, and the higher the rank to which they have been exalted, the more severely will he punish them, if they shall shew themselves to be ungrateful and abuse his benefits.

As the servant, so his master; as the buyer, so the seller. This statement is to the same effect with what goes before; for these ranks are manifestly lawful, and are not usually set aside, unless when the Lord determines to chastise his people with dreadful vengeance, as we have already said; for in a well-ordered society the distinction between master and servant must be observed. In like manner, no public government can be lasting without the transactions of commerce; and therefore, when the distinction between rich and poor has been taken away, every scheme for gaining a livelihood among men is destroyed. The meaning of the Prophet is, that all civil government will be broken up, because in such calamities, they who were the wealthiest are reduced to the lowest poverty. In short, he describes the most appalling desolation, which will be followed by unwonted change.

3. *By emptying shall the earth be emptied.* He confirms what he had already said, and declares that those changes will not be accidental, but that they are the work of God. In the first verse, he had expressly stated that God is making preparations for emptying the earth: he now asserts that it will happen, and adds the reason, that God hath purposed and determined to do it.

4. *The earth hath lamented.* Isaiah proceeds with his subject; for all this tends to explain the desolation of the whole world, that is, of the world which was known to the Jews. According to his custom, he illustrates the

judgment of God more clearly by figures, which are fitted to produce an effect on sluggish minds.

The lofty people of the earth. [390] By the "lofty ones" we must understand those eminent persons who held a higher rank than others; for this is more wonderful than if the common people had fallen. Yet if it be thought preferable to explain it as relating peculiarly to the Jews, I have no objection; for although the Assyrians and Egyptians excelled them in wealth and power, still the Jews held the highest rank in this respect, that they had been adopted by God. But I prefer the other exposition, which makes the meaning to be, that the Lord would inflict punishment, not only on common people, but also on those who surpassed others in rank and splendor.

5. *And the earth was deceitful.* [391] Others render it "defiled" or "polluted," because כנף (*chānăph*) means "to be wicked." Both renderings may be appropriate; but the next verse appears to demand that we explain it to mean *false*; for he appears to illustrate and exhibit it more fully immediately afterwards, when he says that "the earth has been consumed by a curse."

Under its inhabitants. Whether תחת (*tăhăth*) be translated "*Under* its inhabitants," or, "*On account of* its inhabitants," is of little importance. There is a kind of mutual bargain between the land and the husbandmen, that it gives back with usury what it has received: if it does not, it deceives those who cultivate it. But he assigns a reason, imputing blame to them, that they render it barren by their wickedness. It is owing to our fault that it does not nourish us or bring forth fruit, as God appointed to be done by the regular order of nature; for he wished that it should hold the place of a mother to us, to supply us with food; and if it change its nature and order, or lose its fertility, we ought to attribute it to our sins, since we ourselves have reversed the order which God had appointed; otherwise the earth would never deceive us, but would perform her duty.

Because they have transgressed the laws. He immediately assigns the reason why the earth is unfaithful, and deceives her inhabitants. It is because those who refuse to honor God their Father and supporter, will justly be deprived of food and nourishment. Here he peculiarly holds up to shame the revolt of his nation, because it was baser and less excusable than all the transgressions of those who had never been taught in the school of God. The word תורה (*tōrāh*) is applied to "the Law," because it denotes instruction; but here, in the plural number, תורת (*tōrōth*,) it denotes all the instruction that is contained in the "Law." But as the "Law" contains both commandments and promises, he adds two parts for the purpose of explanation.

They have changed the ordinance. The Hebrew word חק (*chōk*) means "an ordinance," and on that account some think that it denotes ceremonies, and others that it denotes morals. We may render it "commandments;" and I understand it to mean not only ceremonies, but everything that belongs to

[390] "The haughty people of the earth. (Heb. the height of the people.)" — Eng. Ver.

[391] "The earth also is defiled." — Eng. Ver. "The earth is even polluted." — Stock. "And the land has been profaned." — Alexander

the rule of a holy life.

They have broken the everlasting covenant. The third term employed by him is, ברית, (*bērīth*,) by which he means a covenant and contract. This word is limited to those "contracts" by which the Lord, who adopted his people, promised that he would be their God. (Exodus 19:6; 29:45; Leviticus 26:12.) He therefore charges them with ingratitude, because, when the Lord revealed himself by all these methods, and gave proofs of his love, they were disobedient and rebellious, "transgressed the laws," and "broke the holy covenant."

But why does he address himself to the Jews? Because he knew that he had been appointed to be their Prophet, that he might especially give instructions to them. Hence we may infer what is the rule of a holy life. It is contained in that law which we ought to follow if we wish that God should approve of our life; if we turn aside from it, we must be wicked and abandoned. We ought also to remark, that it is the will of God that in his word we should consider not only his commandments and laws, but also his covenant; for the chief part of the word consists of promises, by which he adopts and receives us as his own people. Besides, the Prophet unquestionably intended to use a variety of terms in order to express his meaning more strongly; as if he had said, "There is nothing about us that is sound and pure; everything is polluted and corrupted."

He calls it "the covenant of eternity," or "the everlasting covenant," because it ought to be perpetual and inviolable, and to be in force in every age. It was to be transmitted, in uninterrupted succession, from father to son, that it might never be effaced from the memory of man, but might be kept pure and entire. He therefore represents in strong terms their treachery and wickedness, because they dared to violate that covenant which God had made with them, and to overthrow what the Lord intended to be firm and permanent. This was monstrous; and therefore we ought not to wonder that the earth takes vengeance for this wickedness, and refuses to give food to men.

6. *Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth.* Some render it *perjury*, [392] but as אלה (*ālāh*) signifies also a "curse," I have no doubt that here he employs it to denote a "curse," and alludes to those curses which Moses in the law threatens against wicked men and transgressors of the law, (Leviticus 26:16; Deuteronomy 28:15.) We know that the earth was cursed on account of the transgression of our first parent, so that it brought forth thorns and thistles instead of fruits. (Genesis 3:17, 18.) The Lord mitigated this curse, so that, although men were ungrateful and unworthy, still it yielded them food. But when we do not cease to sin, and when we add sin to sin, is it not in the highest degree just that the earth should become barren and unfruitful, in order that we may more clearly perceive this curse, and that

[392] "On account of the sin of perjury is the earth consumed." — Jarchi. " (ālāh) does not here mean false swearing, as explained in the Targum, and by Jarchi, and Kimchi, but the curse of God attending the violation of his law." — Alexander

it may make a deeper impression on our senses?

And its inhabitants are made desolate. I think that אשם (*āshăm*) here means "to make desolate," rather than "to forsake;" and this is apparent from the context, on which account I have translated it "are made desolate." But perhaps it will be thought preferable to take the copulative ו (*vau*) as signifying *because*, and then the meaning will be, "The earth accursed by God is burnt up, *because* its inhabitants have acted wickedly." [393]

Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The word חרו (*charu*) may be taken metaphorically, and I prefer this view of it, which makes the meaning to be, that those whom the wrath of God has consumed are burned up; because the destruction is compared to a conflagration. When he adds, "that few will be left," we learn from it that this prediction cannot be explained as relating to the last day of judgment, and that, on the contrary, the Prophet foretells and confirms those desolations which threatened various nations, and that he does so in order that the godly may fear, and may be led to repentance, and may be prepared for enduring all things.

7. *The wine hath failed.* The same subject is continued, and the Prophet threatens chiefly against the Jews the desolation of the land. He gives a long description in order to affect them more deeply, and impress them with a conviction of the judgment of God. Their luxury, intemperance, and feasting, are rapidly surveyed, because amidst so great abundance they proudly disobeyed God. Such ingratitude was not peculiar to the Jews or to that age, but it is universally found that they who enjoy abundance rebel against God, and indulge themselves too freely. On this account the Prophet censures them; as if he had said, "Hitherto you have been plunged in luxuries and pleasures, but the Lord will cause you to lead a very different kind of life." Isaiah speaks of the future as if it had been present, in order to place it more clearly before their eyes.

9. *They shall not drink wine with a song.* To drink wine is not in itself evil, because God has appointed it for the use of man; but here the Prophet describes the banquets of drunkards, which were full of licentiousness, songs, and insolence. Again, because they abused their enjoyment of plenty, he threatens them with want, which men almost bring upon themselves, when by their luxury they turn to a bad use the goodness of God.

Strong drink shall be bitter. He adds, that if they drink wine, it will be "bitter" to them; because sorrow commonly deprives men of a relish both for what they eat and for what they drink. The meaning may be thus summed up, "Though they have abundance of wine, yet they will be deprived of the use of it, because they will feel such sorrow as shall take away all relish for it." "Strong drink shall be *bitter*;" that is, you shall no longer enjoy those pleasures and delights in which you have hitherto indulged.

393 " (āshăm) is taken by some of the early writers in the sense of being desolate. Its true sense is that of being recognised as guilty, and treated accordingly. It therefore suggests the ideas both of guilt and punishment." — Alexander

10. *The city of* [394] *vanity is broken down.* I do not object to viewing this as relating especially to the desolation of Jerusalem. Yet it may be gathered from the context that it applies also to other cities; for shortly afterwards he uses the plural number in summoning the nations to appear before the same tribunal. But as the Prophet had his own countrymen chiefly in view, we may properly consider it to denote Jerusalem, which he calls "the city of vanity," either because there was no solid virtue in it, or because it was destroyed.

The word תהו (*tōhū*) may refer either to the destruction itself, or to their crimes, by which they provoked the wrath of God against them. If it be thought better to refer it to their crimes, it will denote "the city of confusion," in which nothing is regular or properly arranged; and I approve of this interpretation. Yet it may refer to the punishment; for it declares, in my opinion, the cause of the destruction, and gives up the city to ruin, because justice and good government are banished from it.

Every house is shut up. This is a proof of solitude, and the only reason why it is added is, to express the desolation of that city.

11. *There is a cry about wine.* He means, that there will be a scarcity of wine; for where want or hunger is found, it is accompanied by unceasing complaints, not only in private, but "in the streets" and public places. He therefore points out those doleful sounds and complaints, but, at the same time, reproves their luxury and intemperance, because they were not satisfied with what was necessary, but greedily swallowed wine, and abandoned themselves to every kind of enjoyment. We must supply the contrast. "Hitherto you have had abundance of wine and of food, and you have taken occasion from it to grow insolent against God; and therefore you will justly be deprived of them, and, instead of your wanton indulgence, wailing and lamentations will be heard in the streets."

All joy is darkened. The metaphor in this second clause deserves attention; for, as we say that joy brightens when it obtains its object, so the Prophet here says, that "joy is darkened," because sorrow may be said to be a cloud drawn over it. To *rejoice* is not in itself evil, any more than to drink; and the Prophet does not censure joy simply considered, but excessive and immoderate mirth. When men are merry, they lay no restraint on themselves on account of that dissoluteness or love of disorder (ἀταξίαν) which is natural to them. The Jews, having behaved insolently and lived luxuriously, are deservedly threatened with the vengeance of God, because most justly is joy taken from us when we know not how to make a right use of the Lord's benefits, or to rejoice in him. It thus becomes necessary that he should take away our pleasures and delights, and compel us to sigh and groan.

12. *In the city is left desolation.* By an elegant mode of expression he describes the desolation of Jerusalem or of many other cities. The ornament

[394] "The city of confusion." — Eng. Ver.

and perfection of cities consists of men; and therefore, when their inhabitants have been removed, cities are said to be deserted. The Prophet says ironically, that "ruin" will be left; but the word שמה (*shămmăh*) is rendered by others *desolation*, which amounts to the same thing.

And the gate is smitten with desolation. He mentions the *gates*, because in them the crowded population of the city was seen, for there the people assembled, and there the courts of justice were held. At first, therefore, he mentions the whole city, and next he names one part of it, but for the purpose of setting the matter in a stronger light; for although cities be deprived of their inhabitants, yet some are to be seen in the gates; but if the gates be altogether empty, there must be grievous solitude in the whole city.

13. *For it shall be in the midst of the land.* As this statement is inserted between the threatenings and the consolation, the Prophet appears to address the chosen people, and not all the nations indiscriminately; if we do not rather say that he describes the dispersion, by which the Jews were divided, as it were, into many nations. But this being a harsh and forced interpretation, I interpret it as simply meaning that some hope is left to the ruined nations, and certainly this prediction applies strictly to the kingdom of Christ; and therefore we need not wonder that some part of the salvation is also promised to the Gentiles.

As the shaking of an olive-tree. The Prophet has elsewhere used the same metaphor, but it was when he spoke of the Church alone. (Isaiah 17:5, 6.) On that occasion he said that some seed of God would be left, that believers might not think that the Church was utterly ruined; for when "the olives are shaken," still a few olives are left, and some grapes after the vintage; and in like manner, after the terrible destruction which shall fall upon the Church, a small number of the godly will be left. But now he extends the same promise to other parts of the world, as they were to become partakers of the same grace through Christ. Yet there is still a mixture of threatening; as if he had said, that the earth will be deprived of its inhabitants in exactly the same manner as the trees and vines are stripped of their fruits.

14. *They shall lift up their voice.* He follows out and increases the consolations which he had briefly sketched; for, having formerly (Isaiah 10:19-22) said that, out of that vast multitude, a few drops would be left, which would nevertheless overflow the whole world, in like manner he now says, that the small number of the godly, which shall be left out of an abundant vintage, will nevertheless rejoice and utter a voice so loud that it will be heard in the most distant countries. This was done by the preaching of the gospel; for, as to the condition of Judea, it appeared to be entirely ruined by it: the national government was taken away, and they were broken down by foreign and civil wars in such a manner that they never could rise above them. The rest of the world was dumb in singing the praises of God, and deaf to hear his voice; but as the Jews were the first fruits, I shall willingly admit that they are here placed in the highest rank.

Hence we obtain a remarkable consolation, that the Lord can in a moment restore his Church, and make it most flourishing; or rather, he can, as it were, create it out of nothing; for even out of death, as we have seen, he brings life. Now, this is contrary to nature and to ordinary custom, that so small a number of persons should lift up their voice, and be heard in distant places; for where there are few persons, there is silence, and where there is a crowd, there is commonly a noise. It is therefore a work of God, which goes beyond the course of nature and the ability of men; for otherwise it would appear as if the Prophet uttered what was contradictory, that when the whole of Judea had been laid waste and the world had been emptied, there would be few or almost none left, and yet that their shouting would be heard everywhere. This is in itself incredible, or rather absurd; but, as we have already said, it is an astonishing work of God.

They shall cry aloud from the sea. By those heralds he means not only those who were the descendants of the Jews according to the flesh, but those who were descended from them by faith. The *crying aloud* denotes not only cheerful voices, expressive of gladness and joy, but likewise confidence; for they will freely and boldly utter with a loud voice the praises of God. He states, at the same time, that it is right that believers should be employed in extolling God's perfections and not their own claims to approbation. By *the sea*, he obviously means distant countries, and those which lay beyond the sea and were unknown to the Jews.

15. *Wherefore glorify Jehovah in the valleys.* [395] God's benefits ought to excite us to gratitude, and we testify it by singing his praises. "What return shall we make," as David says, "for all the benefits which he has bestowed on us, but to take the cup of thanksgiving for salvation, and call on the name of the Lord?" The Prophet therefore observes this order; having spoken of the restoration of the Church, he exhorts us to offer the sacrifice of praise.

By *the valleys*, he means countries that are hidden and, as it were, separated from others; for those which are surrounded by mountains are separated and disjoined by nature. The consequence is, that the inhabitants of valleys are less civilized, because they have fewer opportunities of conversing with each other. The meaning is the same as if the Prophet had said, that there will not be a corner so obscure or retired that the praises of God shall not be heard in it.

The name of Jehovah the God of Israel. He uses the expression, "the name of the God of Israel," in order to intimate that all nations will call upon the true God; for, as all nations have a knowledge of God that is natural to them, so all easily turn aside to superstition and false worship. (Romans 1:19.) But here he speaks of spreading the true religion through the whole world; and this makes it still more evident that the prophecy relates to the kingdom of Christ, under which true religion has at length penetrated into foreign and heathen nations.

[395] "In the fires, (or, valleys.)" — Eng. Ver.

16. *From the uttermost part* [396] *of the earth.* This verse contains two statements which have some appearance of being at variance with each other. It begins with a joyful description of the praises of God, and next passes on to complaints and lamentations, in which he bewails the treachery of transgressors, who overturn religion and godliness. So far as relates to praises, we have said that we can neither praise God nor call upon him, till he reveal himself to us, and give a taste of his goodness, that we may entertain hope and confident expectation of life. Hence those sayings of David,

"In the grave who shall praise thee, O Lord?
In death who shall confess to thee?" (Psalm 6:5.)

When we feel nothing but the wrath of God, we are dumb to his praises; and therefore when he says that the praises of God will be heard, he means that the gospel will be spread through the whole world; that men may acknowledge God to be their Father, and may thus break forth into his praise. "From the uttermost part" is a phrase that deserves attention; for at that time the praises of God were confined to Judea, and were not heard at a distance; but afterwards they began to resound everywhere. (Psalm 76:1, 2.)

Glory to the righteous. Some consider this to be spoken by all believers, as if the song were, "God is glorified on account of his righteousness." Others read the two clauses as one, "We have heard that glory is given to the righteous God." Those who think that the heralds of God's praises are called "righteous," bring out a very good sense, but do not attend to the word "Glory," or at least are constrained to render the word צבי (*tzēbī*) *joy.* [397] He makes use of the preterite, "We have heard," instead of the future tense; and his reason for doing so is, that he intended to cheer the hearts of the godly by some consolation; "We shall again hear the praises of God;" for this is more than if he had said, "They will be heard." He speaks also in the first person, in order to include the whole body of the Church, and thus to awaken the attention of the godly.

God is called *righteous*; and we know that this expression frequently occurs in Scripture, but it belongs to him in a different manner from that in which it belongs to men; for men are called "righteous," on account of the "righteousness" which has been communicated to them; but God, who is the fountain of righteousness, is called "righteous," on account of what

[396] "The uttermost part. (Heb. wing.)" — Eng. Ver. The Septuagint translates it literally, , "from the wings of the earth" — Ed

[397] There is a considerable diversity of opinion about the application of the term righteous in this passage. Many commentators agree with Calvin in thinking that God is here called righteous. Bishop Stock has slightly modified this view by applying the designation to the Messiah. "By the righteous," says he, "is probably meant one person the Messiah, (see Acts 7:52, 22:14,) whose kingdom the Prophet beholds in vision, and joins in the chorus of joy at its approach; a joy, however, which is presently interrupted by a reflection on the wickedness of the greater part of his countrymen at that time, who should reject the Lord that bought them. Therefore he saith, Woe is me! destruction shall overtake the inhabitants of the land." Instead of "Glory to the righteous," the Septuagint renders it, , "hope to the godly man." Professor Alexander's rendering is, "Praise to the righteous;" and he remarks, צדיק (tzăddīk) is not an epithet of God (Henderson) or Cyrus (Hendewerk), but of righteous men in general." --- Ed

he performs. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 7:9; 11:7.) And that is a proof of this congratulation and thanksgiving, because from the communication of this righteousness we obtain salvation and life; and therefore, wherever the righteousness of God is, it must be followed by praises and thanksgivings.

When the Prophet predicted these things, how incredible might they appear to be! for among the Jews alone was the Lord known and praised. (Psalm 76:2.) To them destruction is foretold, and next the publication of the word, and the celebration of the praises of God; but how could these things be done, when the people of God had been destroyed? Hence we may infer that there were few who believed these predictions. But now that those events have taken place, it is our duty to behold with admiration so great a miracle of God, because, when the Jews had been not only broken down, but almost annihilated, still there flashed from them a spark by which the whole world was enlightened, and all who were kindled by it burst forth into a confession of the truth.

My leanness. [398] This passage is explained in various ways; for some translate רזי *(rāzī) secret*, and others *leanness.* Those who translate it *secret* understand the Prophet to mean that a double secret has been revealed to him, because the Lord has determined to reward the good and to punish the wicked; for when men look only at the outward appearance of things, and see that the wicked succeed to their wish, and that the godly are overwhelmed by afflictions, they are distressed, and doubt whether the affairs of men are governed by the hand of God, or all things happen by chance; and Solomon shews that thoughts of this kind are the seed of ungodliness. (Ecclesiastes 8:11.) On this account the Psalmist also says, that he "entered into the sanctuary of God," that he might examine the subject in another manner than by human reason. (Psalm 73:17.) If we adopt that interpretation, the meaning will be, "Though it appear as if there were no reward to the righteous, yet I hold this as a secret imparted to me, that it will be well with them; and although the wicked think that they will escape, yet I know that they will not pass unpunished." But as this ingenuity appears to be too far-fetched, I prefer a more simple interpretation; and, besides, there immediately follows an interjection expressive of lamentation, אוי, (ōı,) *Wo!* so that I do not think that Isaiah speaks here about the righteous or about their reward.

Others more correctly explain it *leanness*; as if he had said, that through grief he shrinks and grows lean; for as the prosperous and flourishing condition of that people might be called "fatness," so its wretched and distressed condition might be called "leanness." Here the Prophet stands forth as the representative of the whole race; and when the Lord cuts it down, he justly complains of his "leanness." This interpretation, I have said, is probable; for when the Prophet saw the people diminishing in numbers, he had good reason for bewailing that diminution. We know that, when the grace of God

[398] "My leanness. (Heb. leanness to me, or, my secret to me.)" — Eng. Ver.

was very abundantly poured out, the ancient people was greatly diminished, and the posterity of Abraham was almost annihilated.

But we must see if the Prophet does not look farther than to the rejection of his nation, so as to bewail the condition of his bowels, when he foresees that the Church will be heavily distressed; for רז (*rāz*,) which some translate *secret*, may properly be understood to denote the internal part of the body. In this way the exclamation would be, "My bowels, or my entrails, are pained;" for in a pathetic discourse there is no absurdity in supposing that a word is supplied. When the Lord has extended his Church, it appears to be in a flourishing state, and free from all danger; but when its very inwards or bowels, that is, its own members, give it uneasiness, it is grievously tormented. Hypocrites arise, by whom it is more annoyed than by enemies who "are without." (Revelation 22:15.)

Such is also the import of those groanings, אוי, (ōı̄,) *wo to me*; and Isaiah, I have no doubt, intended to intimate that the godly should not think that they will be happy in this world, but should believe that they must maintain a continual strife, even when they might imagine that there is nothing to hinder them from enjoying uninterrupted tranquillity and peace. He wishes to express the feeling of poignant grief which torments the Church inwardly, even in her very bowels; and this affliction is the more deeply to be lamented, because it cannot be avoided; for, as some one says, the Church can neither flee from internal and domestic enemies, nor put them to flight. Isaiah can scarcely find terms adequate to express this miserly

The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously. These words abundantly confirm the expositions which have been already given. How heavy this affliction is, and how deeply it ought to be deplored, we ourselves have abundantly experienced, and still experience every day. Whence arose Popery, and all its corruption, but from this internal evil? for it was an imposthume (ἀπόστημα) bred in the very bowels of the Church, which sent forth offensive and diseased matter. How comes it also that, when the Church begins to revive, we see doctrine corrupted and discipline overturned not only by the common people, but by those who ought to have given a good example to others? Is it not because the Church is always subject to this evil?

17 *Fear, and the pit, and the snare.* The Prophet here discourses against the sins of the people. Formerly he declared that not only one nation, but very many and very distant nations, would have abundant grounds of thanksgiving. He now passes to another doctrine; for I think that these words ought to be separated from what goes before, because Isaiah again threatens the wicked, that they may know that amidst the highest prosperity of the Church they will be miserable. For the sake of cherishing their indifference, wicked men are accustomed rashly to apply the promises of God to themselves, though they do not at all belong to them; and therefore the prophets usually mingle threatenings with them. It is also possible that Isaiah delivered this discourse separately from the rest, and on a different occasion; for neither

the prophets themselves nor other learned men divided the chapters. We have often seen different subjects joined together, and others divided which ought to have been joined, which was undoubtedly done through ignorance. However that may be, the Prophet returns to the wicked, and threatens against them severe and dreadful judgment.

This description of "fear, the pit, and the snare," is intended to touch the feelings; for if he had said, in a single word, that destruction awaits the wicked, they would not have been greatly moved. But there is room for doubting if he addresses the Jews alone. For my own part, I should not be much inclined to dispute about this matter; but I think it is more probable that these threatenings related also to other nations, and even to the whole world, of which he had formally prophesied.

O inhabitant of the earth. By "the world" we understand those countries which were known to the Jews, as we have already explained. The meaning is, "Thou art pressed by afflictions so diversified, that thou hast no means of escape." Amos gives a similar description: "He who shall flee through dread of a lion shall meet a bear; and if he go into the house, when he leaneth on a wall, a serpent shall bite him." (Amos 5:19.) Isaiah formerly said that lions would be sent against the Moabites who had escaped from the battle. (Isaiah 15:9.) God has an endless variety of scourges for punishing the wicked. It is as if he had said, "Know that you cannot escape the hand of God; for he has various methods by which he takes vengeance on their crimes, and thus overtakes those who had hoped to escape by a variety of contrivances. He who escapes from the battle shall be tormented with hunger; and when he is freed from hunger, he will meet some other calamity, as if nets had been laid on all sides to ensnare you."

For the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken. This argument confirms what had been already said, that it is impossible for them to escape the vengeance of God, who has prepared for it a free course in heaven and in earth, from the utmost height of heaven down to the depths of the earth. Some think that he alludes (Genesis 7:11) to the deluge; but, in my opinion, the meaning is simpler, that the wrath of God will be revealed above and below; as if he had said, "The Lord will arm heaven and earth to execute his vengeance against men, that wherever they turn their eyes, they may behold nothing but destruction."

19. *By breaking down is the earth broken down.* He heightens his description of punishments by using various modes of expression. A little afterwards he will point out the cause of this "shaking," which is, that men by their sins had drawn down on themselves such destruction. He now declares that this evil is incurable. We have formerly said that the Prophet explains the same thing in various ways, and for the purpose of striking and arousing those minds which are naturally very sluggish; for there is in the flesh a carelessness which produces contempt of God, and we have too much experience of it both in ourselves and in others. In order, therefore, that the prophets might

arouse those who were careless and asleep in their vices, they adorn their style; not because they cared about being thought eloquent, but that they might make their hearers more attentive, and sting them to the quick. Hence the allusions of which these verses are full; hence the brilliant metaphors in the style; hence the threatenings and terrors announced in various ways; the object of all is, that careless men may be aroused.

Now, this doctrine ought to be limited to the wicked; not because the godly are exempted from those evils, for they are afflicted as well as other men; but because, when the godly betake themselves to God, and rely wholly upon him, they are not shaken in this manner, and remain firm and steadfast against every assault; while wicked men, who despised the judgments of God, and took unbounded liberties in transgression, are terrified and alarmed, and never find rest.

20. *And shall be removed like a tent.* This does not mean that any change will take place in the position of the earth; but these words, as we have already said, must be referred to men; as if he had said, that there would be no kingly power and no regular government. In short, he intended to describe those changes which he had spoken of in the tenth chapter.

And the transgressions thereof shall be heavy upon it. When he says that "the earth is laden with its iniquity," he has very appropriately assigned this reason, that we may understand that God is never angry with men without a cause; for we ourselves are the authors of all the evils which we suffer. God is by nature disposed to kindness, and regards us with a father's love; and therefore it is our own fault that we are treated with sharpness and severity, and we have no reason to blame him. [399]

And it shall fall, and not rise again. He at length repeats what he briefly stated a little before, that there will be no remedy for those evils. Some think that this relates to the Jews, whose form of government was entirely taken away, so that they were broken down and scattered, and were scarcely reckoned in the rank of men. But I give a more extensive interpretation, that the distresses of the world will be so severe, that it cannot be restored to its original condition. Men always contend against adverse events, and their minds are full of confidence. Having endured calamities, they think that there will be some room for breathing, and their minds are swelled with false hopes, which the Prophet therefore takes away, that they may not in future deceive themselves by unfounded expectation. Yet it ought to be observed, that this general statement does not set aside the exception which Isaiah formerly made.

21. *And it shall come to pass.* This passage has tortured the minds of many commentators, and various interpretations have been offered by various writers. Some think that this relates to the sun and the stars, and others, that it relates to the devils, who will be punished along with the

[399] "Nous n'avons raison aucune d'accuser celuy qui nous frappe;" — "We have no reason to blame him who strikes us."

wicked. Others refer it to the Jews, on whom God had bestowed a remarkable privilege. But I cannot adopt any of those interpretations. [400] The simple and genuine meaning, therefore, appears to me to be, that no power will be so high as to be exempted from those scourges of God; and though they raise themselves above the clouds, yet the hand of God will reach them; as it is said in the Psalm,

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, there also shall thy hand pursue me." Psalm 139:7-10.

Jehovah will visit upon the army on high. [401] This is a metaphor by which he denotes kings and princes, who shine and sparkle in the world like stars; and he afterwards explains this metaphor in direct language, by adding *upon the kings of the earth*; for I do not think that they ought to be separated, as if he were speaking of different subjects, but that there is a repetition of the same statement, so that the latter clause explains the former. But perhaps it will be thought preferable to explain it thus: "he will visit on the kingdoms of the earth," even on those things which appear to surpass the rank of men; for some things rise so much above others, that they appear as if they did not belong to the ordinary rank. The word *visit* must relate to punishment, as even the context shews plainly enough.

22. *And they shall be gathered together, and shall be shut up in prison.* He continues his subject in the beginning of the verse. The mode of expression is metaphorical; for they were not all captives, but God reduced them to servitude, as if a man held in his hand the enemies whom he subdued. He therefore brings forward God as a conqueror, who shuts up enemies in prison, as captives are commonly shut up. We know that men, as it were, flee from God, and despise him, so long as he spares them, and exercises any forbearance towards them; and on this account also he threatens that they shall be thrown into prison in large masses, that they may not solace themselves with their multitude.

Afterwards they shall be visited. When he adds that after a time "they shall be visited," it is not simply a promise, but includes also a threatening to this effect, "As formerly by their obstinacy they mocked God, and excessively prolonged the time of sinning, so God will punish without making haste, till at length, though late, they acknowledge the cause of their distresses." Thus earthly judges frequently do not deign to admit into their presence the malefactors who have offended them, but plunge them into darkness and filth, and gradually wear them out, in order to subdue their obstinacy. Again,

[400] "Interpreters have commonly assumed that 'the host of the high place' is the same with the 'host of heaven,' and must therefore mean either stars (Jerome), or angels (Aben Ezra), or both (Gesenius). Grotius understands by it the images of the heavenly bodies worshipped in Assyria. Gesenius finds here an allusion to the punishment of fallen angels, and then makes this a proof of recent origin, because the Jewish demonology was later than the time of Isaiah. It may be doubted whether there is any reference to the hosts of heaven at all." — Alexander

[401] "The Lord shall punish (Heb. visit upon) the host of the high ones." — Eng. Ver.

as there are two ways in which God visits the world, either when he punishes the wicked, or when he shews to the elect the tokens of a Father's kindness, the word *visit* here signifies "to look upon;" and thus the Prophet softens the harshness of the threatening. It was necessary that the hearts of the godly should be supported amidst these distresses, that they might not faint; and on their account, therefore, after various threatenings, the prophets are wont to add consolations. As these statements tended to support believers, they were undoubtedly addressed to the Jews, among whom chiefly faith was found, or rather, there was none to be seen anywhere else.

After many days. This also deserves attention. It was intended to try the faith of the godly; [402] for we are hasty in our desires, and would wish that God should immediately perform his promises: we complain that he is slow, and we cannot brook any delay. It is therefore our duty to wait patiently for that mercy; and no delay, however long, should make us lose heart. Yet it ought also to be observed, that this does not refer to all; for, as we saw a little before, God had determined to save but a small remnant; and this ought to quicken us the more, that, being humbled by slow and long-continued punishments, we may meet God who visits us.

23. *The moon shall be confounded.* Many commentators think that the Prophet waxes still more wroth against the Jews, so far as to say, that the sun and moon and stars are ashamed of their unbelief, and that not only men, but creatures devoid of speech, will abhor them; but this appears to be far removed from the meaning and design of the Prophet. I have no doubt that he continues to give the consolation which he had glanced at in the former verse; "When the Lord shall visit his people, and cleanse the Church from its defilement, he will establish a kingdom so illustrious that it will darken the sun and stars by its brightness." This mode of expression is frequently employed by the prophets, and we have formerly seen it. Since, therefore, God will establish your kingdom on Mount Zion, so great will be its splendor in the restoration of the people, that those things which dazzle the eyes of men, will be dark in comparison of it; and, for the purpose of expressing this, he has mentioned those objects which surpass all others in brightness.

When the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion. Some think that the word *reign* denotes God's vengeance; but this is inaccurate, for although the Lord is said to reign when he discharges the office of a Judge, yet the complex phrase, "the reign of God in Mount Zion," always denotes mercy and salvation. He speaks of the restoration of the Church, and hence it follows, that it is only in Christ that those things are fulfilled.

And before his elders glory. By expressly mentioning the "elders," he employs a figure of speech frequently used in Scripture, by which the chief part of the Church is taken for the whole body of it. And yet it is not without a special design that he denotes, by the term "elders," not only the priests,

[402] "Des enfans de Dieu;" — "Of the children of God."

but other governors who preside over discipline and morals, and by whose moderation and prudence others ought to be guided. Under their name he includes the whole nation, not only because they represent the whole body, and because the common people are in some measure concealed under their shadow, but likewise that believers may entertain hope of future restoration; for otherwise it would have been of little or no avail that a scattered multitude should be left like a mutilated body or a confused mass. Not without good reason did he use the phrase, "and before his elders," that the Jews might know that the power of God would be visibly and strikingly displayed; not that it can be perceived by the bodily senses, but by faith. He reigns in such a manner, that we feel that he is present with us; and if we did not comprehend this, it would yield us no consolation.

Glory. [403] Instead of "glory" some read "gloriously," and others, "glorious." I prefer to take it simply as a substantive, though there is little difference in the meaning. He shews how great will be the splendor and glory of God, when the kingdom of Christ shall be established, because all that is brilliant must be obscured, and the glory of Christ alone must hold a high and prominent place. Hence it follows, that then only does God receive his just rights, and the honor due to him, when all creatures are placed in subjection, and he alone shines before our eyes.

[403] "And before his ancients gloriously; (or, there shall be glory before his ancients.)" — Eng. Ver. "Before his ancients shall he be glorified." — Lowth. "And before his elders shall there be glory." — Alexander

Chapter 25

CHAPTER 25

Isaiah Chapter 25:1-12

1. O Lord, thou art my God: I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name: for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

1. Iehova Deus meus es tu; exaltabo te: celebrabor nomin tuum; quia fecisti rem mirificam; consilia iam olim decreta, veritatem firmam.

2. For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

2. Quia posuisti ex urbe acervum, urbem munitam in ruinam; palatium extraneorum, ut non sit civitas, nec unquam ædificetur.

3. Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

3. Propterea glorificabit te populus fortis; civitas gentium robustarum timebit te.

4. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

4. Nam fuisti fortitudo pauperi; fortitudo, inquam, egeno in afflictione ejus; refugium ab inundatione, umbra ab æstu, quia spiritus fortium (aut, violentorum) quasi turbo (vel, inundatio) contra murum.

5. Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

5. Sicut æstum in arido, strepitum alienorum humiliabis, æstum in umbra nubis; clamorem (vel, cantum, vel, excisionem) fortium humiliabit.

6. And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a

feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

6. Et faciet Iehova exercituum cunctis populis in monte isto convivium pinguium, convivium defecatorum; pinguium, inquam, medullatorum; defecatorum liquidorum.

7. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

7. Et destruet in monte isto faciem involucri quo involuti sunt populi omnes, et operimentum quad expansum est super omnes gentes.

8. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

8. Destruxit mortem in æternum. Et absterget Dominus Iehova lachrymam a cunctis faciebus, et opprobrium populi sui auferet ab universa terra; quia Iehova locutus est.

9. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

9. Et dicetur in die illa: Ecce Deus noster iste; expectavimus eum, et salvabit nos. Iste Iehova; expectavimus eum, exultabimus, et lætabimur in salute ejus.

10. For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.

10. Nam quiescet manus Iehovæ in monte isto; et triturabitur Moab subter eum, sicut trituratur palea in sterquilinio.

11. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim; and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.

11. Et extendet manum suam sub medio ejus, sicut extendit natator ad natandum; et humiliabit superbiam ejus, cum brachiis manuum suarum.

12. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.

12. Et munitionem sublimitatis murorum tuorum sternet, humiliabit, dejiciet in terram, ad pulverem.

1. *O Lord, thou art my God.* Hitherto Isaiah has prophesied about the judgments of God, which threatened not only a single nation, but almost the whole world. Now, it was impossible that the contemplation of calamities so dismal as those which he foresaw should not give him great uneasiness; for godly persons would desire that all mankind should be saved, and, while they honor God, they desire also to love all that belongs to him; and, in short, so far as any man sincerely fears God, he has a powerful and lively feeling of the divine judgments. While wicked men stand amazed at the judgments of God, and are not moved by any terror, godly men tremble at the slightest

token of his anger. And if this be the case with us, what do we suppose was experienced by the Prophet, who had almost before his eyes those calamities which he foretold? For, in order that the ministers of the word might be convinced of the certainty of what they taught, it was necessary that they should be more powerfully impressed by it than the generality of men.

Since therefore the Lord held out to Isaiah, as in a picture, those dreadful calamities, he found it necessary, under the overpowering influence of grief and anxiety, to betake himself to the Lord; otherwise the confused emotions of his mind would have agitated him beyond measure. He therefore takes courage from the belief that, in the midst of these tempests, the Lord still determines to promote the advantage of his Church, and to bring into subjection to himself those who were formerly estranged. Isaiah therefore remains firm and steadfast in his calling, and does not allow himself to be drawn aside from his purpose, but continually relies on the expectation of mercy, and therefore perseveres in celebrating the praises of God. Thus we learn that this thanksgiving is connected with the former prophecies, and that Isaiah considers not only what he foretold, but why the Lord did it; that is, why the Lord afflicted so many nations with various calamities. It was, that he might subdue those who were formerly incorrigible, and who rushed forward with brutal eagerness, who had no fear of God, and no feeling of religion or godliness.

Thou art my God. Being as it were perplexed and confused, he suddenly raises his thoughts to God, as we have already said. Hence we ought to draw a very useful doctrine, namely, that when our minds are perplexed by a variety of uneasy thoughts on account of numerous distresses and afflictions which happen daily, we ought immediately to resort to God, and rely on his providence; for even the smallest calamities will overwhelm us, if we do not betake ourselves to him, and support our hearts by this doctrine. In order to bring out more fully the meaning of the Prophet, the word *but* or *nevertheless* may be appropriately inserted in this manner: "Whatever temptations from that quarter may disturb me, nevertheless I will acknowledge thee to be my God." Thus he promises that he will give to God the praise which is due to him; and this cannot be, unless a firm belief of his grace dwell in our hearts, and hold a superiority, from which grace springs a joy, which yields to us the most abundant ground for praises, when we are certain of our salvation, and are fully convinced that the Lord is our God. Accordingly, those who are influenced by no desire to praise God, have not believed and have not tasted the goodness of God; for if we actually trust in God, we must be led to take great delight in praising his name.

For thou hast done a wonderful thing. He uses the word פלא, (*pĕlĕ*,) *wonderful*, in the singular number instead of the plural. The Prophet does not confine his view to the present appearance of things, but looks to the end; for even men who in other respects are heathens, behold in the government of the world astonishing events, the sight of which overwhelms them with

amazement; which undoubtedly happened to the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, and to the Babylonians and Moabites. But those only who have tasted his goodness and wisdom can profit by the works of God; for otherwise they undervalue and despise his works, and do not comprehend their excellence, because they do not perceive their end, which is, that God, wonderfully bringing light out of darkness, (2 Corinthians 4:6,) raises his Church from death to life, and regulates in the best manner, and directs to the most valuable purpose, those things which to the eye of man appear to be confused.

Counsels which have been already decreed of old. [404] Now, in order to bestow still higher commendation on the providence of God, he adds, that the "counsels have been already decreed of old;" as if he had said, that to God nothing is sudden or unforeseen. And indeed, though he sometimes appears to us to act suddenly, yet all things were undoubtedly ordained by him before the creation of the world. (Acts 15:18.) By this word, therefore, the Apostle means that all the miracles which happen contrary to the expectation of men, are the result of that regular order which God maintains in governing the world, arranging all things from the beginning to the end. Now, since we do not understand those secret decrees, and our powers of understanding cannot rise so high, our attention must therefore be directed to the manifestation of them; for they are concealed from us, and exceed our comprehension, till the Lord reveal them by his word, in which he accommodates himself to our weakness; for his decree is (ἀνεξεύρητον) unsearchable.

Firm truth. [405] From the eternal decrees of God the Prophet thus proceeds to doctrines and promises, which he undoubtedly denotes by the word *truth*; for the repetition would be frivolous, if this word did not signify a relation; because, when God has revealed to us his purpose, if we believe his sayings, he then appears to be actually true. He commends the firmness and certainty of the word, when he says that it is "steadfast truth;" that is, that everything that comes from God, everything that is declared by him, is firm and unchangeable.

2. *For thou hast made of a city a heap.* Some refer this to Jerusalem; but I think that there is a change of the number, as is very customary with the prophets; for the Prophet does not speak merely of a single city, but of many cities, which he says will be reduced to heaps. As to the view held by some, that the Romans made Jerusalem a palace, it has nothing to do with the Prophet's meaning, which will be easily enough understood, if we keep in remembrance what has been already stated, that the Prophet does not confine his thoughts to those calamities by which the Lord afflicts many nations, but extends his view to the end of the chastisements. In this manner the Lord determined to tame and subdue the obstinacy of men, whom he would never have brought into subjection to him without having been broken down by various afflictions.

[404] "Faithfulness and truth." — Eng. Ver. "Perfectly true." — Stock. "Truth, certainty." — Alexander.

[405] "Counsels of old." — Eng. Ver. "Counsels of old time." — Stock

A palace of foreigners, [406] *that it may not be a city.* The Prophet does not merely mean that, when the natives have been driven out, "foreigners" wil1 inhabit the cities which have been taken; for that would not agree with what he immediately adds, "that it may be no longer a city;" but that wandering bands of men who shall be in want of a habitation will there find abundance of room, because there will be no inhabitants left. Since ארמון (*armōn*) denotes a magnificent palace, the Prophet thus says ironically, that highwaymen will dwell as in palaces, on account of the vast extent of the place which shall be deserted.

3. *Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee.* This is the end which I mentioned; [407] for if the Lord should destroy the world, no good result would follow, and indeed destruction could produce no feeling but horror, and we would never be led by it to sing his praise; but, on the contrary, we must be deprived of all feeling, when we perceive nothing but wrath. But praises flow from a sense of grace and goodness. It is therefore as if he had said, "Thou wilt not only strike and afflict, O Lord, but wilt cause the chastisements to be not without effect; for by them thou wilt subdue the fierceness of men, so that those who were formerly estranged from thee shall bend their neck to thee." This passage should lead us to observe how much we need chastisements, which train us to obedience to God; for we are carried away by prosperity to such an extent, that we think that we have a right to do anything, and we even grow wanton and insolent when God treats us with gentleness.

The city of the terrible nations shall fear thee. When the Prophet next mentions *fear*, he shews that this praise does not consist in words or outward gestures, but in the sincere feeling of the heart. Hence we infer that he now speaks of the entire worship of God; but, as many persons think that they have fully discharged their duty, as soon as they have made a confession with the mouth, he adds, for the sake of explanation, "The nations shall fear thee." When he calls them strong and powerful, by these epithets he denotes their pride and arrogance; for they were elated by their prosperity. They rebel against God, and cannot be made humble or submissive, unless they have been deprived of all things. To such views, therefore, ought our thoughts to be directed amidst those calamities which we perceive. The fierceness of men must be restrained and subdued, that they may be prepared for receiving doctrine and for rendering true obedience. So long as they shall be blinded by their wealth and vain confidence, they will fearlessly mock at the judgments of God, and will never yield subjection to him.

4. *For thou hast been a strength to the poor.* Hence we see the fruit of conversion, namely, that the Lord raises us from the dead, and brings us, as it were, out of the grave, stretching out his hand to us from heaven, to rescue us even from hell. This is our first access to him, for it is only in our

[406] "Of foreigners, a term with the Jews synonymous to barbarians or enemies; as the Romans confounded hospites with hostes, being to them nearly the same thing." — Stock

[407] See page 191

poverty that he finds the means of exercising his kindness. To us in our turn, therefore, it is necessary that we be poor and needy, that we may obtain assistance from him; and we must lay aside all reliance and confidence in ourselves, before he display his power in our behalf. This is the reason why he visits us with chastisements and with the cross, by which he trains us, so that we may be able to receive his assistance and grace.

A refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat. It is not without good reason that Isaiah adorns this description by these comparisons; for numerous and diversified temptations arise, and, in order to bear them courageously, it is necessary that the weak minds of men should be strengthened and fortified. On this account he says that God will be "a strength to the poor, a refuge from the storms, and a shadow from the heat;" because, whatever may be the nature of the dangers and assaults which threaten them, the Lord will protect his people against them, and will supply them with every kind of armor.

The breath of the strong or *of the violent ones.* In this passage, as in many others, (Genesis 8:1; Exodus 15:10; 1 Kings 19:11,) רוח (*rūăch*) signifies "the blowing of the wind," and denotes the tremendous violence with which wicked men are hurried along against the children of God; for not only do they "breathe out threatenings and terrors," (Acts 9:1,) but they appear to vomit out fire itself.

A storm or *flood against the wall.* This is to the same purport as the former; for by this figure he means, that wicked men, when they obtain liberty to do mischief, rush on with such violence that they throw down everything that comes in their way, for to overthrow and destroy walls is more than if the water were merely flowing over the fields.

5. *As the heat in a dry place.* If the Lord did not aid when violent men rush upon us, our life would be in imminent danger; for we see how great is the rage of wicked men, and if the Lord overturn walls, what can a feeble man do against him? These things therefore are added in order to magnify the grace of God, that we may consider what would become of us if the Lord did not render assistance.

Yet there are two ways in which commentators explain this passage. Some understand it to mean, that wicked men will be consumed by God's indignation, in the same manner as the violence of the heat burns up the fields which are in themselves barren. Others render it in the ablative case, *As if by heat*, and make the meaning to be, "Though wicked men, relying on their power, are so violent, yet the Lord will prostrate them in a moment, as if they were overpowered 'by heat in a dry place.' " But I consider the meaning to be different, for, after having shewn how great is the rage of wicked men against believers, he adds:

Thou wilt bring them down, O Lord. Alluding to the metaphor of the deluge, which he had formerly used, he says, "Thou wilt quench their heat, which would otherwise consume us, even as rain, or a shower, falling from

heaven, quenches the heat that scorched the thirsty fields." And thus the passage flows naturally; for the other interpretation is forced, and does violence, as the saying is, to the letter.

The noise of the strong ones will he lay low. [408] This clause is tortured in various ways. Some think that זמיר (*zĕmīr*) means *seed*; others that it means *a root;* as if he had said, that God will not only destroy wicked men, but will utterly root them out. This meaning would be probable, were it not opposed by the metaphor of the heat. In my opinion, therefore, it is more correctly interpreted by others to mean "singing and shouting," or "cutting off," although even those interpreters do not fully succeed in getting at the meaning of the Prophet. He therefore confirms the preceding statement, that the violence of wicked men, or the shouting which they haughtily and daringly set up, will presently be laid low, as the heat of the sun is overpowered by the falling rain, which is meant by *the shadow of a cloud*

6. *And the Lord of hosts shall make.* This passage has received various interpretations. Some think that the Prophet threatens the Jews, and threatens them in such a manner as to invite various nations to a banquet. This mode of expression is also found in other passages, for the Lord is said to fatten the wicked for the day of slaughter. Those commentators think that, as if the Jews were exposed as a prey to the Gentiles on account of their impiety, the Gentiles are invited to a banquet; as if the Lord had said, "I have prepared a splendid entertainment for the Gentiles; the Romans shall plunder and prey on the Jews." But, in my opinion, that view of the passage cannot be admitted, nor will it be necessary for me to give a long refutation of it, after having brought forward the true interpretation. Others explain it as if Isaiah were speaking of the wrath of God in this manner, "The Lord will prepare a banquet for all nations; he will give to them to drink the cup of his anger, that they may be drunken."

But the Prophet had quite a different meaning, for he proceeds in making known the grace of God, which was to be revealed by the coming of Christ. He employs the same metaphor which is also used by David, when he describes the kingdom of Christ, and says, that

"the poor and the rich will sit down at this feast,
and will eat and be satisfied." (Psalm 22:26, 29.)

By this metaphorical language he means, that no class of men will be excluded from partaking of this generous provision. Formerly it seemed as if the Lord nourished the Jews only, because they alone were adopted, and, as it were, invited to the feast provided for his family; but now he admits the Gentiles also, and extends his beneficence to all nations.

Will make for all nations a feast of fat things. This is an implied contrast when he says, *to all nations*, for formerly he was known to one nation only.

[408] "The branch of the terrible ones." — Eng. Ver. "So shall the song of the tyrants be brought low." — Alexander

(Psalm 76:1.) By "a feast of fat things" is meant a banquet consisting of animals that have been well fattened.

Of liquids purified. [409] Some render the Hebrew word שמרים, (*shĕmārīm*,) *dregs*, but inaccurately, for it means "old wines," such as the French call, *vins de garde*, "wines that have been long kept," and that are preferable to ordinary wines, especially in an eastern country, where they carry their age better. He calls them liquids which contain no dregs or sediment.

In short, it is sufficiently evident that he does not here threaten destruction against Gentiles or Jews, but that both are invited together to a very splendid banquet. This is still more evident from Christ's own words, when he compares the kingdom of heaven to a marriage-feast which the King prepared for his Son, to which he invites all without exception, because those who were at first invited refused to come. (Matthew 22:2, 3.) Nor have I any doubt that he speaks of the preaching of the gospel; and as it proceeded from Mount Zion, (Isaiah 2:3,) he says that the Gentiles will come to it to feast; for when God presents to the whole world spiritual food for feeding souls, the meaning was the same as if he had prepared a table for all. The Lord invites us at the present day, that he may fill and satisfy us with good things; he raises up faithful ministers to prepare for us that feast, and gives power and efficacy to his word, that we may be satisfied with it. [410]

In this mountain. As to the word *mountain*, though the servants of God do not now come out of the mountain to feed us, yet by this name we must understand the Church; for nowhere else can any one partake of this food. That feast is not set down in streets and highways, the table is not spread everywhere, and this banquet is not prepared in all places. In order that we may feast, we must come to the Church. That place was mentioned, because there alone God was worshipped, and revelations proceeded from it; as also the gospel came forth from it. When he says that this banquet will be rich and sumptuous, the design of this is to commend the doctrine of the gospel; for it is the spiritual food with which our souls are fed, and is so exquisitely delightful that we have no need of any other.

7. *And he will destroy the face of the covering.* [411] Here also commentators differ, for by the word *covering* is meant the disgrace with which believers are covered in this world, so that the glory of God is not seen in them; as if he had said, "Though many reproaches oppress the godly, yet God will take away those reproaches, and will make their condition glorious. I pass by other interpretations; but, in my opinion, the true meaning is, that the Lord promises that he will take away the veil by which they were kept in blindness and ignorance; and therefore it was by the light of the gospel that this darkness was dispelled.

409 "Of wines on the lees well refined." — Eng. Ver.

410 "Que nous en soyons remplis et rassassiez;" — "That we may be filled and satisfied with it."

411 "Le voile qui cache la face de tous les peuples;" — "The veil which covers the face of all people."

In that mountain. He says that this will be in mount Zion, from which also the light of the word shone on the whole world, as we have already seen. (Isaiah 2:3.) This passage, therefore, must unavoidably be referred to the kingdom of Christ; for the light did not shine on all men till Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, arose, (Malachi 4:2,) who took away all the veils, wrappings, and coverings. And here we have another commendation of the gospel, that it dispels the darkness, and takes away from our eyes the covering of errors. Hence it follows, that we are wrapped up and blinded by the darkness of ignorance, before we are enlightened by the doctrine of the gospel, by which alone we can obtain light and life, and be fully restored. Here, too, we have a confirmation of the calling of the Gentiles, that is, of our calling; for not only the Jews, but all nations, which formerly were buried in every kind of errors and superstition, are invited to this banquet.

8. *He hath destroyed death eternally.* [412] The Prophet continues his subject; for in general he promises that there will be perfect happiness under the reign of Christ, and, in order to express this the more fully, he employs various metaphors admirably adapted to the subject. That happiness is real, and not temporary or fading, which not even death can take away; for amidst the highest prosperity our joy is not a little diminished by the consideration that it will not always last. He therefore connects two things, which render happiness full and complete. The first is, that the life is perpetual; for to those who in other respects are happy for a time, it is a wretched thing to die. The second is, that this life is accompanied by joy; for otherwise it may be thought that death would be preferable to a sorrowful and afflicted life. He next adds that, when all disgrace has been removed, this life will be glorious; for otherwise less confidence would have been placed in the prophecy, in consequence of the wretched oppression of the people.

But it is asked, To what period must we refer these promises? for in this world we must contend with various afflictions, and must fight continually; and not only are we "appointed to death," (Psalm 44:22,) but we "die daily." (1 Corinthians 15:31.) Paul complains of himself and the chief pillars of the Church, that they are "a spectacle to all men," and endure insults of every kind, and are even looked upon as (καθάρματα) "cleansings" and (περιψήματα) "sweepings," or "offscourings." [413] (1 Corinthians 4:9, 13.) Where or when, therefore, are these things fulfilled? They must undoubtedly be referred to the universal kingdom of Christ; — universal, I say, because we must look not only at the beginning, but also at the accomplishment and the end: and thus it must be extended even to the second coming of Christ, which on that account is called "the day of redemption" and "the day of

[412] "He will swallow up death in victory." — Eng. Ver.

[413] "When we consider the expression which follows, (evidently meant, by a parallelism, to be exegetical,) , there is little doubt that the sense of is 'the cleansings up,' as is 'the sweepings up or around;' metaphorically denoting 'the vilest things' or 'persons,' the very 'outcasts' of society." — Bloomfield on 1 Corinthians 4:13. "Π denotes filings or scrapings of any kind, and also the sweepings that are cleared away with a brush." —Calvin on Corinthians, vol. 1 p. 166

restoration;" because all things which now appear to be confused shall be fully restored, and assume a new form. (Luke 21:28; Acts 3:21; Romans 8:23; Ephesians 4:30.) This prediction relates, no doubt, to the deliverance from Babylon; but as that deliverance might be regarded as the earnest and foretaste of another, this promise must undoubtedly be extended to the last day.

Let us therefore direct all our hope and expectation to this point, and let us not doubt that the Lord will fulfill all these things in us when we have finished our course. If we now "sow in tears," then undoubtedly we shall "reap with joy" and ecstasy. (Psalm 126:5.) Let us not dread the insults or reproaches of men, which will one day procure for us the highest glory. Having obtained here the beginnings of this happiness and glory, by being adopted by God, and beginning to bear the image of Christ, let us firmly and resolutely await the completion of it at the last day.

For Jehovah hath spoken it. After so many dreadful calamities, it might be thought that such an event was incredible; and therefore the Prophet shews that it proceeds not from man, but from God. When Jerusalem had been overthrown, the worship of God taken away, the temple destroyed, and the remnant of the people oppressed by cruel tyranny, no man would have believed it to be possible that everything would be raised to its original condition. It was necessary to combat with this distrust, to which men are strongly inclined; and therefore the Prophet confirms and seals these promises.

"Know that God communicated to me these declarations; fix your minds therefore on him, and not on me; let your faith rely on him 'who cannot lie' or deceive."
(Titus 1:2.)

9. *And it shall be said.* The verb אמר (*āmăr*) is indefinite, "He shall say;" but as the discourse does not relate to one or another individual, but to all in general, I chose to render it in a passive form. [414] This is an excellent conclusion; for it shews that God's benefits are not in any respect doubtful or uncertain, but are actually received and enjoyed by men. The Prophet declares that the banquet, of which he formerly spoke, (verse 6,) will not in vain be prepared by God; for men shall feast on it, and possess everlasting joy.

Lo, this is our God. That joyful shout, which he declares will be public, is the actual test and proof, so to speak, of the experience of the grace of God. This passage ought to be carefully observed; for the Prophet shews that there will be such a revelation as shall fix the minds of men on the word of God, so that they will rely on it without any kind of hesitation; and if these things belong, as they undoubtedly do belong, to the kingdom of Christ, we derive from them this valuable fruit, that Christians, unless they are wanting to themselves, and reject the grace of God, have undoubted

[414] "J'ay mieux aimé le tourner, On dira;" — "I chose rather to render it, It shall be said."

truth on which they may safely rely. God has removed all ground of doubt, and has revealed himself to them in such a manner, that they may venture freely to declare that they know with certainty what is his will, and may say with truth what Christ said to the Samaritan woman, "We worship what we know." (John 4:22.) Having been informed by the gospel as to the grace offered through Christ, we do not now wander in uncertain opinions, as others do, but embrace God and his pure worship. Let us boldly say, "Away with all the inventions of men!"

It is proper to observe the contrast between that dark and feeble kind of knowledge which the fathers enjoyed under the law, and the fullness which shines forth to us in the gospel. Though God deigned to bestow on his ancient people the light of heavenly doctrine, yet he made himself more familiarly known through Christ, as we are told;

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared him." (John 1:18.)

The Prophet now extols that certainty which the Son of God brought to us by his coming, when he "sheweth to us the Father." (John 14:9.) Yet, while we excel the ancient people in this respect, that the reconciliation obtained through Christ makes God, as it were, more gracious to us, there is no other way in which God can be known but through Christ, who is "the pattern and image of his substance." (Hebrews 1:3.) "He who knoweth not the Son, knoweth not the Father." (John 14:7.) Though Jews, Mahometans, and other infidels, boast that they worship God, the creator of heaven and earth, yet they worship an imaginary God. However obstinate they may be, they follow doubtful and uncertain opinions instead of the truth; they grope in the dark, and worship their own imagination instead of God. In short, apart from Christ, all religion is deceitful and transitory, and every kind of worship ought to be abhorred and boldly condemned.

Nor is it without good reason that the Prophet employs not only the adverb *Lo*, but the demonstrative pronoun *This,* [415] in order to attest more fully the presence of God, as, a little afterwards, by repeating the declaration of certainty and confidence, he expresses the steadfastness that will be found in those who shall worship God through Christ. It is certain that we cannot comprehend God in his majesty, for he "dwelleth in unapproachable light," (1 Timothy 6:16,) which will immediately overpower us, if we attempt to rise to it; and therefore he accommodates himself to our weakness, gives himself to us through Christ, by whom he makes us partakers of wisdom, righteousness, truth, and other blessings. (1 Corinthians 1:30.)

This is Jehovah. It is worthy of observation that, when he calls Christ the God of believers, he gives to him the name "Jehovah;" from which we infer that the actual eternity of God belongs to the person of Christ. Besides, since Christ has thus made himself known to us by the gospel, this proves the base ingratitude of those who, not satisfied with so full a manifestation, have

[415] "Ces deux mots, Voici, Cestui-ci;" — "These two words, Lo, This."

dared to add to it their own idle speculation, as has been done by Popery.

We have waited for him. He expresses the firmness and perseverance of those who have once embraced God in Christ; for it ought not to be a temporary knowledge, but we must persevere in it steadfastly to the end. Now, Isaiah speaks in the name of the ancient Church, which at that time had its seat, strictly speaking, among the Jews alone; and therefore, despising as it were all the gods that were worshipped in other countries, he boldly declares that he alone, who revealed himself to Abraham, (Genesis 15:1,) and proclaimed his law by the hand of Moses, (Exodus 20:1, 2,) is the true God. Other nations, which were involved in the darkness of ignorance, did not "wait for" the Lord: for this "waiting" springs from faith, which is accompanied by patience, and there is no faith without the word.

Thus he warns believers that their salvation rests on hope and expectation; for the promises of God were as it were suspended till the coming of Christ. Besides, we ought to observe what was the condition of those times; for it appeared as if either the promise of God had come to nought, or he had rejected the posterity of Abraham. Certainly, though they looked very far, God did not at that time appear to them; and therefore they must have been endued with astonishing patience to endure such heavy and sharp temptations. Accordingly, he bids them wait quietly for the coming of Christ; for then they will clearly perceive how near God is to them that worship him.

The same doctrine ought to soothe us in the present day, so that, though our salvation be concealed, still we may "wait for the Lord" with firm and unshaken hope, and, when he is at a distance, may always say, *Lo, here he is.* In times of the greatest confusion, let us learn to distinguish him by this mark, *This is he.* [416] As to the words, though he says, in the past tense, [417] "We rejoiced and were glad in his salvation;" yet the words denote a continued act; and, a little before, he had said in the future tense, "He will save us." The meaning may be thus summed up, "Christ will never disappoint the hopes of his people, if they call on him with patience."

10. *For the hand of Jehovah shall rest.* The design of the Prophet in the beginning of this verse, I have no doubt, was to comfort the godly, who but for this would have thought that God had forsaken and abandoned them; for the opinion of those who view it as describing the judgment which the Lord was about to execute on the Jews, has no foundation whatever; but the meaning is the same as if he had said, that the Lord will always assist his Church. I am aware that "the hand of God" rests also on the reprobate, when he does not cease to pursue them with his vengeance, till he completely overwhelm them; but here the word "hand" denotes assistance, and not chastisements, and therefore by the word "rest," is meant the uninterrupted continuance of

[416] "C'est-ci l Eternel;" — "This is the Eternal."

[417] "This is a strange oversight. נגילה (nagīllah) and נשמחה (nismĕchāh) are in the future tense, and are so rendered by our Author in his version, ``Exultabimus et lætabimur,'' --- ``We will rejoice and be glad.'' ``The augmented futures at the close,'' says Professor Alexander, alluding to the He paragogic, ``may either denote fixed determination (`we will rejoice, we will be glad') or a proposition, (`Let us then rejoice,') for which the language has no other distinct form.'' --- Ed

defense or protection.

We draw from this a profitable doctrine, that although God scatters innumerable blessings over the whole world, in such a manner that wicked men also obtain a share of them, yet his "hand" does not "rest," or is not continually present, but in the holy *mountain*; that is, in the Church, where he is worshipped. It ought also to be observed, that Jerusalem had been chastised, before she received these blessings; for he had formerly threatened chastisements and punishments, to which he added this consolation.

And Moab shall be trodden down under him. In this clause he gives an additional view of the grace of God; for, by inflicting punishment on the enemies of the Church, he will shew how dearly he values its salvation. The Jews had no enemies more deadly than the Moabites, though their ancestors [418] were near relatives. By a figure of speech (συνεκδοχικῶς) in which a part is taken for the whole, he includes under this name all the enemies of the Church, and especially those who are somewhat related to them, and who are more destructive than all others. He shews that, though for a time they are victorious and oppress the Church, yet eventually they shall be punished. His object is, that under their afflictions believers may not lose heart, as if their condition were unhappy, while wicked men are cheerful and prosperous; for the "treading down," which is here mentioned, will quickly follow. Consequently, if at the present day we see the Church disturbed and oppressed by those who are somewhat related to us, and who even assume the name and title of the Church, let us comfort our hearts by this promise.

As straw is trodden down in the dunghills. [419] The word מדמנה, (*Mădmēnāh*,) which we translate "dunghill," [420] is supposed by some to be the name of a city, which is also mentioned by Jeremiah, (Jeremiah 48:2.) But what if we should say that the Prophet alludes to the city, which was probably situated in a fertile soil, and thus conveys a stronger censure, and presses harder on the Moabites? As if he had said, "As straw is trodden down in their fields, so will the Lord tread down the Moabites." I do not dislike other interpretations, but consider it to be not improbable that he alludes to the fertility of the soil in which that city was situated. Yet in my version I have not hesitated to follow the common opinion.

11. *And he shall spread out.* The Prophet now explains and confirms the former statement; but he employs a different metaphor, by which he means, that the Lord will spread out his hand to the innermost part of the country of Moab, and not merely to its extremities. Some explain the metaphor thus: "As the arms are stretched out in swimming, so the Lord will chastise the Moabites on all sides." Others think that it expresses the doubling of punishments, as if he had said, "The Lord will not only punish the Moabites,

[418] That is, Abraham and Lot. (Genesis 11:31; 19:37.)

[419] "As straw is trodden down for the dunghill, (or, thrashed in Madmenah.)" — (Eng. Ver.)

[420] Professor Alexander renders it, "in the water of the dunghill," and remarks, "The Keri, or Masoretic reading in the margin, has במו, a poetical equivalent of ב, the preposition. The Kethib, or textual reading, which is probably more ancient, is במי, in the water. This, with the next word, may denote a pool in which the straw was left to putrefy."

but will again and again take vengeance for the cruelty which they exercised against the children of God."

But we might take another way of explaining that metaphor. Those who swim do not rush forward with the utmost violence, but gently spread out and quickly draw back their arms, and yet they cut and subdue the waters. In like manner, the Lord does not always put forth great strength to cut down the wicked, but without any effort, without the use of armies, without any noise or uproar, he destroys and puts them to flight, however valiant or well prepared for battle they may appear to be. And I approve of this explanation, because it takes nothing from the meaning formerly given, and explains more clearly, that the wicked are often brought to nothing by the hand of God, though he do not openly thunder from heaven. When he says, "*In the midst of it*," he shews that no part will be hidden in such a manner as not to be overtaken by this vengeance.

12. *And the fortress.* The Prophet now directs his discourse to the country of Moab. It was highly fortified, and was proud of its walls and fortifications; and he affirms that the lofty towers, and other defences, however strong and seemingly impregnable, will be of no avail. The ancients, it is well known, had quite a different method of fortifying from what is practiced among us.

He will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground. The three words here employed, for conveying the meaning more strongly, are not superfluous; for it was necessary to beat down that pride which swelled the hearts of the Moabites, and which, as we formerly saw, [421] made them intolerable. The Prophet therefore mocks at them, "As if the Lord could not cast down that loftiness of which you boast!"

To the dust. The meaning of this clause is as if he had said, "He will not only level it with the ground, but will reduce it *to dust*, so that there will not even be a trace of the ancient ruin." This passage contains an excellent and highly seasonable consolation; for the enemies of the Church in the present day are so haughty, that they mock not only at men, but at God himself, and are so much swelled and puffed up by their power, that they imagine themselves to be invincible; but, in opposition to their bulwarks and defences, we ought to bring forward this declaration of the Prophet, "The Lord will quickly bring down and lay them low." Yet we must patiently endure to see them strong and powerful, till the full time for their destruction arrive.

[421] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 488

Chapter 26

CHAPTER 26

Isaiah Chapter 26:1-21

1. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city: salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

1. In die illa cantabitur canticum in terra Iuda: Urbs fortitudinis nobis; salutem posuit muros et vallum.

2. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

2. Aperite portas, et ingredietur gens justa, custodiens veritates.

3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.

3. Cogitatio fixa: custodies pacem, pacem; quoniam in te confisum est.

4. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

4. Sperate in Iehova in perpetuum; quia in Iah Iehova fortitudo seculorum.

5. For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low: he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.

5. Nam incurvabit incolas sublimitatis, civitatem exaltatam humiliabit; humiliabit, inquam, eam ad terram, deducet ad pulverem.

6. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.

6. Calcabit eam pes; pedes pauperis, gressus inopum.

7. The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

7. Semita justi rectitudines; rectam viam justi æquabis, (vel, tu, qui rectus es, viam justi æquabis.)

8. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the

desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

8. Etiam in via judiciorum tuorum, Iehova, speravimus in te, ad nomen tuum, et memoriam tui desiderium animæ.

9. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

9. Anima mea desideravit te per noctem; quin et spiritu meo intra me te mane (vel, sedulo) quæram; nam ex quo fuerint judicia tua in terra, justitiam discent incolæ terræ.

10. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

10. Impius gratiam obtinebit, nec discet justitiam; in terra rectorum operum perverse aget, nec videbit magnificentiam Iehovæ.

11. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

11. Iehova, utcunque exaltata fuerit manus tua, non videbunt; videbunt et pudefient æmulatione populi; quin et ignis hostium tuorum vorabit eos.

12. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

12. Iehova, ordinabis nobis pacem; nam et omnia opera nostra operatus es nobis.

13. O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

13. Iehova Deus noster, subjugaverunt nos domini præter te; tantum in te recordabimur nominis tui.

14 They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

14. Mortui non vivent; occisi non resurgent; propterea visitasti, et exterminasti eos; et perdidisti omnem memoriam eorum.

15. Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.

15. Addidisti genti, Iehova; addidisti genti; glorificatus es; dilatasti omnes fines terræ.

16. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

16. Iehova, in tribulatione visitaverunt te, effuderunt precationem, dum castigatio tua super eos.

17. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord.

17. Sicut prægnans, quæ ad partum propinquat, dolet, clamat in doloribus

suis; sic nos fuimus a facie tua, Iehova.

18. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

18. Parturivimus, doluimus, ac si peperissemus ventum, salus non est facta terræ, et non ceciderunt incolæ orbis.

19. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

19. Vivent mortui tui, cadaver meum resurgent. Evigilate, et cantate, incolæ pulveris. Quoniam ros herbarum ros tuus; et terra mortuos ejiciet, (vel, terram Gigantum prosternes; vel, terra Gigantes cadere faciet.)

20. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

20. Veni, populе mi, intra in cubicula tua; claude ostia post te: lateas paululum ad momentum, donec transeat indignatio.

21. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

21. Nam ecce Iehova egreditur e loco suo, ut visitet iniquitatem habitatoris terræ contra eum. Et discooperiet terra sanguines suos, et non teget amplius super occisis suis.

1. *In that day shall a song be sung.* Here the Prophet begins again to shew that, after the return of the people from captivity, they will be defended by God's power and guardianship, and that under his protection Jerusalem will be as safe as if she had been surrounded by bulwarks, ramparts, a ditch, and a double wall, so that no enemy could find entrance.

It is proper to observe the time when "this song was sung." The Prophet had foretold the calamity that would befall the Church, which was not yet so near at hand, but happened a short time after his death. When the people were led into captivity, they would undoubtedly have despaired, if they had not been encouraged by such promises. That the Jews might cherish a hope that they would be delivered, and might behold life in the midst of death, the Prophet composed for them this song, even before the calamity occurred, that they might be better prepared for enduring it, and might hope for better things. I do not think that it was composed solely that, when they had been delivered, they might give thanks to God, but that even during their captivity, though they were like dead men, (Ezekiel 37:1,) they might strengthen their hearts with this confidence, and might also train up their children in this expectation, and hand down these promises, as it were, to posterity.

We have formerly [422] seen the reason why these and other promises were put by Isaiah into the form of verse. It was, that, having been frequently sung, they might make a deeper impression on their memory. Though they mourned in Babylon, and were almost overwhelmed with sorrow, (hence these sounds, (Psalm 137:4,) "How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?") yet they must have hoped that at a future period, when they should have returned to Judea, they would give thanks to the Lord and sing his praises; and therefore the Prophet shews to them at a distance the day of deliverance, that they may take courage from the expectation of it.

We have a city of strength. By these words a full restoration of Jerusalem and of the people is promised, because God will not only deliver the captives and gather those that are scattered, but will also preserve them safe, after having brought them back to their country. But not long afterwards believers saw that Jerusalem was destroyed, (2 Kings 25:9,) and the Temple thrown down, (2 Chronicles 36:19,) and after their return nothing could meet their eye but hideous ruins; and all this Isaiah had previously foretold. It was therefore necessary that they should behold from the lofty watch-tower of faith this restoration of Jerusalem.

He hath made salvation to be walls and a bulwark. He now defines what will be "the strength of the city;" for the "salvation" of God will supply the place of a "wall," towers, ditches, and mounds. As if he had said, "Let other cities rely on their fortifications, God alone will be to us instead of all bulwarks." Some allege that the words may be read, "He hath set a wall and bulwark for salvation;" and I do not set aside that rendering. But as a more valuable doctrine is contained in the Prophet's words, when nothing is supplied, it serves no good purpose to go far for a forced interpretation; especially since the true and natural interpretation readily presents itself to the mind, which is, that God's protection is more valuable than all ditches and walls. In like manner, it is also said in the psalm, "Thy mercy is better than life," (Psalm 63:3;) for as David there boasts of enjoying, under God's shadow, greater safety and freedom from care than if he had been fortified by every kind of earthly defense, so Isaiah here says, that there will be good reason for laying aside fear, when God shall have undertaken to guard his people. Now, since this promise extends to the whole course of redemption, we ought to believe that at the present day God is still the guardian of his Church, and therefore, that his power is of more avail than if it had been defended by every kind of military force. Accordingly, if we wish to dwell in safety, we must remain in the Church. Though we have no outward defences, yet let us learn to be satisfied with the Lord's protection, and with his sure salvation, which is better than all bulwarks.

2. *Open ye the gates.* This "song" was undoubtedly despised by many, when it was published by Isaiah; for during his life, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were wicked and ungodly, and the number of good men was ex-

[422] See vol. 1 p. 162.

ceedingly small. But after his death, when they had been punished for their wickedness, it was in some measure perceived that this prediction had not been uttered in vain. So long as wicked men enjoy prosperity, they have no fear, and do not imagine that they can be brought low. Thus the Jews thought that they would never be driven out of Judea, and carried into captivity, and hoped that they would continue to dwell there. It was therefore necessary to take away from them every pretense for being haughty and insolent; and such is the import of the Prophet's words:

And a righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, shall enter in. "The inhabitants of the restored city shall be unlike the former; for they will maintain righteousness and truth. But at that time this promise also might appear to have failed of its accomplishment; for when they had been driven out of the country and led into captivity, no consolation remained. Accordingly, when the Temple had been destroyed, the city sacked, and all order and government overthrown and destroyed, they might have objected, "Where are those 'gates' which he bids us 'open?' Where are the people who shall 'enter?' " Yet we see that these things were fulfilled, and that nothing was ever foretold which the Lord did not accomplish. We ought, therefore, to keep before our minds those ancient histories, that we may be fortified by their example, and, amidst the deepest adversity to which the Church is reduced, may hope that the Lord will yet raise her up again.

When the Prophet calls the nation "righteous and truthful," he not only, as I mentioned a little before, describes the persons to whom this promise relates, but shews the fruit of the chastisement; for when its pollution shall have been washed away, the holiness and righteousness of the Church shall shine more brightly. At that time wicked men were the majority, good men were very few, and were overpowered by the multitude of those who were of an opposite character. It was therefore necessary that that multitude, which had no fear of God, and no religion, should be taken away, that God might gather his remnant. Thus, it was a compensation for the destruction, that Jerusalem, which had been polluted by the wickedness of her citizens, again was actually devoted to God; for it would not have been enough to regain prosperity, if newness of life had not shone forth in holiness and righteousness.

Now, as the Prophet foretells the grace of God, so he also exhorts the redeemed people to maintain uprightness of life. In short, he threatens that these promises will be of no avail to hypocrites, and that the gates of the city will not be opened for them, but only for the righteous and holy. It is certain that the Church was always like a barn, (Matthew 3:12,) in which the chaff is mingled with the wheat, or rather, the wheat is overpowered by the chaff; but when the Jews had been brought back into their country, the Church was unquestionably purer than before. Those who returned must have been animated by a good disposition, to undertake a journey so long, and beset by so many annoyances, embarrassments, and dangers; and many

others chose rather to remain in captivity than to return, thinking that to dwell in Babylon was a safer and more peaceful condition than to return to Judea. Such persons must have had a seed of piety, which led them to take possession of those promises which were granted to the fathers. Now, though the Church even at that time was stained by many imperfections, still this description was comparatively true; for a large portion of the filth had been swept away, and those who remained had profited in some degree under God's chastisements.

A righteous nation, which keepeth the truth. Some distinguish these terms in this manner, "A nation *righteous* before God, and *upright* before men." But I take the meaning to be more simple; that, after having called the nation "righteous," he shews in what righteousness consists; that is, where there is uprightness of heart, which has nothing feigned or hypocritical, for nothing is more opposite to righteousness than hypocrisy. And though no man ever existed who advanced so far that he could receive the commendation of being perfectly righteous, yet the children of God, who with their whole heart aim at this "truth," may be said to be keepers of it. But perhaps it will rather be thought that, by a figure of speech, one part is taken for the whole, to describe what is true righteousness; that is, when all deceit and all wicked practices have been laid aside, and men act towards each other with sincerity and truth.

If any man wish to make use of this passage for upholding the merits of men, the answer is easy; for the Prophet does not here describe the cause of salvation, or what men are by nature, but what God makes them by his grace, and what kind of persons he wishes to be members of his Church. Out of wolves he makes sheep, as we have formerly seen. [423] So long as we live here, we are always at a great distance from perfection, and are in continual progress towards it; but the Lord judges of us according to that which he has begun in us, and, having once led us into the way of righteousness, reckons us to be righteous. As soon as he begins to check and reform our hypocrisy, he at once calls us true and upright.

3. *The thought is fixed; thou wilt keep peace, peace.* [424] As the Hebrew word יצר (*Yĕtzĕr*) signifies both "imagination" or "creature," and "thought," some render it, "By a settled foundation thou wilt keep peace;" as if the Prophet meant, that when men, amidst the convulsions of the world, continue to rest firmly on God, they will always be safe. Others render it, "For the fixed thought thou wilt keep peace;" which amounts to nearly the same thing, that they who have fixed their minds on God alone will at length be happy; for in no other way does God promise that he will be the guardian of his people than when they rely on his grace with settled thoughts, and without change or wavering. Since, however, the sign of the dative case is not added, but the Prophet in a concise manner of expression says, "Fixed

[423] See Calvin on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 384

[424] "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace (Heb. peace, peace) whose mind (or, thought, or, imagination) is stayed on thee." — Eng. Ver.

or steadfast thought," let my readers judge if it be not more appropriate to view it as referring to God, so as to make the meaning to be, that the peace of the Church is founded on his eternal and unchangeable purpose; for, in order to prevent godly minds from continual wavering, it is of the highest importance to look to the heavenly decree.

It is undoubtedly true that we ought constantly to hope in God, that we may perceive his continual faithfulness in defending us; and believers are always enjoined not to be driven about by any doubt, or uncertainty, or wavering, but firmly to rely on God alone. Yet the meaning which is more easily obtained from this passage, and comes more naturally from the words of the Prophet, is, that it is a fixed and unchangeable decree of God, that all who hope in him shall enjoy eternal peace; for if *fixed thought* means the certainty and steadfastness of the godly, it would be superfluous to assign the reason, which is —

Because he hath trusted in thee. In short, both modes of expression would have been harsh, that "continual peace is prepared for imagination," or "for thought." But it is perfectly appropriate to say that, when we trust in God, he never disappoints our hope, because he has determined to guard us for ever. Hence it follows, that, since the safety of the Church does not depend on the state of the world, it is not moved or shaken by the various changes which happen daily; but that, having been founded on the purpose of God, it stands with steady and unshakable firmness, so that it can never fall.

There is also, I think, an implied contrast between God's fixed thought and our wandering imaginations; for at almost every moment there springs up something new which drives our thoughts hither and thither, and there is no change, however slight, that does not produce some doubt. We ought therefore to hold this principle, that we do wrong if we judge of God's unshaken purpose by our fickle imaginations; as we shall elsewhere see,

"As far as the heavens are from the earth, so far are my thoughts from your thoughts, O house of Israel." (Isaiah 55:9.)

We ought therefore above all to hold it certain, that our salvation is not liable to change; because the purpose of God is unchangeable.

Thou wilt keep peace, peace. What has now been stated explains the reason of the repetition of the word *peace*; for it denotes uninterrupted continuance for ever. By the word *peace* I understand not only serenity of mind, but every kind of happiness; as if he had said, that the grace of God alone can enable us to live prosperously and happily.

4. *Trust ye in Jehovah for ever.* As to the words, some read in the second clause, "Trust in God, the strong Jehovah of ages;" but as צור (*tzūr*) is not always an adjective, but signifies *strength*, I reject that meaning as forced, besides that it has little relation to the subject, as will immediately appear. There is also little ground for the ingenuity of those who infer from this passage the divinity of Christ, as if the Prophet said, that "Jehovah is in Jah;" for the twofold name of God is given for the express purpose of

magnifying his power.

He now exhorts the people to rest safely on God, and therefore, after the preceding doctrine, there is now room for exhortation. Besides, it would have been vain to say that our peace is in the hand of God, and that he is our faithful guardian, if we had not been taught and instructed on this subject, and at the same time urged by exhortations. Yet he exhorts us not only to earnest hope, but to perseverance; and this discourse applies properly to believers, who have already learned what it is to trust in the Lord, and who need to be strengthened, because they are still weak, and may often fall, in consequence of the various motives to distrust with which they are called to struggle. He therefore does not enjoin them merely to trust in the Lord, but to remain steadfastly in trust and confidence to the end.

For in Jah Jehovah is the strength of ages. [425] We ought to attend to the reason which is here assigned, namely, that as the power of God, which is the object of faith, is perpetual, so faith ought to be extended so as to be equally perpetual. When the Prophet speaks of the strength and power of God, he does not mean power which is unemployed, but power active and energetic, which is actually exerted on us, and which conducts to the end what he had begun. And this doctrine has a wider application, for it bids us truly believe that we ought to contemplate the nature of God; for, as soon as we turn aside from beholding it, nothing is seen but what is fleeting, and then we immediately faint. Thus ought faith to rise above the world by continual advances; for neither the truth, nor the justice, nor the goodness of God, is temporary and fading, but God continues always to be like himself.

5. *For he will bring down the inhabitants of loftiness.* [426] He now explains more fully what is that power of God of which he spoke. It is that which we ourselves feel, and which is exerted for our benefit. The two clauses are therefore closely connected, that "the proud are laid low by the power of God," and that "the lowly and despised are placed in their room;" for it would not have yielded full consolation to tell us, in the first place, that "the proud will be laid low," if he had not likewise added, that "the lowly will be exalted," so as to hold dominion over the proud. We therefore acknowledge, that in our own experience God works powerfully for our salvation, and this yields to us a ground of hope.

Under the word *loftiness* he includes not only bulwarks and fortifications of every kind, (for the ancients were wont to build their cities in lofty places,) but also wealth and magnificence. He therefore means, that no defense can prevent God from casting down the wicked, and laying them low. Towers and bulwarks, indeed, are not displeasing to God; but as it rarely happens that they who are strong and powerful are not proud, so *loftiness* frequently denotes *pride*. Unquestionably he speaks of the wicked, who have abundance of arms, forces, and money, and imagine that they are protected against God

[425] "For in the Lord Jehovah is (Heb. the Rock of ages) everlasting strength." — Eng. Ver.
[426] "For he bringeth down them that dwell on high." — Eng. Ver.

himself. He likewise comforts the Jews, as we have formerly said, [427] because the invincible power of Babylon might have terrified them and thrown them into despair, if the Lord had not supported them by this promise: "You have no reason for being terrified at the greatness or strength of Babylon; for she will quickly fall, and will not stand before the power of the Lord."

7. *Straightnesses are the way of the righteous man.* He does not praise the righteousness of the godly, as some have falsely supposed, but shews that, through the blessing of God, they are prosperous and successful during the whole course of their life. Having only stated briefly in the beginning of the verse, that "their ways are plain and smooth," he explains more fully in the second clause, ascribing it to the grace of God that in an open plain, as it were, the righteous proceed in their course, till they reach the goal.

Thou wilt weigh the straight path of the righteous. The word *weigh* contains a metaphor, that God, by applying a balance, as it were, brings to an equal measure those things which in themselves were unequal. The Hebrew word ישר (*yāshār*) is ambiguous, for it may refer either to God or to the path. Accordingly some render it, *Thou, who art upright, will direct the path of the righteous*; [428] and in other passages God is called *upright.* (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 25:8.) There would also be propriety in the allusion, that the *straightness* of which he spoke proceed from God, for he alone is *straight* or *upright.* But the other version appears to be more natural. [429]

He promises in general, that God will take care of the righteous, so as to lead them, as it were, by his hand. When the wicked prosper and the righteous are oppressed, everything in this world appears to be moved by chance; and although Scripture frequently declares and affirms that God takes care of them, (Psalm 37:5; 1 Peter 5:7,) yet we can scarcely remain steadfast, but waver, when everything that happens to them is unfavourable. Yet it is true that the ways of the righteous are made plain by God's balance, however rough and uneven they may appear to be; and not only so, but he has committed them to the guardianship of his angels, "lest they should be injured, or dash their foot against a stone." (Psalm 91:11.) But for this, they would easily fall or give way through exhaustion, and would hardly ever make way amidst so many thorns and briers, steep roads, intricate windings, and rough places, did not the Lord lead out and deliver them.

Let us therefore learn to commit ourselves to God, and to follow him as our leader, and we shall be guided in safety. Though snares and artifices, the stratagems of the devil and wicked men, and innumerable dangers, may surround us, we shall always be enabled to escape. We shall feel what the Prophet says here, that our ways, even amidst deep chasms, are made plain,

[427] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 407

[428] It will be observed, that this accords very nearly with our English version. — Ed

[429] Bishop Stock's rendering is, "The road of the just is the direct road; rightly the path of the just dost thou make even;" and he makes the following annotations: — "The direct road to happiness, the object of all human pursuit. 'Rightly,' or with reason, 'the path of the just dost thou make even,' smooth before him, till he reaches his journey's end. 'The straight road is the short one,' says the divine as well as the geometrician." — Ed

so that there is no obstacle to hinder our progress. And, indeed, experience shews, that if we are not led by God's guidance, we shall not be able to push our way through rugged roads; for so great is our weakness that we shall scarcely advance a single step without stumbling at the smallest stone that comes in our way. Satan and wicked men not only entangle and delay us by many perplexities, and not only present to us slight difficulties, but cause us to encounter sometimes high mounds and sometimes deep pits, which even the whole world would be unable to avoid.

It is therefore proper for us to acknowledge how much we need heavenly direction, and to confess with Jeremiah, "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself; and it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23.) Let us not be puffed up with vain confidence, as if the result were placed in our own power. Let us not boast, as James warns us, that "we shall do this or that." (James 4:15.) Such is the manner of rash men, who act as if they could do everything at their own pleasure; while it is not in our power, as Solomon tells us, to direct our tongue so as to give a proper answer. (Proverbs 16:1.) In vain, therefore, do men form plans, and deliberate, and decide about their ways, if God do not stretch out his hand. But he holds it out to the righteous, and takes peculiar care of them; for, while the providence of God extends to all, and while he supplies the wants of young ravens (Psalm 147:9) and sparrows, (Matthew 10:29,) and of the smallest animals, yet he has a fatherly kindness towards the godly, and delivers them out of dangers and difficulties.

8. *Yea, in the way of thy judgments.* This verse contains a very beautiful doctrine, without which it might have been thought that the former statements were without foundation. Since he said that God will be our guide during the whole of life, so that we shall neither wander nor stumble, and while, on the other hand, we are pressed by so many straits, we might conclude that those promises have not been actually fulfilled. Accordingly, when he tries our patience, we ought to strive, and yet to trust in him. Here the Prophet gives us this instruction, that, though our eyes are not gratified by an easy and delightful path, and though the road is not made smooth under our feet, but we must toil through many hard passages, still there is room for hope and patience.

By *the way of judgments* he means adversity, and the word *judgment* often has this meaning in Scripture. But here is a mark which distinguishes the godly from hypocrites; for in prosperity hypocrites bless God, and speak highly of him; but in adversity they murmur, and curse God himself, and plainly shew that they had no confidence in him, and thus judge of God according as their prosperity lasts. The godly, on the other hand, when they are tried by afflictions and calamities, are more and more excited to place confidence. [430]

The particle אף, (*ăph,*) *Even*, is inserted for the sake of emphasis, as if

[430] "A se fier en Dieu;" — "To trust in God."

the Prophet had said, that believers are earnest in the worship of God, not only so long as he treats them with gentleness, but that, if he deal harshly with them, still they do not faint, because they are supported by hope. It is therefore the true test of sincere godliness, when not only while God bestows his kindness upon us, but while he withdraws his face, and afflicts us, and gives every sign of severity and displeasure, we place our hope and confidence in him. Let us learn to apply this doctrine to our own use, whenever we are hard pressed by the calamities of the present life; and let us not cease to trust in him, even when our affairs are in the most desperate condition. [431] "Though He slay me," says Job, "I will trust in Him;" and David says that: "though he walk amidst the shadow of death, he will trust and not be afraid, because he knows that God is with him." (Job 13:15; Psalm 23:4.)

To thy name. The Prophet aims at shewing what is the source of that uwearied earnestness which prevents the godly from sinking under the greatest calamities. It is because they are free from wicked desires and from excessive solicitude, and in their aspirations boldly rise to God. For, in consequence of our disorderly passions and cares holding us bound, as it were, to the earth, our hearts either wander astray, or sink into indolence, so that they do not freely rise to God; and as the essence of God is hidden from us, this makes us more sluggish in seeking him. From his hidden and incomprehensible essence, therefore, the Prophet draws our attention to the name of God, as if he enjoined us to rest satisfied with that manifestation of it which is found in the word; because there God declares to us, as far as is necessary, his justice, wisdom, and goodness, that is, himself.

And to the remembrance of thee. It is not without good reason also that he has added the word *remembrance*; for it means that the first perception or thought is not enough, but that continual meditation is enjoined; because without its aid all the light of doctrine would immediately vanish away. And indeed the true and sincere knowledge of God inflames us to desire him, and not only so, but also prompts us to desire to make progress, whenever the "remembrance" of it occurs to our minds. The knowledge of God, therefore, comes first; and next, we must be employed in frequent "remembrance;" for it is not enough that we have once obtained knowledge, if love and desire do not grow through constant meditation. Hence, also, we perceive that the knowledge of God is not a dead imagination.

9. *My soul hath desired thee.* This is a stronger expression of the former statement; for, having previously spoken in the person of believers, he had said that the desire of their soul was towards God. He now adds, with regard to himself, *My soul hath desired*; as if he had said, "I have all the faculties of my soul directed towards seeking thy name." The word נפש (*nēphĕsh*) frequently denotes the vital *Soul*; but as the Prophet here employs two words, I distinguish them so as to make נפש (*nephesh*) mean the desire or will, and

[431] "Encor que les choses soyent du tout hors d'espoir;" — "Even when matters are altogether beyond hope."

רוח (*rūăch*) the intellectual parts; for we know that these are the chief parts of the human soul, namely, the Understanding and the Will, both of which God justly claims for himself. Such is also the import of that passage, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37.) The Prophet therefore shews, that all the faculties of his soul are directed to this point, to seek God and embrace him.

Others take רוח, (*rūăch*,) *the Spirit*, to mean the regenerated part; and so by נפש (*nĕphĕsh*) they understand the natural soul, and by רוח, (*rūăch*,) *the Spirit*, they understand the grace of God, which is supernatural. But this cannot be admitted; for the sensual man (ψυχικός) never seeks God; and we perceive how strongly we are opposed by our feelings when we rise to God, and with what difficulty we conquer that aversion. It is unnecessary, therefore, to refute this interpretation, for it is directly contrary to Scripture; and from many similar passages it is sufficiently plain that the Spirit and Soul mean the understanding and the heart.

In the night. By *the night* Scripture often means adversity, which is compared to darkness and gloominess. But I interpret it somewhat differently, as if the Prophet had said, "There is no time so improper or unreasonable that I may not call upon thee or pray to thee." That interpretation differs little from the former, but is rather more general; for night is supposed to be set apart for rest, and at that time all the desires and labors of men [432] cease; and, in short, there is little difference between a sleeping and a dead man. He says, therefore, that at the time which is devoted to rest and repose he rises to seek God, so that no occasion turns him aside; — not that those who are asleep have any active thought, but that sleep itself, if we turn to God, is a part of our course; and although we slumber and are silent, still we praise him by hope and confidence.

In the morning [433] *will I seek thee.* By *the night* the Prophet does not literally mean *sleep*; and this is perfectly evident from the present clause, in which *night* is contrasted with *morning*, which denotes continuance.

The inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness. We must observe the reason assigned, when he says that "the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness from the judgments of God," meaning that by chastisements men are taught to fear God. [434] In prosperity they forget him, and their eyes are as it were blinded by fatness; they grow wanton and petulant, and do not submit to be under authority; and therefore the Lord restrains their insolence, and teaches them to obey. In short, the Prophet confesses that he and others were trained, by God's chastisements, to yield submission to his authority, and to intrust themselves to his guardianship; because if God

[432] "Tous les desirs et travaux des hommes."

[433] "Early." — (Eng. Ver.) In the marginal reading of the Author's version, he renders it "earnestly." — Ed

[434] "Que les hommes sont enseignez à eraindre Dieu par les verges dont il les frappe;" — "That men are taught to fear God by the scourges with which he strikes them."

do not, with uplifted arm, claim his right to rule, no man of his own accord yields obedience.

10. *The wicked man will obtain favour.* [435] Isaiah contrasts this statement with the former. He had said that the godly, even when they are afflicted, or see others afflicted, still rely on the love of God, and trust in him. But now he declares, on the other hand, that the wicked cannot be brought in any way to love God, though he endeavor, by every sort of kindness, to draw and gain them over; and that, whatever aspect the Lord assume towards them, they do not become better.

This verse appears, at first view, to contradict the former, in which the Prophet said, that the justice of God is acknowledged in the earth, when he executes his judgments, and shews that he is the Judge, and punishes the transgressions of men; while he says here that the wicked cannot in any way be led or persuaded to worship God, and that they are so far from being made better by the chastisements, that even acts of kindness make them worse. The good effect of chastisements certainly does not appear in all; for wicked men do not at all profit by them, as we see in Pharaoh, whom chastisements and scourges rendered more obstinate. (Exodus 7:13.) But although he spoke indiscriminately about "the inhabitants of the earth," yet he strictly included none but God's elect, with whom indeed even some hypocrites share the profit that is gained; for sometimes, though reluctantly, they are moved by reverence for God, and are restrained by the dread of punishments. [436] But as the Prophet here describes sincere repentance, by "the inhabitants of the earth" he means only the children of God.

Some view it as a question, "Shall favor be shewn to the wicked?" or, "Why should the wicked man obtain favor?" as if the Prophet insinuated that they do not deserve that God should deal gently with them. But I choose rather to explain it thus, "Whatever may be the acts of kindness by which God draws the wicked, they will never learn to act uprightly." The Prophet therefore has limited the statement made in the former verse.

In the land of upright actions he will deal unjustly. This is added in order to shew more strongly the baseness of this ingratitude. It was a sufficiently heinous offense that they abused the acts of God's kindness, and by means of them became more rebellious; but it is their crowning wickedness, that "they deal wickedly in the land" which the Lord had consecrated to himself. What he now says relates to Judea, but may be extended also to other countries in which God is now worshipped; but at that time there was no other country on which Isaiah could bestow that title, for in no other was there any knowledge of God. (Psalm 76:2.)

Thus he calls Judea "the land of upright actions." I give this interpretation, because, since the Prophet employs נכחות (*nekōchōth*) in the feminine gender,

[435] "Let favour be shewed to the wicked." — Eng. Ver.

[436] "Et se retiennent en bride de crainte qu'ils ont d'estre fouettez;" — "And are kept in check through fear of being chastised."

the word *upright* cannot apply to men. [437] He therefore bestows this title, because the law was there in full force, (Psalm 76:1, 2.) and that nation had been peculiarly chosen by God; and it was added, as I have already said, in order to exhibit more strongly the ingratitude of the nation. Some extend it indiscriminately to the whole world, because, wherever we live, God supports us on the condition of our maintaining uprightness. This is too far-fetched; but, since God has now spread abroad his kingdom in every direction, wheresoever men call on his name, that is "the land of upright actions;" [438] so that we are worthy of double condemnation, if, after having been stimulated by benefits so numerous and so great, we do not testify our gratitude by the practice of godliness and by good works.

When he adds, that the reprobate *will not behold the majesty of the Lord,* this does not in any degree palliate, but rather doubles their criminality; because it is base and shameful indolence not to observe the glory of God which is openly manifested before our eyes. The wicked are thus rendered the more inexcusable, because, how numerous soever may be the methods by which the Lord makes known his name, still they are blind amidst the clearest light. There is never any lack of testimonies by which the Lord openly manifests his majesty and glory, but, as we have formerly seen, [439] few consider them. God manifests his glory not only by the ordinary works of nature, but likewise by some astonishing miracles and demonstrations, by means of which he gives us abundant instruction about his goodness, wisdom, and justice. Wicked men shut their eyes, and do not observe them, though in trifling matters they are very clear-sighted; and the Prophet now censures them severely for this wickedness.

Others think that it is a threatening against the reprobate, *they shall not behold the majesty of the Lord,* as if they did not deserve to obtain this view of the works of God. Though this is true, yet, as this clause is closely connected with the former, the Prophet continues to censure the indolence of those who do not direct their minds to the works of God, but, on the contrary, become stupid. On this account, we ought to think it the less wonderful that so few repent, though very many demonstrations of the righteousness of God are openly made; for infidelity is always blind to behold the works of God.

11. *O Jehovah, though thy hand is lifted up.* This is an explanation of the former statement; for he brings forward nothing that is new, but shews more clearly what he had formerly stated in a few words. He had already said that the wicked "will not behold the majesty of the Lord;" and now he explains that "majesty" to be that which is visible in the works of God. He does not send us to that hidden majesty which is concealed from us, but

[437] Accordingly, our English version, instead of "upright actions," uses the term "uprightness," which corresponds to the Author's French version, "la terre de droiture," "the land of uprightness." — Ed

[438] "La terre de droiture;" — "The land of uprightness."

[439] The Author refers to his exposition of Isaiah 5:12. See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 176

leads us to the works, which he denotes figuratively (μετωνυμικῶς) [440] by the *hand*. Here he again censures the wicked, and shews that they cannot be excused on the plea of ignorance; for, though they perceive nothing, still the hand of God is openly visible; and it is nothing but their blind ingratitude, or rather their voluntary indolence, that hinders them from perceiving it. Some might plead ignorance, and allege that they did not see these works; but the Prophet says that God's hand is "lifted up," and not merely exerted, so that it is not only visible to a few persons, but shines conspicuously.

They shall see and be ashamed. He shews plainly that this "beholding" is different from that of which he formerly spoke, when he said that the wicked "do not see the glory of the Lord;" for they do see, but do not observe or take any notice of it; but at length "they shall see," but too late, and to their great hurt. After having long abused the patience of God, and proved that they were obstinate and rebellious, they will at length be constrained to acknowledge the judgments of God. Thus Cain, (Genesis 4:13,14,) Esau, (Genesis 27:38,) and others like them, who too late repented of their crimes, (Hebrews 12:17,) though they fled from the face of God, yet were constrained to see that he was their Judge. Thus, in those who despise him, God frequently produces a feeling of remorse, that he may display his power; but such knowledge is of no avail to them.

In this manner, therefore, the Prophet threatens wicked men, after having accused them of blindness, in order to shew that they have no plea of ignorance; and he forewarns them that the time will come when they shall know with whom they have to do, and that they will then feel that they ought not to despise that heavenly name which they now treat as fabulous, and scorn. They shut their eyes, and act without restraint, and make us a laughing-stock, and do not think that God will be their Judge, but rather turn into ridicule our distresses and afflictions. Thus they look down on us as from a lofty place, and grow more and more hardened; but at length they will understand that the true worshippers of God have not lost their labor.

And shall be ashamed. In order to shew that this beholding of the glory of God is not only of no advantage, but hurtful to them, he says that they shall behold with *shame* the blessing of God towards believers, in which they will have no share.

Through their envy of the people. This tends to shew more strongly the severity of the punishment, that not only will they burn with "envy," when they shall see that the children of God have been delivered from those distresses, and have been exalted to glory, but there will likewise be added another evil, that they will be consumed by the fire of the enemy. By "the envy of the people," therefore, is here meant the indignation which wicked men feel when they compare the lot of godly men with their own.

Yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them. By *the fire of the enemies*,

[440] M , or metonymy, denotes that figure of rhetoric by which one word is exchanged for another on account of a connection of idea, such as, "Moses and the prophets," for their works, or, as in this passage, the "hand" for the works performed by it. — Ed

he means that "fire" with which God consumes his "enemies." He employs the word "fire" to denote God's vengeance; for here it must not be taken for visible "fire" with which we are burned, nor even for the thunderbolt alone, but is a metaphorical expression for dreadful anguish, as we find that in many other passages Scripture denotes by this term, God's severest vengeance. (Deuteronomy 32:22; Job 20:26, 22:20.) No language indeed can sufficiently express this anguish. Yet I do not object to the suggestion, that the Prophet alludes to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 19:24.)

12. *O Jehovah, thou wilt ordain peace for us.* This statement tends to the consolation of the godly, as if he had said, "We shall see what will be the end of the wicked; for thou wilt prevent them from sharing with thy children, and wilt take them away as enemies by fire, but we shall be happy." The Hebrew verb שפת, (*shāphăth*,) which signifies "to ordain," has the same import as the word "establish;" as if he had said, "Thou wilt prepare peace for us in uninterrupted succession:" for the wicked also enjoy peace, but not of long duration; but our peace is fixed on the Lord, and has a firm foundation, and never comes to an end. By the word *peace* he means perfect happiness. Hence infer, that the children of God alone, who rest on him, are happy; for the life of the wicked, to whatever extent it may abound in pleasures and luxuries, when everything proceeds to their wish, is most miserable. There is therefore no solid foundation for peace but in God's fatherly love.

All our works. By *works* he means all the blessings which the Lord bestows on those who believe in him; as if he had said, "Transactions, business, actions," and everything included in the French phrase *nos affaires*, or in the corresponding English phrase *our affairs*. Accordingly, those who have quoted this passage for the purpose of overturning free-will have not understood the Prophet's meaning. It is undoubtedly true that God alone does what is good in us, and that all the good actions which men perform are from his Spirit. But here the Prophet merely shews that we have obtained from the hand of God all the good things which we enjoy; and hence he infers that his kindness will not cease till we shall have obtained perfect happiness. Now, since God is the author of all good things, we ought chiefly to consider those which hold the first and highest place; for if we ought to acknowledge that we have received from God those things by which we support this life, much more those which belong to the salvation of the soul. If, therefore, we ought to acknowledge his kindness in small matters, how much more ought we to acknowledge it in matters of the greatest importance and value? But there is no reason why we should bring forward this passage against the Papists; for they might easily evade it, and we have a great number of other passages exceedingly conclusive.

In this passage, therefore, the Prophet appears to exhort the godly to testify their gratitude; for he bids them declare the acts of God's kindness, so as to acknowledge that they are indebted to him for everything which they

possess; and this contains a profitable doctrine, namely, that from past events and benefits received, the godly reason even as to God's future kindness, and infer that he will also take care of them for the future. Having therefore experienced God's kindness, let us also learn to hope for the future; and since he hath shewn himself to be so kind and bountiful, let us steadfastly fix our hearts in the hope of future assistance.

This example has been followed by all the saints, and in this way they have strengthened their faith. Thus David says, "Thou wilt not despise the work of thy hands." (Psalm 138:8.) Paul says, "He who hath begun in us a good work will perform it." (Philippians 1:6.) Jacob also says, "I am less than the compassions and the truth which thou hast shewn to thy servant; but thou saidst, I will surely do thee good." (Genesis 32:10,12.) God is not like men, to be capable of being wearied by doing good, or exhausted by giving largely; and therefore the more numerous the benefits with which he has loaded us, so much the more ought our faith to be strengthened and increased.

13. *O Lord our God.* This verse contains a complaint of the saints, that they were oppressed by the tyranny of the wicked. This song was composed in order to refresh the hearts of believers, who were to be cruelly banished from that land which was a figure of eternal happiness, that, having been deprived of sacrifices and holy assemblies, and almost of every consolation, crushed by the heavy yoke of the Babylonians, banished from their country, loaded with reproach and sore afflictions, they might direct their groanings to God, in order to seek relief. He speaks, therefore, in the name of believers, who to outward appearance had been rejected by God, and yet did not cease to testify that they were the people of God, and to put their trust in him.

Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us. Not without cause do they complain that they are placed under a different dominion from that of God, for he had received them under his sole guardianship. Hence it follows that, if they had not been estranged from him, they would not have endured so hard a lot as to be exposed to the tyranny and caprice of enemies. It may be thought that the government of all princes is "besides God," or different from that of God, even though they govern in his name. But the Prophet does not speak of those who govern for our benefit, but of those who are opposed to true worship and to holy doctrine. David was indeed a ruler who exercised dominion separate from that of God, but at the same time he was a genuine servant of God for the general advantage of the whole people; and therefore he maintained the true religion, which those rulers wished altogether to overthrow. Most justly did it befall the Jews, that, in consequence of having refused to obey God, who treated them with the greatest kindness, they were subjected to the tyranny of wicked men.

There is an implied contrast between God and the pious kings who governed the people in his name and by his authority, and the tyrants who oppressed them by governing with most unjust laws. This will be made more

evident by a similar passage in Ezekiel, "I gave them," says God, "good laws, by which they might live; but because they did not execute my judgments, and despised my statutes, and profaned my Sabbaths, and cast their eyes upon the idols of their fathers, for this reason I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live." (Ezekiel 20:11, 24, 25.) Since they might formerly, through the blessing of God, have been prosperous and happy, if they had obeyed his word, the prophet Ezekiel threatens that they will be subjected to tyrants who will compel them to obey their cruel enactments, and that without profit or reward. Isaiah now deplores a similar calamity. "When the Lord ruled over us, we could not be satisfied with our lot, and now we are compelled to endure severe tyranny, and suffer the just punishment of our wickedness." The same complaint may be made by believers who live under the Papacy, or who in any way are compelled, by unjust laws, to observe superstition; for they are subject to a government which is "besides God," or different from that of God, and endure bondage worse than barbarous, which not only fetters their bodies, but conducts their souls to torture and slaughter.

In thee only. This clause appears to be contrasted with the former to this effect, "Although irreligious men wish to withdraw from thy dominion, yet we will continue under it; for we are fully convinced that we are thine." But we may draw from it more abundant instruction, that, although the feeling of the flesh pronounces that those who are cruelly oppressed by enemies have been forsaken by God, and laid open to be a prey, yet the Jews do not cease to boast in God when they do not perceive that he is near them; for the mere remembrance of his name supports them, and gently cherishes their hope. There is thus a very emphatic contrast between "the remembrance of the name of God" and the immediate experience of his grace; for steadfastly to embrace God, even though he is absent, is a proof of uncommon excellence.

Others render it, *In thee and in thy name*; but the word *and* is not in the passage. There is here exhibited to us consolation, which is great and highly necessary in these times, when the base ingratitude of men, by shaking off the yoke of God, has brought down upon itself a most cruel tyranny; and we need not wonder if we already see it abound in many places in which men call on the name of God. Yet the godly ought not to faint on this account, provided that they support themselves by this consolation, that God never entirely forsakes those who find abundant consolation in the remembrance of his name. But at the same time it is necessary to testify this faith, so as to choose to die a thousand times rather than depart from God by profaning his name; for when any one goes astray through the fear of men, it is certain that he never has truly tasted the sweetness of the name of God. So long, therefore, as we freely enjoy the word, let us be diligently employed in it, so that, when necessity shall demand it, we may be armed, and that it may not appear that we have indulged at our ease in idle speculation.

14. *The dead shall not live.* [441] The Prophet again speaks of the unhappy end of the wicked, whose prosperity often agitates and vexes us, as we read in the Psalms of David. (Psalm 37:1, 73:3, 17.) That our eyes may not be dazzled by the present appearances of things, he foretells that their end will be very miserable. Others interpret this passage as relating to believers, who appear to die without any hope of a resurrection; but unquestionably he speaks of the reprobate, and this will be still more evident from an opposite statement which he makes at the nineteenth verse. There is a contrast between the resurrection of good men and wicked men, [442] between whom there would be little difference, were it not evident that the latter are sentenced to eternal death, and that the former will receive a blessed and everlasting life: and not only does eternal death await the wicked, but all the sufferings which they endure in this world are the commencement of everlasting destruction; for they cannot be soothed by any consolation, and they feel that God is their enemy.

The slain shall not rise again. [443] The word which we render *slain* is rendered by others *giants*; [444] but as in many passages of Scripture רפאים [445] (*rĕphāīm*) denotes *slain*, so also in this passage it will be more appropriate, for otherwise there would be no contrast. (Psalm 88:11; Proverbs 2:18; 9:18; 21:16.)

Therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them. This is added for the sake of explanation; for it assigns the reason why the reprobate perish without hope, namely, because it is the purpose of God to destroy them. In the wrath of God they have nothing to look for but death and ruin.

15. *Thou hast added to the nation.* This verse is explained in various ways. Some think that the Prophet here declares that the godly are not merely oppressed by one kind of affliction, but are plunged, as it were, into the lowest misery, and that they see no end of their distresses. Others explain it simply to mean, "O Lord, thou hast bestowed on thy nation various blessings," and think that the Prophet mentions the blessings which God bestowed on his people in various ways, as if he had said, "The people have experienced, not only in one instance, but in innumerable ways, the Lord's kindness and bounty."

But when I attend to what follows, *Thou hast enlarged*, that is, "Thou hast extended thy kingdom, which formerly was confined within narrow limits," I choose rather to view the two statements as closely connected; for the latter clause is an interpretation of the former. Besides, it agrees well with what

[441] "(They are) dead, they shall not live." — Eng. Ver.

[442] "Des fideles et des infideles;" — "Of believers and unbelievers."

[443] "(They are) deceased, they shall not rise." — Eng. Ver.

[444] Professor Alexander renders רפאים (rĕphāīm) ghosts and remarks, ``It is here a poetical equivalent to מתים (mēthīm,) and may be variously rendered shades, shadows, spirits, or the like. The common version (deceased) leaves too entirely out of view the figurative character of the expression. Giants, on the contrary, is too strong, and could only be employed in this connection in the sense of gigantic shades, or shadows.''

[445] As if the reading had been not rĕphāīm, but rōphĕīm, the Seventy render it , "physicians shall not rise again." — Ed

follows, that *God is glorified*; for we know that in nothing does the glory of God shine more conspicuously than in the increase of the Church. It is as if he had said, "Thou hadst formerly a small people, but thou hast multiplied and increased it;" for the Gentiles were admitted and joined to the Jews on condition that they should be united into one people. Thus the Lord added a vast multitude, for the children of Abraham were called out of all nations.

We must therefore supply, not "Thou hast added blessings," but "Thou hast added a greater number;" and the meaning is, "O Lord, thou wast not satisfied with that small number, and hast gathered for thyself out of all nations an innumerable people." This relates to the kingdom of Christ, which has been spread through the whole world by the preaching of the gospel; and in this passage the Prophet speaks highly of this wide extension, and expresses it by the phrase, *Thou hast enlarged.* This mode of expression is not at variance with the ordinary way of speaking, when an enlargement of a kingdom or of territories is expressed. And yet the Prophet does not mean that the land was enlarged, but that, by spreading the worship of God on all sides, mutual intercourse produced larger space and greater freedom of habitation; for contentions had the effect of narrowing it. [446] We have here a promise of the calling of the Gentiles, which must have greatly comforted godly men during that banishment and miserable dispersion of the Church, so that, although they saw it to be amazingly weakened and diminished, still they were convinced that it would be increased in such a manner that not only would they become innumerable, but foreign and distant nations would be added to them.

16. *O Jehovah, in tribulation they have visited thee.* This might be explained as relating to hypocrites, who never flee to God but when they have been constrained by distresses and afflictions. But since the Lord instructs believers also by chastisements, as the Prophet formerly shewed, (verses 8 and 9,) I choose rather to refer it simply to them, that not only they may know that God has justly punished them, but that the bitterness of the afflictions may likewise be sweetened by the good result of the chastisement, and that they may be better instructed in the fear of the Lord, and may profit more and more every day. Isaiah therefore speaks in the person of the Church, that whenever godly men read this statement, they might acknowledge that amidst their distresses and afflictions they were nearer to God than when they enjoyed prosperity, by means of which almost always (such is the depravity of our nature) we become excessively proud and insolent. On this account we must be curbed and tamed by chastisements; and this thought will soften the harshness of punishments, and make us less ready to shrink from them if we think that they are profitable to us.

They poured out a prayer. The Hebrew word לחש (*lăchăsh*) [447] signifies a *muttering.* This word therefore must not be taken for a prayer pronounced

[446] "Faisoyent que la demeurance estiot plus estroite et moins libre;" — "Made habitation to be narrower and less free."

[447] "Que nous avons traduit Prière;" — "Which we have translated Prayer."

in words, [448] but for that which indicates that the heart is wrung with sore pains, as those who are tortured by extreme anguish can hardly speak or express the feelings of their hearts. It therefore denotes, that calling upon God which is sincere and free from all hypocrisy; such as men will aim at when in sore affliction they utter groans as expressive of intense pain. In prosperity men speak with open mouths; but when they are cast down by adversity, they hardly venture to mutter, and express their feelings with the heart rather than with the tongue. Hence arise those unutterable groans of which Paul speaks. (Romans 8:26.) It is in reference to the godly, therefore, that Paul makes this declaration, and to them must this doctrine be limited; for wicked men, although some lamentations are extorted from them by pain, become more hardened and more and more obstinate and rebellious.

17. *As a woman with child.* Here two things ought chiefly to be remarked. First, he compares believers to women in labor, who, we know, endure exquisite pain; and, accordingly, he says that their anguish breaks out into loud and violent cries. Hence we infer that the Prophet does not only speak of that sorrow which arises from outward distresses and annoyances, but rather describes that dreadful anguish by which the hearts of the godly are sorely and dreadfully tormented, when they perceive that God is angry with them, and when their consciences reprove them. There is no bodily pain so acute that it can be compared to that anguish, and this is plainly expressed by the phrase *in thy sight*

18. *We have as it were brought forth wind.* The second thing to be remarked is, that he goes beyond the limit of the metaphor; for when there is no end to their distresses, the condition of the godly is worse than that of women in labor, who, as soon as they are free from their pains, break out into joy at the sight of what they have brought forth, (John 16:21,) and forget all their sorrows. The godly, on the other hand, he tells us, are continually bringing forth; for new troubles and anxieties constantly await them, and when they think that the birth is at hand, they bring forth nothing but anguish. That is what he means by *wind,* [449] namely, that there is no removal or abatement of pain; and immediately afterwards he thus explains it, *Salvations have not been wrought for the land,* [450] that is, we have not beheld any deliverance.

And the inhabitants of the world have not fallen. יפלו ובל (ūbăl yĭppĕlū,) that is, *have not fallen*; for נפל (*nāphăl*) signifies "to fall." Others explain it "to dwell." If we take it in that sense, the meaning will be, "The Jews shall not dwell," that is, they shall not return to their own land; the inhabitants who possess it shall not perish. But if we follow the ordinary interpretation, we must view it as referring to the wicked. "The inhabitants of the world

[448] "Pour une prière articulee;" — "For an articulated prayer."

[449] "An obvious phrase for inanity. See below, Isaiah 33:11 They who think of a female disorder, termed empneumatosis, should remember that it is an uncommon disorder, and that metaphors are not drawn from objects or events of rare occurrence." — Stock

[450] "We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth." — Eng. Ver.

annoy us and do not fall; everything goes on prosperously with them."

So long as the wicked flourish, the children of God must be unhappy, and become like women in labor; and this condition must be quietly endured by us, if we wish to have a place in the Church of God. It is, indeed, the common lot of all to endure numerous and endless afflictions; and hence comes the old proverb, "It is happy not to be born, or, when born, immediately to depart out of life." But we see that the godly are visited with sore anguish and very heavy afflictions beyond others; for in this manner God wishes to try their faith, that, after having laid aside their desires and forsaken the world, they may serve him. Since, therefore, the Lord has a peculiar care of them, he must chastise them, while he permits wicked men to indulge in unbounded licentiousness.

Here we are also reminded that we must endure not merely one or another calamity, and must not imagine that, when we have endured some afflictions, there are none in reserve for us; for we ought always to be prepared to endure new ones. When God begins to chastise his people, he does not immediately cease. We shall "bring forth wind" when we think that the birth is at hand; other calamities will break out, and we shall be continually attacked by additional sorrows. We must therefore maintain this warfare so long as it shall please God to employ us in it. Accordingly, we shall follow the ordinary interpretation, *have not fallen*; for, as the Lord cheers his people, when he manifests to them his salvation and punishes the wicked, so he gives them occasion to groan, so long as they behold their enemies placed in a lofty position and exercising high authority. And if the Lord in this manner tried his Church in former times, we need not wonder that we experience the same thing in the present day.

By *the inhabitants of the world* he means heathens and irreligious men; for he contrasts the rest of the world with Judea, which he formerly called, by way of eminence, (κατ᾽ ἐξοχὴν,) *the land*, and mentions its inhabitants apart.

19. *Thy dead men shall live.* Isaiah continues the same consolation, and addresses his discourse to God, thus shewing that there is nothing better for us than to bring our thoughts to meet in God, whenever we must struggle with temptations; for there is nothing more dangerous than to wander in our thoughts, and to give way to them, since they can do nothing else than toss us up and down and drive us into error. Nothing therefore is safer for us than to betake ourselves to God, on whom alone our hearts can rest; for otherwise we shall meet with many things that tend to shake our faith. The general meaning is, that as God guards believers, though they are like "dead men," yet they "shall live" amidst death itself, or shall rise again after their decease.

But it may be asked, of what time does Isaiah speak? For many interpret this passage as relating to the last resurrection. The Jews refer it to Messiah's kingdom, but they are mistaken in thinking that it is immediately fulfilled by

the Messiah's first coming. Christians are also mistaken in limiting it to the last judgment; for the Prophet includes the whole reign of Christ from the beginning to the end, since the hope of living, as we shall immediately see, goes beyond this world. Now, in order to understand more fully the whole of the Prophet's meaning, we ought first to consider that life is promised, not indiscriminately, but only to "God's dead men;" and he speaks of believers who die in the Lord, and whom he protects by his power. We know that "God is the God of the living, and not of the dead." (Matthew 22:32.) Accordingly, if we are God's people, we shall undoubtedly live; but in the meantime we must differ in no respect from dead men, for "our life is hidden," (Colossians 3:3,) and we do not yet see those things for which we hope. (Romans 8:23, 24.)

So then he speaks simply of the dead, that is, of the condition of believers, who lie in the shadow of death on account of various afflictions which they must continually endure. Hence it is evident, that this must not be limited to the last resurrection; for, on the contrary, we say that the reprobate, even while they live, are dead, because they do not taste God's fatherly kindness, in which life consists, and therefore perish in their brutal stupidity. But believers, by fleeing to God, obtain life in the midst of afflictions, and even in death itself; but because they have in prospect that day of the resurrection, they are not said literally to live till that day when they shall be free from all pain and corruption, and shall obtain perfect life; and, indeed, Paul justly argues, that it would be a subversion of order, were they to enjoy life till the appearance of Christ, who is the source of their life. (Colossians 3:3, 4.)

Thus we have said that Isaiah includes the whole reign of Christ; for, although we begin to receive the fruit of this consolation when we are admitted into the Church, yet we shall not enjoy it fully till that last day of the resurrection is come, when all things shall be most completely restored; and on this account also it is called "the day of restitution." (Acts 3:21.) The only remedy for soothing the grief of the godly is, to cast their eyes on the result, by which God distinguishes them from the reprobate. As death naturally destroys all the children of Adam, so all the miseries to which they are liable are forerunners of death, and therefore their life is nothing else than mortality. But because the curse of God, through the kindness of Christ, is abolished, both in the beginning and in the end of death, all who are engrafted into Christ are justly said to live in dying; for to them all that is evil is the instrument of good. (Romans 8:28.) Hence it follows, that out of the depths of death they always come forth conquerors till they are perfectly united to their Head; and therefore, in order that we may be reckoned among "God's dead men," whose life he faithfully guards, we must rise above nature. This is more fully expressed by the word נבלה, (*nĕbēlāh*,) or *dead body*

My dead body, they shall arise. As if he had said, "The long-continued putrefaction, by which they appear to be consumed, will not hinder the

power of God from causing them to rise again entire." So far as relates to the phrase, some render it, "With my dead body." Others explain it, "Who are my dead body." Others supply the particle of comparison, "Like as my dead body;" but as the meaning is most fully brought out if, without adding or changing anything, we take up simply what the words mean, I choose to view them as standing in immediate connection. At least, this word is inserted for the express purpose that the Prophet may join himself to the whole Church, and thus may reckon himself in the number of "God's dead men" in the hope of the resurrection. [451]

As to his mentioning himself in particular, he does so for the sake of more fully confirming this doctrine; for thus he testifies his sincerity, and shews that this confession is the result of faith, according to that saying, "I believed, therefore I spake." (Psalm 116:10; 2 Corinthians 4:13.) But for this, irreligious men might discourse concerning the mercy of God and eternal life, though they had no sincere belief of them; for even Balaam knew that he spoke what was true, and yet he derived no benefit from his predictions. (Numbers 23:19; 24:13.) Very differently does the Prophet speak in this passage; for he professes to belong to the number of those who shall obtain life, and then declares that he willingly endures all the troubles and calamities by which the Lord humbles and slays him, and that he chooses rather to endure them than to flourish along with the wicked. In this manner he testifies, that he does not speak of things unknown, or in which he has no concern, but of those things which he has learned by actual experience; and shews that his confidence is so great that he willingly ranks himself in the number of those "dead bodies" which, he firmly believes, will be restored to life, and therefore chooses to be a dead body, and to be so reckoned, provided that he be accounted a member of the Church, rather than to enjoy life in a state of separation from the Church.

This gives greater force to his doctrine, and he contrasts it with the statement which he formerly made (verse 14) about wicked men, *they shall not live*; for the hope of rising again is taken from them. If it be objected, that resurrection will be common not only to believers but also to the reprobate, the answer is easy; for Isaiah does not speak merely of the resurrection, but of the happiness which believers will enjoy. Wicked men will indeed rise again, but it will be to eternal destruction; and therefore the resurrection will bring ruin to them, while it will bring salvation and glory to believers.

Awake and sing, ye inhabitants of the dust. He gives the name, *inhabitants of the dust*, to believers, who are humbled under the cross and afflictions, and who even during their life keep death constantly before their eyes. It is true that they enjoy God's blessings in this life; [452] but by this metaphor Isaiah declares that their condition is miserable, because they bear the image of death; for "the outward man" must be subdued and weakened, till it utterly

[451] "Esperant avoir part de leur resurrection;" — "Hoping to share in their resurrection."
[452] "En ceste vie."

decay, "that the inward man may be renewed." (2 Corinthians 4:16.) We must therefore be willing to be humbled, and to lie down in the dust, if we wish to share in this consolation.

Accordingly, he bids the dead men "awake and sing," which appears to be very inconsistent with their condition; for among them there is nothing but mournful silence. (Psalm 6:5; 88:11.) He thus draws a clear distinction between God's elect, whom the corruption of the grave and the "habitation in the dust" will not deprive of that heavenly vigor by which they shall rise again, and the reprobate, who, separated from God the source of life, and from Christ, fade away even while they live, till they are wholly swallowed up by death.

For thy dew is the dew of herbs. [453] He now promises "the dew of herbs," and thus illustrates this doctrine by an elegant and appropriate comparison. We know that *herbs*, and especially those of the meadows, are dried up in winter, so that they appear to be wholly dead, and, to outward appearance, no other judgment could be formed respecting them; yet the roots are concealed beneath, which, when they have imbibed the *dew* at the return of spring, put forth their vigor, so that *herbs* which formerly were dry and withered, grow green again. In this manner will the nation regain its former vigor after having been plentifully watered with the *dew* of the grace of God, though formerly it appeared to be altogether withered and decayed.

Such comparisons, drawn from well-known objects, have great influence in producing conviction. If "herbs" watered by "dew" revive, why shall not we also revive when watered by the grace of God? Why shall not our bodies, though dead and rotten, revive? Does not God take more care of us than of herbs? And is not the power of the Spirit greater than that of "dew?" Paul employs a similar argument in writing to the Corinthians, when he treats of the resurrection; but as he applies his comparison to a different purpose, I think it better to leave it for the present, lest we should confound the two passages. It is enough if we understand the plain meaning of the Prophet.

And the earth shall cast out the dead. Others render the clause in the second person, "Thou wilt lay low the land of giants," [454] or "Thou wilt lay low the giants on the earth." I do not disapprove of this interpretation, for the words admit of that meaning; but the former appears to agree better with the scope of the passage, though it makes little difference as to the

[453] Bishop Lowth's rendering is, "For thy dew is as the dew of the dawn." Bishop Stock follows him very closely: "For as the dew of day-light is thy dew," and remarks: — "A dew of rays, that is, as I conceive, a dew able to abide the solar rays, or a steady dew, in oppostion 'to the early dew that passeth away' of Hosea 6:4, 13:3; which the Prophet there parallels with 'the morning cloud.' The comparison of Isaiah intimates that the refreshing of Israel should not be transient, but lasting." Professor Alexander, with his usual learning and judgment, produces a formidable array of conflicting authorities, but vindicates the usual rendering. "There are," he says, "two interpretations of ארות, (ōrōth,) both ancient, and supported by high modern authorities. The first gives the word the usual sense of אור, (ōr,) light; the other, that of plants, which it has in 2 Kings 4:39. To the former it may be objected, that it leaves the plural form unexplained, that it arbitrarily makes light mean life, and that it departs from the acknowledged meaning of ארות (ōrōth) in the only other place where it occurs. The second interpretation, on the other hand, assumes but one sense of the word, allows the plural form its proper force, and supposes an obvious and natural allusion to the influence of dew upon the growth of plants. In either case, the reference to the dew is intended to illustrate the vivifying power of God." --- Ed

[454] As to the interpretation of רפאים (rēphāīm) by giants, See page 231, note 3

substance of the doctrine. These words must relate to that consolation of which we have formerly spoken.

20. *Come, my people.* In this verse he exhorts the children of God to exercise patience, to shut themselves up, and to bear with moderation their troubles and afflictions, and to stand unmoved in opposition to the fierce tempests which seemed likely to overwhelm them. This exhortation was highly necessary; for the lamentable state to which the nation was afterwards reduced was, to outward appearance, very inconsistent with that promise. The Prophet, therefore, when the people are distressed and know not where to go, takes them, as it were, by the hand, and conducts them to some retired spot, where they may hide themselves in safety till the storms and tempests are abated. When he calls them "his own people," he speaks in the name of God, and not in his own.

Enter into thy chamber. By *chamber* he means calmness and composure of mind, by which we encourage and strengthen our hearts with firm belief, and calmly wait for the Lord, as Habakkuk, after having foretold the calamities which were about to fall on the Jews, says that he will go up "to his watch-tower," that is, to a place of safety, in which he may patiently and silently await the result. (Habakkuk 2:1.) Isaiah gives a similar injunction in this passage, that the godly, when they see that they are attacked by various storms which they are unable to resist, should shut themselves up in a "chamber," or some place of retirement.

Shut thy doors behind thee. As it would not be enough that we should once be fortified against the fierce attacks of tempests, he bids us also "shut the doors." This relates to steadfastness; as if he enjoined us to take good heed not to leave any chink open for the devil; for he will easily break through and penetrate into our hearts, if the smallest entrance be allowed him.

Hide thyself for a little moment. When he bids them "hide" or "conceal" themselves, he means that it will be a very safe refuge for believers, if they are courageous and patiently wait for the Lord; for though we must boldly and valiantly maintain the contest, yet since the power of God is displayed in our weakness, (2 Corinthians 12:9,) there is nothing better for us than to take refuge, with all humility, under God's wings, that they who tremble may be placed by him in perfect safety.

Again, because we are naturally rash, and hurried away by impatience, when we do not see that the Lord's assistance is immediate, on this account he says that these storms are "momentary." [455] True, we must continually struggle with afflictions, and, so long as we live, must not hope to see an end of them; and, consequently, the afflictions are, in our opinion, of very long duration. But if we compare them with that eternity, in which we shall possess immortal joys, it will be but "a very little moment." In like manner, Paul also shews that the light and momentary afflictions which we endure

[455] "Que ces tourbillons et orages passent, et sont de petite duree;" — "That these whirlwinds and storms pass away, and are of short duration."

in this life, ought not to be compared to that weight of eternal glory which we expect to receive. (2 Corinthians 4:17; Romans 8:18.)

Till the indignation pass over. By adding this he intends to remove all doubt from believers, as if he promised that they would quickly be delivered. I interpret "indignation" as meaning simply the affliction which proceeds from the Lord's anger. Others refer it to enemies; and I do not object to that interpretation, but prefer the former; for we see that the prophets earnestly teach that no evil happens to us that does not come from the hand of God, who does not inflict them on us without good reason, but when he has been provoked by our iniquities and transgressions. (Amos 3:6.) We are thus reminded that God's wrath against the Church will not last always, but that, like storms and tempests, it will come to an end, and on this account believers endure it more patiently. Hence it is said elsewhere, (Micah 7:9,) "I will bear the Lord's wrath;" for they know that he chastises them for their salvation. He introduces the Lord speaking, as I mentioned a little before, that his exhortation may have greater authority.

21. *For, behold, Jehovah cometh out of his place.* It is a very grievous temptation to the godly, when they see that the wicked exercise their rage without being punished, and that God does not restrain them; for they look upon themselves as forsaken by him. Isaiah therefore meets this temptation, and shews that the Lord, though he keep himself out of view for a time, will in due season gird himself for yielding assistance, and for revenging the injuries which his people have received.

By the word *cometh out*, he describes God stretching out his hand to his people in such a manner as if it had formerly been concealed, because the saints did not perceive his aid. For this reason he says, that the Lord "cometh out," and that he appears in public to yield assistance and exercise judgment, as if he had formerly dwelt like a private person at home. But perhaps there is an allusion to the sanctuary; and this mode of expression occurs frequently in the prophets. (Micah 1:3; Habakkuk 3:13; Zechariah 14:3.) Though heathen nations despised the ark of the covenant which was laid up in a place little renowned, yet believers knew, by communications of power and grace which they quickly obtained, that it was not in vain or to no purpose that they called on God in that holy place. Yet this principle always holds good, that, though unbelievers ridicule the temple as some mean hut, still God will "come forth" from it at his own time, that the whole world may know that he is the protector of his people

This meaning is more appropriate than if we were to interpret God's *place* to mean heaven, from which he "cometh forth;" for Isaiah intended to express something more. When the prophets mention heaven, they exhibit to us the majesty and glory of God; but here he refers to our senses, that is, when we see that God, who formerly appeared to remain concealed and to be at rest, gives us assistance. He employs the demonstrative particle הנה, (*hinnēh*,) *behold*, and the participle of the present tense יצא, (*yōtzē*,) *coming*

forth, in order to express certainty, and that believers may not be displeased at bridling their feelings till his coming.

To visit the iniquity. This is to the same purport with what goes before; for it would have been inconsistent with the nature of God, who is the judge of the world, to allow the wicked freely to indulge in sin without being punished. The word *visit* contains a well-known metaphor; because, so long as God delays or suspends his judgments, we think that he sees nothing, or that he has turned away his eyes. There is emphasis, also, in the phrase עליו, (*gnālāiv*,) *upon him*; as it is frequently said that the wicked are taken in "the snares which they have laid," (Psalm 9:16,) or "in the pit which they have digged." (Psalm 57:6.) The meaning therefore is, that all the injuries inflicted will fall on the heads of those who were the authors of them.

The earth also shall disclose her blood. [456] This also is highly emphatic. When innocent blood is shed and trodden under foot by wicked men, the earth drinks it up, and as it were receives it into her bosom; and, in the meantime, the death of the godly appears to be forgotten, and to be blotted out for ever from remembrance, so that it shall never come to be beheld even by God himself. Men indeed think so, but God makes a widely different declaration; for he declares, that those murderers will one day be "disclosed" and brought into judgment.

On this account he calls it "the blood, or bloods, of the earth," which the earth has drunk up; and in like manner it is said, that "the earth opened her mouth" when the blood of Abel was shed. (Genesis 4:11.) In that passage the Lord represents in strong terms the aggravation of that guilt, by saying, that the earth was polluted with that blood, and therefore he shews how "precious in his sight is the death of the saints," (Psalm 116:15,) how great is the care which he takes of them, and that at length he will not permit their death to pass unpunished. The earth itself will take up arms to avenge the murders and cruelties which the godly have endured from tyrants and enemies of the truth; and not a drop of blood has been shed of which they will not have to render an account. We ought therefore to call to remembrance this consolation, and to keep it constantly before our eyes, when the wicked slay, mock, and ridicule us, and inflict upon us every kind of outrage and cruelty. God will at length make known that the cry of innocent blood has not been uttered in vain; for he never can forget his own people. (Luke 18:7.)

[456] "Her blood (Heb. bloods)." — Eng. Ver.

Chapter 27

CHAPTER 27

Isaiah 27:1-13

1. In that day the Lord, with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

1. In die illa visitabit Iehova gladio suo duro, et magno et forti, super Leviathan serpentem penetrem, et super Leviathan serpentem flexuosum, et occidet draconem qui est in mari.

2. In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.

2. In die illa vineæ ruboris canite.

3. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

3. Ego Iehova custodio eam, singulis momentis irragabo eam; ne visitet eam (hostis,) noctu et interdiu custodiam ipsam.

4. Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

4. Furor non est mihi. Quis me committat cum vepre et spina (aut, veprem spinœ)? Gradiar hostiliter per eam, incendam penitus.

5. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.

5. An apprehendet robur meum, ut faciat mecum pacem, mecum, inquam, pacem faciat?

6. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

6. In posterum radices mittet Iacob; pullulabit et florebit Israel, et implebuntur facies orbis fructu.

7. Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain

according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?

7. An juxta plagam percutientis eum percussit eum? An juxta cædem cædentium eum cæsus est.

8. In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.

8. In mensura in emissione ejus disceptabis cum ea, etiam cum flaverit vento suo violento in die Euri.

9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the alter as chalk-stones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

9. Itaque hoc modo expiabitur iniquitas Iacob; et hic omnis fructos, ablatio peccati ejus; cum posuerit cunctos lapides altaris sicut lapides calcis confractos, ut non resurgant luci et imagines.

10. Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

10. Civitas tamen munita erit solitaria; locus habitatus erit desertus, ac derelictus quasi solitudo. Ibi pascetur vitulus, et ibi accubabit et absumet summitates ejus.

11. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire; for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

11. Dum arescet messis ejus, frangent (vel, secabunt) eam, mulieres venientes accendent eam; quia non est populus intelligens; propterea non miserebitur ejus factor ejus, et fictor ejus non erit illi propitius.

12. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

12. Accidet tamen in die illa, ut excutiat Iehova ab alveo fluminis ad fluvium Ægypti; et vos congregabimini unus ad unum, filii Israel.

13. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

13. Accidet etiam die illa, ut clangatur tuba magna; et venient qui perierant in terra Assur, et qui dissipati erant in terra Ægypti; et adorabunt Iehovam in monte sancto, in Ierusalem.

1. *In that day.* Here the Prophet speaks in general of the judgment of God, and thus includes the whole of Satan's kingdom. Having formerly spoken of the vengeance of God to be displayed against tyrants and wicked men who have shed innocent blood, he now proceeds farther, and publishes

the proclamation of this vengeance.

On leviathan. The word "leviathan" is variously interpreted; but in general it simply denotes either a large serpent, or whales and sea-fishes, which approach to the character of monsters on account of their huge size. [457] A1though this description applies to the king of Egypt, yet under one class he intended also to include the other enemies of the Church. For my own part, I have no doubt that he speaks allegorically of Satan and of his whole kingdom, describing him under the figure of some monstrous animal, and at the same time glancing at the crafty wiles by which he glosses over his mischievous designs. In this manner he intended to meet many doubts by which we are continually assailed, when God declares that he will assist us, and when we experience, on the other hand, the strength, craft, and deceitfulness of Satan. Wonderful are the stratagems with which he comes prepared for doing mischief, and dreadful the cruelty which he exercises against the children of God. But the Prophet shews that all this will not prevent the Lord from destroying and overthrowing this kingdom. It is indeed certain that this passage does not relate to Satan himself, but to his agents or instruments, [458] by which he governs his kingdom and annoys the Church of God. Now, though this kingdom is defended by innumerable cunning devices, and is astonishingly powerful, yet the Lord will destroy it.

To convince us of this, the Prophet contrasts with it *the Lord's sword, hard, and great, and strong,* by which he will easily slay an enemy that is both strong and crafty. It ought therefore to be observed, that we have continually to do with Satan as with some wild beast, and that the world is the sea in which we sail. We are beset by various wild beasts, which endeavor to upset our ship and sink us to the bottom; and we have no means of defending ourselves and resisting them, if the Lord do not aid us. Accordingly, by this description the Prophet intended to describe the greatness of the danger which threatens us from enemies so powerful and so full of rage and of cunning devices. We should quickly be reduced to the lowest extremity, and should be utterly ruined, did not God oppose and meet them with his invincible power; for by his sword alone can this pernicious kingdom of Satan be destroyed.

But we must observe what he says in the beginning of the verse, *In that day.* It means that Satan is permitted, for some time, to strengthen and defend his kingdom, but that it will at length be destroyed; as Paul also declares, "God will quickly bruise Satan under your feet." (Romans 16:20.) By this promise he shews that the time for war is not yet ended, and that we must fight bravely till that enemy be subdued, who, though he has been a hundred times vanquished, ceases not to renew the warfare. We must therefore fight

[457] "The word leviathan, which, from its etymology, appears to mean contorted, coiled, is sometimes used to denote particular species, (e.g., the crocodile,) and sometimes as a generic term for huge aquatic animals, or the larger kind of serpents, in which sense the corresponding term! תנין (tănnīn) is also used. They both appear to be employed in this case to express the indefinite idea of a formidable monster, which is in fact the sense now commonly attached to the word dragon." --- Alexander

[458] Ses organes et instrumens

with him continually, and must resist the violent attacks which he makes upon us; but, in order that we may not be discouraged, we must keep our eye on that day when his strong arm shall be broken.

On leviathan the piercing serpent, and on leviathan the crooked serpent. The epithets applied to "leviathan" describe, on the one hand, his tricks and wiles, and, on the other hand, his open violence; but at the same time intimate that he is endued with invincible power. Since בריח (*bārīăch*) signifies a crowbar, that word denotes metaphorically the power of piercing, either on account of venomous bites or on account of open violence. The second name, עקלתון, (*gnăkāllāthōn*,) is derived from the verb עקל, (*gnākăl*,) *to bend*; and hence it comes to be applied to crooked and tortuous foldings.

2. *Sing to the vineyard of redness.* [459] He now shews that all this will promote the salvation of the Church; for the Lord attends to the interests of his people, whom he has taken under his guardianship and protection. In order, therefore, that the Church may be restored, Satan and all his kingdom shall be utterly destroyed. The object of all the vengeance which God takes on his enemies is to shew that he takes care of the Church; and although in this passage the Prophet does not name the Church, he shews plainly enough that he addresses her in this congratulation.

This figure conveys the meaning even more strongly than if he had spoken expressly of the people of Israel; for since the whole excellence of a vineyard depends partly on the soil in which it is planted, and partly on diligent cultivation, if the Church of God is a vineyard, we infer that its excellence is owing to nothing else than the undeserved favor of God and the uninterrupted continuance of his kindness. The same metaphor expresses also God's astonishing love towards the Church, of which we spoke largely under the fifth chapter. [460]

He calls it *a vineyard of redness*, that is, very excellent; for in Scripture, if we compare various passages, "red wine" denotes excellence. He says that this song may at that time be sung in the Church, and foretells that, though it would in the mean time be reduced to fearful ruin, and would lie desolate and waste, yet that afterwards it will be restored in such a manner as to yield fruit plentifully, and that this will furnish abundant materials for singing.

3. *I Jehovah keep it.* Here the Lord asserts his care and diligence in dressing and guarding the vine, as if he had said, that he left nothing undone that belonged to the duty of a provident and industrious householder. Not only does he testify what he will do, when the time for gladness and congratulation shall arrive, but he relates the blessings which the Jews had already received, that their hope for the future may be increased. Yet we must supply an implied contrast with the intermediate period, during which God appeared to have laid aside all care of it, so that at that time it differed little from a wilderness. This then is the reason why the Lord's vineyard was

[459] "Chantez à la vigne rouge;" — "Sing to the red vineyard."

[460] Ft449 See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 162

plundered and laid waste; it was because the Lord forsook it, and gave it up as a prey to the enemy. Hence we infer that our condition will be ruined as soon as the Lord has departed from us; and if he assist, everything will go well.

I will water it every moment. He next mentions two instances of his diligence, that he "will water it every moment," and will defend it against the attacks of robbers and cattle and other annoyances. These are the two things chiefly required in preserving a vineyard, cultivation and protection. Under the word *water* he includes all that is necessary for cultivation, and promises that he will neglect nothing that can carry it forward. But protection must likewise be added; for it will be to no purpose to have cultivated a vineyard with vast toil, if robbers and cattle break in and destroy it. The Lord, therefore, promises that he will grant protection, and will not permit it to suffer damage, that the fruits may ripen well, and may be gathered in due season. Though the vine may suffer many attacks, and though enemies and wild beasts may assail it with great violence, God declares that he will interpose to preserve it unhurt and free from all danger. Moreover, since he names a fixed day for singing this song, let us remember that, if at any time he cease to assist us, we ought not entirely to cast away hope; and therefore, if he permit us to be harassed and plundered for a time, still he will at length shew that he has not cast away all care of us.

4. *Fury is not in me.* This verse contains excellent consolation; for it expresses the incredible warmth of love which the Lord bears towards his people, though they are of a wicked and rebellious disposition. God assumes, as we shall see, the character of a father who is grievously offended, and who, while he is offended at his son, still more pities him, and is naturally inclined to exercise compassion, because the warmth of his love rises above his anger. In short, he shews that he cannot hate his elect so as not to bear fatherly kindness towards them, even while he visits them with very severe punishments.

Scripture represents God to us in various ways. Sometimes it exhibits him as burning with indignation, and having a terrific aspect, and sometimes as shewing nothing but gentleness and mercy; and the reason of this diversity is, that we are not all capable of enjoying his goodness. Thus he is constrained to be perverse towards the perverse, and holy towards the holy, as David describes him. (Psalm 18:25.) He shews himself to us what we suffer him to be, for by our rebelliousness we drive him to severity.

Yet here the Prophet does not speak of all indiscriminately, but only of the Church, whose transgressions he chastises, and whose iniquities he punishes, in such a manner as not to lay aside a father's affection. This statement must therefore be limited to the Church, so as to denote the relation between God and his chosen people, to whom he cannot manifest himself otherwise than as a Father, while he burns with rage against the reprobate. Thus we see how great is the consolation that is here given; for if we know that God

has called us, we may justly conclude that he is not angry with us, and that, having embraced us with a firm and enduring regard, it is impossible that he shall ever deprive us of it. It is indeed certain that at that time God hated many persons who belonged to that nation; but, with respect to their adoption, he declares that he loved them. Now, the more kindly and tenderly that God loved them, so much the more they who provoked his anger by their wickedness were without excuse. This circumstance is undoubtedly intended to aggravate their guilt, that their wickedness constrains him, in some measure, to change his disposition towards them; for, having formerly spoken of his gentleness, he suddenly exclaims, —

"Who shall engage me in battle with the brier and thorn?" or, as some render it, "Who shall set me as a brier and thorn?" Yet it might not be amiss also to read, "Who shall bring against me a brier, that I may meet it as a thorn?" for there is no copulative conjunction between those two words. Yet I willingly adhere to the former opinion, that God wishes to have to deal with thistles or thorns, which he will quickly consume by the fire of his wrath. If any one choose rather to view it as a reproof of those doubts which often arise in us in consequence of unbelief, when we think that God is inflamed with wrath against us, as if he had said, "You are mistaken in comparing me to the brier and thorn," that is, "You ascribe to me a harsh and cruel disposition," let him enjoy his opinion, though I think that it is different from what the Prophet means. [461]

Others think that God assumes the character of a man who is provoking himself to rage; as if he had said, "I do not choose to be any longer so indulgent, or to exercise such forbearance as I have formerly manifested;" but this is so forced, that it does not need a lengthened refutation. It is true, indeed, that since God is gentle and merciful in his nature, and there is nothing that is more foreign to him than harshness or cruelty, he may be said to borrow a nature that does not belong to him. [462] But the interpretation which I have given will of itself be sufficient to refute others, namely, that God complains bitterly that he will as soon fight with thorns as with his vineyard, for when he considers that it is his inheritances he is compelled to spare it.

I will pass through them in a hostile manner, and utterly consume them. These words confirm my former exposition; for the burning relates to "briers and thorns," and he declares that, if he had to deal with them, he would burn them all up, but that he acts more gently, because it is his vineyard. Hence we infer that, if God is not enraged against us, this must be attributed, not to any merits of men, but to his election, which is of free grace. By these words, מי יתנני, (*mi yittĕnēnī*,) "Who shall give me?" he plainly shews that he has just cause for contending with us, and even for destroying us in a hostile

461 "Si quelqu'un est de cet advis, je n'empesche point qu'il ne le suive;" — "If any one is of that opinion, I do not hinder him from following it."

462 "Tellement qu'il est constraint comme l'emprunter d'ailleurs quand il se courrouce;" — "So that he is compelled, as it were, to borrow it from another quarter when he is enraged."

manner, were he not restrained by compassion towards his Church; for we would be as thorns and briers, and would be like wicked men, if the Lord did not separate us from them, that we might not perish along with them. If the phrase במלחמה, (*bămmilhāmāh,*) *in battle*, which we have translated "in a hostile manner," be connected with the question, "Who shall set me?" it will not ill agree with the meaning. [463]

5. *Will she take hold of my strength?* או (ō,) is frequently a disjunctive conjunction, [464] and therefore this passage is explained as if the particle had been twice used, "*Either* let her take hold of my strength, *or* let her make peace with me;" that is, "If she do not enter into favor with me, she will feel my strength to her great loss." Others explain it somewhat differently, "Who shall take hold of my strength?" that is, "Who shall restrain me?" But I pass by this interpretation, because I consider it to be too far-fetched. I return to that which is more generally received.

It is supposed that God threatens the Jews in order to try all the ways and methods by which they may be brought back to the right path; for God is laid under a necessity to urge us in various ways, because we are accustomed to abuse his forbearance and goodness. On this account he frequently threatens to punish us for our ingratitude, as Isaiah appears to do in this passage, "If they do not choose to avail themselves of my kindness, and repent, that they may return to favor with me, they shall feel my strength, [465] which I have hitherto restrained." Yet another meaning equally appropriate might perhaps be drawn from it, as if God exhorted his people to acknowledge his power, which leads them to seek reconciliation; for whence comes that brutish indifference which makes us view without alarm the wrath of God, but because we do not think of his power with due reverence?

But I prefer to view it as a question, as in other passages also it frequently has this meaning. [466] "Will he take hold of my strength, so as to enter into peace with me?" As if a father, anxious and perplexed about his son, were to groan and complain, "Will not this scoundrel [467] allow himself to receive benefit? for I know not how I ought to treat him; he cannot endure severity, and he abuses my goodness. What shall I do? I will banish him till he repent, and then he will feel how great is that fatherly power by which I have hitherto preserved him. Since he does not permit me to exercise forbearance, he must be treated with the utmost rigour of the law. Will he not then perceive how great my power is, that he may come into a state of favor with me?" We shall understand this better, if we consider that the source of all our distresses

[463] That is, instead of making it the beginning of the following sentence, "in battle (or, in a hostile manner) I will pass through them," it might be read as the conclusion of the question, "Who shall engage me with briers and thorns in battle?" And this concluding suggestion accords with our English version. — Ed

[464] "Of the various senses ascribed to או (ō,) such as unless, oh that if, etc., the only one justified by usage is the disjunctive sense of or." --- Alexander

[465] "Ils sentiront la pesanteur de ma main;" — "They shall feel the weight of my hand."

[466] That is, our Author is of opinion that או (ō) frequently has the same force as the Latin interrogative particle An. --- Ed

[467] "Ce vaut-neant-ci;" — "This good-for-nothing."

is, that we are not affected with a sense of the divine goodness; for if we should take into consideration the greatness of the blessings which we have received from God, we should quickly be drawn aside from our iniquities and transgressions, and should desire to return into a state of favor with him.

Here we see what care about our salvation is manifested by our Heavenly Father, who wishes us to take hold of his power and goodness, that we may know how great it is, and may partake of it more and more abundantly; for he would wish to deal with us on the same familiar terms as with his children, if we did not prevent him by our wickedness. Since, therefore, we are incapable of enjoying his fatherly tenderness, he must display his strength and majesty, that, being awed by it, and affected by the anticipation of the judgment, we may humbly entreat him, and sincerely implore peace and pardon. Now, this is done when we are truly [468] converted to him; for, so long as we please ourselves, and flatter our vices, we cannot but displease him; and, on the other hand, if we enter into peace with him, we must make war against Satan and sin.

How earnestly God desires to be reconciled to us appears still more clearly from the repetition of the words. He might have said, in a single word, that he is merciful and ready to bestow pardon; and therefore, when he twice repeats the words, *that he may make peace with me,* he declares that willingly and most earnestly he hastens to blot out all our offenses.

6. *Afterwards* [469] *shall Jacob put forth roots.* He now gives actual proof of that love of which he formerly spoke. In order to understand it better, we must consider the condition of that ancient people; for it was the heritage of God, not through its own merits, but by the blessing of adoption. The Lord might justly have been offended at that nation to such an extent as to destroy it utterly, and blot out its name; but he refrained from exercising such severity, because he had to deal with his vineyard and heritage. He aimed at nothing more than that the people should acknowledge their guilt and return to his favor; and therefore he followed up the former statement with this promise, lest the people, struck with excessive terror at that power which exhibits the judgments of God and his chastisements and stripes, should grow disheartened; for the contemplation of the judgment of God might throw us into despair, if we did not entertain some hope of being restored. Accordingly, he says —

Jacob shall again put forth roots. "Though I shall lessen my Church, and reduce it to a very small number, yet it shall be restored to its ancient and flourishing condition, so as to fill the whole world; for, after having once been

[468] "Sans feintise;" — "Without hypocrisy."

[469] Such is Calvin's translation of באים, (bāīm,) coming, which, occupying a somewhat anomalous position at the beginning of the verse, has perplexed the critics. The usual and best defended supplement is ימים, (yāmīm,) days, and thus the construction is supposed to be, ``In coming days.'' The French version takes ci-apres, ``hereafter;'' the Italian has Ne' giorni a venire, ``In the days to come;'' Luther's version has As mirb bennoch bazu fummen, ``Yet it will come to this.'' Our English version connects the word with ``Jacob,'' and makes it to signify ``Them that come of Jacob,'' which is countenanced by the Septuagint, οἱ ἐρχόμενοι τέκνα Ιακὼβ, ``They that come, the children of Jacob,'' but does not appear to have the support of any modern critic or version. --- Ed

reconciled, it will be more and more increased." This metaphor borrowed from *roots* is highly elegant; for by the wrath of the Lord we are as it were cut off, so that we appear to be completely slain and dead; but to whatever extent the Lord afflicts his Church, he never allows the roots to die, but they are concealed for a time, and at length bring forth their fruit.

And the face of the world shall be filled with fruit. What he now says, that "the world shall be filled with the fruit" of those roots, was accomplished at the coming of Christ, who collected and multiplied the people of God by the gospel; and Israel was united with the Gentiles in one body, so that the distinction which formerly existed between them was removed. (Ephesians 2:14.) Now, we know that the gospel, and all the fruit that sprung from it, proceeded from the Jews. (Isaiah 2:3; John 4:22.)

7. *Hath he smitten him?* [470] He confirms the former statement, and shews that, even in chastisements, there are certain and manifest proofs of the goodness and mercy of God; for while the Lord chastises his people, he moderates the severity in such a manner as always to leave some room for compassion. There are various ways of explaining this verse. Some interpret it thus: "Did I smite Israel as his enemies smote him? The Assyrians did not at all spare him: they acted towards him with the utmost cruelty. But I laid a restraint on my wrath, and did not smite as if I wished to destroy him; and thus I gave abundant evidence that I am not his enemy." But I prefer another and commonly received interpretation, which leads us to understand that a difference between believers and the reprobate is here declared; for God punishes both indiscriminately, but not in the same manner. When he takes vengeance on the reprobate, he gives loose reins to his anger; because he has no other object in view than to destroy them; for they are "vessels of wrath, appointed to destruction," (Romans 9:22,) and have no experience of the goodness of God. But when he chastises the godly, he restrains his wrath, and has another and totally different object in view; for he wishes to bring them back to the right path, and to draw them to himself, that provision may be made for their future happiness.

But it may be asked, Why does the Prophet employ a circuitous mode of expression, and say, "according to the stroke of him that smote him?" I answer, he did so, because the Lord often employs the agency of wicked men in chastising us, in order to depress and humble us the more. It is often a very sore temptation to us, when the Lord permits us to be oppressed by the tyranny of wicked men; for we have doubts whether it is because he favors them, or because he deprives us of his assistance, as if he hated us. To meet this doubt, he says that he does indeed permit wicked men to afflict his people, and to exercise their cruelty upon them for a time, but that he will at length punish them for their wickedness more sharply than they punished the godly persons. Yet, if any one choose to adopt the former

[470] "Hath he smitten him as he smote (Heb., according to the stroke of) those that smote him?" — Eng. Ver.

interpretation, namely, that the Lord will not deal with us as with enemies, I have no objection. Hence arises also that saying, that "it is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men;" for the Lord can never forget his covenant, that he will deal in a gentle and fatherly manner with his Church. (2 Samuel 24:14; 1 Chronicles 21:13.)

8. *In measure.* This is the second proof of the divine compassion towards all the elect, whom he chastises for this purpose, that they may not perish; and, by mitigating the punishments which he inflicts upon them, he pays such regard to their weakness that he never permits them to be oppressed beyond measure. As to the word בסאסאה, (*bĕsăssĕāh,*) *in measure*, all interpreters agree that it denotes moderation; for otherwise we could not bear the hand of the Lord, and would be overwhelmed by it; but he keeps it back, and "is faithful," as Paul says,

"not to suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear."
(1 Corinthians 10:13.)

Thus also Jeremiah prays to the Lord to "chastise him in judgment," that is, with moderation, accommodating the stripes to his weakness. (Jeremiah 10:24.)

In her shooting forth, בשלחה, (*bĕshālləchāch.*) Interpreters are not agreed as to the meaning of this word. Some think that it means, "by engaging them in internal wars with each other," and others, "that God will punish their sins by that sword which they have drawn and put into his hand." But as I cannot approve of either of those interpretations, I pass them by. I approve more highly of those who interpret it, "in her shootings forth," that is, in plants; so as to mean, that in inflicting punishment, the Lord attacks not only their outward circumstances, but also their persons. We know that the Lord's chastisements are various. The more light and moderate are those by which he takes from us only external blessings, which are called "the good things of fortune." So then God punishes believers in such a manner as not only to afflict their persons, but to take from them what is necessary for the support of life, such as corn, wine, oil, and other things of that kind which the earth produces; for שלח (*shālăch*) signifies to "shoot forth," and to "produce."

But I have another exposition which comes nearer to the Prophet's meaning, that *in shooting forth* God contends with the Church, because, though he cuts down the branches and even the trunk, yet his wrath does not extend to the roots, so as to prevent the tree from again shooting forth; for there is always some remaining vigor in the roots, which he never permits to die. And this agrees with what goes before, when he promised (verse 6) that Israel would bring forth "fruit." This explains what he formerly said, *in measure*; namely, that he will not pull up the root; for the Lord cuts down what appears outwardly, such as branches and leaves, but defends the root and preserves it safe. But, on the other hand, he tears up the reprobate by the roots, and cuts them down in such a manner that they can never rise

again.

Though he blow with his violent wind. Some translate it, "he blew with his wind," but I think that the meaning is made more clear by saying, "though he blow." He continues the metaphor, by which he had alluded to herbs and plants, which a violent wind causes to wither, but only in appearance; for the root is always safe. Thus though the Lord attacks believers with great violence, and takes away all their beauty and comeliness, so that they appear to be entirely slain, yet he usually preserves in them some internal vigor.

In the day of the east wind. When the Prophet spoke of "the day of the east wind," he had his eye on the situation of Judea, to which, as we learn from other passages, that easterly wind was injurious. We know that each country has its own particular wind that is injurious to it; for in some countries the north wind, in others the south wind, and in others the east or equinoctial wind, occasions great damage, throwing down the corn, scorching or spoiling all the fruits, blasting the trees, and scarcely leaving anything in the fields uninjured. By "the east wind" in this passage, is supposed to be meant "the equinoctial wind," which in many countries is very destructive.

9. *Therefore in this manner shall the iniquity of Jacob be expiated.* After having spoken of the chastisement of the people, he begins to state more clearly that the Lord promotes the interests of his people by these chastisements, so that they derive benefit from them. He had mentioned this formerly, but now he explains it more fully, that all the chastisements which God inflicts will tend to wash away the sins of his people, that thus they may be reconciled to God.

A question arises, Are our sins expiated by the stripes with which God chastises us? For if it be so, it follows that we must satisfy God for our sins, as the Papists teach. These two things are closely connected. If God punish us for our sins in order to expiate them, when punishments are not inflicted, satisfactions must come in their room. But this difficulty will be easily removed, if we consider that here the Prophet does not handle the question, whether we deserve the forgiveness of sins on account of our works, or whether the punishments which God inflicts on us may be regarded as making amends for them. He simply shews that chastisements are the remedies by which God cures our diseases, because we are wont to abuse his goodness and patience. God must therefore bring us to acknowledgment of our sins, and to patience; and thus the punishments which he inflicts as chastisements for our sins are remedies, because our desires may be said to be consumed by them as by fire, [471] to which also Scripture frequently compares them. (Psalm 66:10; 89:46.) In no respect can they yield satisfaction, but men are prepared by them for repentance. Hence he shews, therefore, that the godly have no reason for exclaiming against God's chastisements, and that they ought to acknowledge, on the contrary, that their salvation is thus

[471] "Ne plus ne moins que si le feu y avoit passé;" — "In exactly the same manner as if fire had passed on them."

promoted, because otherwise they would not acknowledge the grace of God. If any person wish to have a short reply, we may state it in a single word, that chastisements expiate our offenses indirectly, but not directly, because they lead us to repentance, which again, in its turn, brings us to obtain the forgiveness of sins.

And this is all the fruit, the taking away of his sin. Some render it in the genitive case, "the fruit *of* the taking away of his sin;" but I prefer to read it in the nominative case. כל, (*chōl*,) *all*, frequently means, "great and abundant;" and therefore it denotes the plentiful fruit by which the chastisements will be followed. In a word, he intends to commend to us God's chastisements on the ground of their usefulness, that the godly may bear them with calmness and moderation, when they know that by means of them they are purged and prepared for salvation. [472] And immediately afterwards the Prophet explains his meaning more clearly by speaking of abolishing superstitions. So long as the people of Israel enjoyed prosperity, they did not think of repentance; for it is natural to men that prosperity should make them insolent and harden them more and more. He therefore shews how, in chastising his people, God also takes away their sin, because, having formerly indulged in wickedness and proceeded to greater lengths in sinning in consequence of his goodness and forbearance, they shall now know that they were justly punished, and shall change their life and conduct.

When he shall have made all the stones of the altar. Here Isaiah, by a figure of speech, exhibits a single class, so as to explain the whole by means of a part, and describes in general terms the removal of idolatry and superstitions; for he does not speak of the *altar* which was consecrated to God, but of that which they had erected to their idols. Thus, when the stones of it shall have been broken, and the idols thrown down and destroyed, so that no trace of superstition shall be seen, the iniquity of the people shall at the same time be removed.

Hence it ought to be remarked, first, that we ought not to expect pardon from the Lord, unless we likewise repent of our sins; for whosoever flatters himself must be the object of the anger of God, [473] whom he does not cease to provoke, and our iniquity is taken away only when we are moved by a true feeling of repentance. Secondly, it ought to be observed, that though repentance is an inward feeling of the heart, yet it brings forth its fruits before men. In vain do we profess that we fear God, if we do not give evidence of it by outward works; for the root cannot be separated from its fruits. Thirdly, it ought to be inferred, that idolatry is chiefly mentioned here, because it is the source of all evils. So long as the pure worship of God and the true religion are maintained, there is also room for the duties of brotherly kindness, which necessarily flow from it; but when we forsake

[472] "Et mis en chemin de salut;" — "And led into the way of salvation."

[473] "Quiconque se flatte en son ordure, il attirera sur sa teste infalliblement l'ire de Dieu;" — "Whosoever flatters himself in his pollution will infallibly draw down on his head the wrath of God."

God, he permits us also to fall into every kind of vices. And this is the reason why, under the name of idolatry, he includes likewise other acts of wickedness. Besides, we see that he condemns not only statues and images, but everything that had been invented by the Jews contrary to the injunction of the law; and hence it follows that he sets aside every kind of false worship.

That groves and images may never rise again. By adding this, he shews how strongly God abhors idolatry, the remembrance of which he wishes to be completely blotted out, so that not even a trace of it shall henceforth be seen. Yet the Prophet intended to express something more, namely, that our repentance ought to be of such a kind that we shall steadfastly persevere in it; for we will not say that it is true repentance, if any one, through a sudden impulse of feeling, shall put down superstitions, and afterwards shall gradually allow them to spring up and bud forth; as we see to be the case with many who at first burn with some appearance of zeal, and afterwards grow cold. But here the Prophet describes such steadfastness that they who have once laid aside their filth and pollution maintain their purity to the end.

10. *Yet the defenced city shall be desolate* Here the copulative ו (*vau*) is generally supposed to mean *for*, and some take it for *otherwise*. There will thus be a twofold interpretation; for if we translate it *because*, the Prophet will assign a reason for the former statement, but that exposition is rejected by the context, and is altogether absurd. With greater plausibility it is taken for *otherwise*; for this threatening might be appropriately introduced, "If you do not repent, you see what awaits you, the defenced city shall be like a wilderness." But I consider that exposition to be a departure from the natural meaning, and therefore I choose rather to take it as signifying *nevertheless* or *yet*

The Prophet means that Jerusalem and the other cities of Judea must "nevertheless" be destroyed, and that, although the Lord wishes to spare his people, it is impossible for them to be preserved. Godly men would have grown disheartened, when they saw that holy city overthrown and the temple demolished; but from these predictions they learned that God would have abundance of methods for preserving the Church, and were supported by that consolation. So then the Prophet intended to meet this very sore temptation; and hence also we learn that we ought never to lose courage, though we suffer every hardship, and though the Lord treat us with the utmost severity. Although this threatening extends to the whole of Judea, yet I think it probable that it relates chiefly to Jerusalem, which was the metropolis of the nation.

There shall the calf feed. This metaphor is frequently employed by the prophets when they speak of the desolation of any city; for they immediately add, that it will be a place for pasture. Here we ought to take into account the judgment of God, which places *calves* and brute beasts in the room of the Jews who had profaned the land by their crimes. Having been adopted

by God to be his children, with good reason ought they to have obeyed so kind a Father; but since they had shaken off the yoke and given themselves up to wickedness, it was the just reward of their ingratitude, that the land should be possessed by better inhabitants, taken not from the human race but from brute beasts.

And shall browse on its tops. [474] What he says about the "tops" tends to shew more strongly the desolation; as if he had said that there will be such abundance of grass that the calves will crop none but the tender parts. סעף (*sāīph*) signifies also *branch*; but as branches naturally rise high, I take it here for *summit* or *top*. It might also be thought that there is an allusion to the beauty of the city, and that as its houses formerly were lofty and magnificent, when these have been thrown down, nothing will be seen in it but herbs and leaves, the "tops" of which the calves which enjoy abundant pasture will eat in disdain.

11. *When its harvest shall wither.* [475] Some think that the Prophet has in his eye the metaphor of a vineyard, which he employed at the beginning of the chapter, and therefore they translate קציר (*kātzīr*,) *branches*. The word is certainly ambiguous; but as קציר (*kātzīr*) means also a *harvest*, and as the metaphor of a *harvest* is more appropriate, I prefer to take it in that sense. Nor do I translate it, "When the harvest shall be withered," but "When the harvest shall wither." In this passage *wither* means nothing else than to approach to maturity. Before the harvest of the land is ripe, it shall be cut down; as if he had said, "The Lord will take away from thee the produce which thou thoughest to be already prepared for thee and to be in thy hand."

The women coming shall burn it. When he says that "women shall come," he means that God will have no need of robust soldiers to execute his judgment, and that he will only make use of the agency of women. This exhibits in a still stronger light the disgracefulness of the punishment, for he threatens that the calamity shall also be accompanied by disgrace; because it is more shameful and humiliating to be plundered by "women," who are unused to war, than by men.

For it is a people of no understanding. At length he assigns the reason of so heavy a calamity. At first sight it might appear to be excessively harsh that the Lord should permit the people whom he had chosen to be wretchedly tormented and scattered, and not to render them any assistance; for it is inconsistent with his kindness and fatherly love which he bears towards them. But the Prophet shews that God had good reason for punishing the Jews with such severity; for they were destitute of knowledge and sound "understanding."

Nor is it without reason that he pronounces ignorance to have been the source of all evils; for since "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom," (Proverbs 1:7; Psalm 111:10,) they who despise God and obey the wicked

[474] "And consume the branches thereof." — Eng. Ver.
[475] "When the boughs thereof are withered." — Eng. Ver.

passions of their flesh are justly condemned by the Spirit of God as blind and mad. And yet such ignorance does not at all excuse us or lessen the guilt of our wickedness; for they who sin are conscious of their sinfulness, though they are blinded by their lust. Wickedness and ignorance are therefore closely connected, but the connection is of such a nature that ignorance proceeds from the sinful disposition of the mind. Hence it comes that "ignorance," or "ignorances," is the general name given by the Hebrew writers to every kind of sin, and hence also that saying of Moses,

"O that they were wise and understood!"
(Deuteronomy 32:29.)

Any man will easily perceive this, if he consider how great is the power of evil passions to trouble us; for when we have been deprived of the light of doctrine, and are void of understanding, the devil drives us as it were to madness, so that we do not dread the arm of God, and have no respect for his holy word.

Therefore their Maker will not have compassion on them. For the purpose of still heightening their terror, he at length takes away all hope of pardon; for even if a remnant was preserved, the wrath of God did not on that account cease to rage against the multitude at large. The Prophet here calls God the *Maker* and *Creator* of Israel, not in the same manner that he is called the Creator of heaven and earth, (Genesis 1:1,) but inasmuch as he has formed his Church by the Spirit of regeneration. In like manner Paul also declares, that in that sense we are αὐτοῦ ποίημα, *his workmanship*, (Ephesians 2:10,) as we have already stated in the exposition of another passage. [476] (Isaiah 19:25.) Isaiah made this statement, in order to exhibit more strongly the ingratitude of the people, and to shew how justly they deserve to be punished, since, after having been formed and preserved by God, they treated him with dishonor and contempt.

12. *And yet it shall come to pass on that day.* He softens the harshness of the former statement; for it was a dreadful judgment of God, that the people were deprived of all hope of mercy and favor. The particle ו (*vau*) must therefore be explained as in the tenth verse, "*Nevertheless*, or, *and yet* it shall come to pass on that day."

That Jehovah shall thrash. The Prophet speaks metaphorically; for he compares the gathering of the Church to the "thrashing" of wheat, by which the grain is separated from the chaff. The meaning of the metaphor is, that the people were so completely overwhelmed by that captivity that they appeared to be nothing else than grain concealed or scattered here and there under the chaff. It was necessary that the Lord should "thrash," as with a fan, what was concealed amidst the confused mass; so that this gathering was justly compared to "thrashing."

From the channel of the river to the river of Egypt. By this he means Euphrates and the Nile; for the people were banished, partly into Chaldea

[476] See p. 83

or Assyria, and partly into Egypt. Many fled into Egypt, while others were carried captive into Babylon. He therefore foretells that the Lord will gather his people, not only from Chaldea, and from the whole of Mesopotamia, but also from Egypt.

And you shall be gathered one by one. לאחד אחד, (*lĕăhăd ĕhād,*) which we have translated "one by one," is translated by others "each out of each place;" but this is an excessively forced exposition, and the exposition which I have stated appears to me more simple. Yet there are two senses which the words will bear; either, "I will gather you into one body," or "I will gather you, not in companies nor in great numbers, but one after another," as usually happens when men who had wandered and been scattered are gathered; for they do not all assemble suddenly, but approach to each other by degrees. The Jews were scattered and dispersed in such a manner that they could not easily be gathered together and formed into one body; and therefore he shews that this dispersion will not prevent them from being restored to a flourishing condition. This was afterwards fulfilled; for the Jews were gathered and brought back, not by a multitude of horsemen or chariots, not by human forces, or swords, or arms, as Hosea states, but solely by the power of God. (Hosea 1:7.)

13. *It shall also come to pass in that day.* This is the explanation of the former verse. He speaks metaphorically, and shews that so great will be the power of God, that he will easily bring back his people. As kings assemble large armies by the sound of a trumpet, so he shews that it will be easy for the Lord to gather his people, on whom prophecy had not less efficacy than the trumpet by which soldiers are mustered.

And they shall come who were perishing. He calls them *perishing*, because they were miserably scattered, and appeared to be very near destruction, without any hope of being restored. The enemies, while their monarchy lasted, would never have permitted their captives to return, nor had they led them into banishment in a distant country with any other design than that of gradually casting into oblivion the name of Israel.

And who had been scattered in the land of Egypt. What he adds about Egypt contains a more remarkable testimony of pardon, namely, that those who fled into Egypt, though they did not deserve this favor, shall be gathered. They had offended God in two respects, as Jeremiah plainly shews; first, because they were obstinate and rebellious; and, secondly, because they had refused to obey the revelation, (Jeremiah 28:10, 11;) for they ought to have submitted to the yoke of the Babylonians rather than flee into Egypt in opposition to the command of God.

And shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain. At length, he describes the result of their deliverance, that the Jews, having returned from captivity into their country, may again worship God their deliverer in a pure and lawful manner. By the *mountain* he means the temple and sacrifices. This was indeed accomplished under Darius, but the Prophet undoubtedly intended

to extend this prophecy farther; for that restoration was a kind of dark foreshadowing of the deliverance which they obtained through Christ, at whose coming the sound of the spiritual trumpet, that is, of the gospel, was heard, not only in Assyria or Egypt, but in the most distant parts of the world. Then were the people of God gathered, to flow together to Mount Zion, that is, to the Church. We know that this mode of expression is frequently employed by the prophets when they intend to denote the true worship of God, and harmony in religion and godliness; for they accommodated themselves to the usages of the people that they might be better understood. We know also that the gospel proceeded out of Zion; but on this subject we have spoken fully at the second chapter. [477]

[477] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 96

Chapter 28

CHAPTER 28

Isaiah 28:1-29

1. Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

1. Væ coronæ superbiæ temulentorum Ephraim; quia decor gloriæ ejus erit flos deciduus, quæ est super caput vallis pinguium, oppresorum a vino.

2. Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which, as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

2. Ecce durus et fortis Domino, sicut inundatio grandinis, turbo subvertens; sicut impetus aquarum vehementium inundantium, dejiciens in manu ad terram.

3. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

3. Pedibus conculabitur corona superbiæ temultorum Ephraim.

4. And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

4. Et erit flos deciduus decor gloriæ ejus, quæ est super caput vallis pinguium, quasi fructus præcox ante æstivos, quem qui viderit, aspiciens eum dum adhuc in manu est, devorat.

5. In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.

5. In illa die Iehova exercituum in corona gloriæ, et diadema decoris reliquiis populi sui,

6. And for spirit of judgement to him that sitteth in judgement, and for

strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

6. Et in spiritum judicii sedenti super tribunal, et in fortitudinem propulsantibus prœlium ad portam.

7. But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way: the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

7. At isti quoque præ vino errarunt, præ sicera hallucinati sunt. Sacerdos et propheta errarunt præ sicera, absorpti sunt a vino; hallucinati sunt præ sicera, errarunt in visione, impegerunt in judicio.

8. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean

8. Quoniam omnes mensæ plenæ sunt vomitu stercoreo, ut locus non vacet.

9. Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

9. Quem docebit scientiam, et quem intelliegere faciet doctrinam? Abductos a lacte, abstractos ab uberibus?

10. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.

10. Quoniam præceptum ad præceptum, præceptum ad præceptum; instructio ad instructionem, instructio ad instructionem; paululum ibi, paululum ibi.

11. For with stammering lips, and another tongue, will he speak to this people.

11. Quoniam balbis labiis et lingua exotica loquetur ad populum istum.

12. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

12. Quoniam illis dixit, Hæc est requies; requiescere facite lassum, et hoc refrigerium; et noluerunt audire.

13. But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

13. Erit igitur illis verbum Iehovæ regula ad regulam, regula ad regulam; instructio ad instructonem, instructio ad instructionem; paululum ibi, paululum ibi; propterea ibunt, et corruent retrorsum, conterentur, irretientur et capientur.

14. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

14. Propterea audite verbum Iehovæ, viri illusores, qui dominamini populo huic, qui est in Ierusalem.

15. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when overflowing scourge shall pass through,

it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

15. Quia dixitis, Percussimus fœdus cum morte, et cum inferno fecimus pactum; flagellum inundans cum transierit, non veniet ad nos; quia posuimus mendacium refugium nostrum, et sub vanitate sumus absconditi.

16. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

16. Quare sic dicit Donminus Iehova: Ecce ego ponam in Sion lapidem, lapidem probationis, angulum pretiosum, fundamentum solidum. Qui credit non festinabit.

17. Judgement also will I lay to the line, and righteouseness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.

17. Et ponam judicium ad regulam, et justitiam ad mensuram (vel, trutinam.) Everret grando fiduciam mendacii, et latibulum aquæ inundabunt.

18. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

18. Et abolebitur pactum cum morte; visio vestra cum inferno non stabit, flagellum inundans cum transierit, tunc eritis ei in conculcationem.

19. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night; and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.

19. Ex quo transierit, rapiet vos utique mane quotidie, transibit interdiu et noctu. Et erit ut terror (vel commotio) duntaxat intelligere faciat auditum.

20. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower that that he can wrap himself in it

20. Quoniam contractus est lectus, ut non sufficiat; angusta erit stragula colligendo.

21. For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

21. Quoniam sicut in monte Perazim stabit Iehova, et sicut in valle Gibeon, irascetur (vel, tumultuabitur) ad faciendum opus suum, alienum opus suum; ad designandum facinus suum, alienum facinus suum.

22. Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong; for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

22. Nunc itaque ne sitis illusores; ne forte constringantur vincula vestra. Quoniam consumptionem et finitionem audivi a Domino Iehova exercituum super universam terram.

23. Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.

23. Auscultate, et audite vocem meam; advertite et audite sermonem

meum.

24. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?

24. An quotidie arat arator, ut seminet? aperit et confringit glebas agri sui?

25. When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye, in their place?

25. Annon cum æquaverit faciem ejus, tunc sparget viciam, seret cyminum, et ponet triticum in mensura, hordeum demensum, et speltam suo modo?

26. For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

26. Docet eum rectitudinem Deus suus, et instituit eum.

27. For the fitches are not thrashed with a thrashing-instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

27. Certe non triturabitur vicia tabula dentata, nec rota plaustri super cyminum circumferetur; quia baculo excutitur vicia, et cyminum virga.

28. Bread-corn is bruised; because he will not ever be thrashing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen.

28. Triticum licet trituretur, non in perpetuum triturat ipsum, nec rotam plaustri sui perpetuo strepere facit, ne dentibus suis conterat ipsum.

29. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

29. Etiam hoc ab Iehova exercituum egressum est, qui mirificus est, consilio et magnificus opere.

1. *Woe to the crown of pride.* Isaiah now enters on another and different subject from that which goes before it; for this discourse must be separated from the former one. He shews that the anger of the Lord will quickly overtake, first, Israel, and afterwards the Jews; for it is probable that the kingdom of Israel was still entire when the Prophet uttered these predictions, though nothing more can be affirmed with certainty than that there is good reason to believe that the ten tribes had not at that time been led into captivity.

Accordingly, the Prophet follows this order. First, he shews that the vengeance of God is not far from Israel, because various sins and corruption of every kind prevailed in it; for they were swelled with pride and insolence, had plunged into their luxuries and given way to every kind of licentiousness, and, consequently, had broken out into open contempt of God, as is usually the case when men take excessive liberties; for they quickly forget God. Secondly, he shews that God in some measure restrains his anger by sparing the tribe of Judah; for when the ten tribes, with the half tribe of Benjamin, had been carried into captivity, the Jews still remained entire and uninjured. Isaiah

extols this compassion which God manifested, in not permitting his Church to perish, but preserving some remnant. At the same time he shews that the Jews are so depraved and corrupted that they do not permit God to exercise this compassion, and that, in consequence of the wickedness which prevailed among them, not less than in Israel, they too must feel the avenging hand of God. This order ought to be carefully observed; for many persons blunder in the exposition of this passage, because the Prophet has not expressly mentioned the name of Israel, though it is sufficiently known that *Ephraim* includes the ten tribes.

As to the words, since the particle הוי (*hōī*) very frequently denotes "wishing evil on a person," I was unwilling to depart from the ordinary opinion of commentators, more especially because the Prophet openly threatens in this passage; yet if the translation, *Alas the crown!* be preferred, I have no objection.

For the excellence of its glory shall be a fading flower [478] The copulative ו (*vau*) signifies *for* or *because*. He compares the "glory" and "excellence" of Israel to "a fading flower," as will afterwards be stated. In general, he pronounces a curse on the wealth of the Israelites; for by the word "Crown" he means nothing else than the wicked confidence with which they were puffed up, and which proceeded from the excess of their riches. These vices are almost always joined together, because abundance and fullness produce cruelty and pride; for we are elated by prosperity, and do not know how to use it with moderation. They inhabited a rich and fertile country, and on this account Amos (Amos 4:1) calls them "fat cows," which feed on the mountain of Samaria. Thus, being puffed up by their wealth, they despised both God and men. The Prophet calls them "drunkards," because, being intoxicated by prosperity, they dreaded no adversity, and thought that they were beyond the reach of all danger, and that they were not even subject to God himself.

A fading flower. He alludes, I doubt not, to the crowns or chaplets [479] which were used at banquets, and which are still used in many places in the present day. The Israelites indulged in gluttony and drunkenness, and the fertility of the soil undoubtedly gave occasion to their intemperance. By calling it "a fading flower" he follows out his comparison, elegantly alluding to flowers which suddenly wither.

Which is on the head of the valley of fatness. [480] He says that that glory is "on the head of the valley of fatness," because they saw under their feet their pastures, the fertility of which still more inflamed their pride. שמנים

[478] "Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower." — Eng. Ver.

[479] "Woe to Samaria, the proud chaplet of the drunkards of Ephraim, which stands at the head of a rich valley belonging to a race of sots! 'Sebaste, the ancient Samaria, is situated on a long mount of an oval figure, having first a fruitful valley, and then a ring of hills running round about it.' — Maundrell, p. 58. Hence it is likened to a chaplet, or wreath of flowers, worn upon the head by Jews, as well as Greeks and Romans, at their banquets, as may be seen, Wisd. 2:7, 8." — Stock

[480] "De la vallee grasse;" — "Of the fat valley."

(*shĕmānīm*) is translated by some "of ointments;" but that is inapplicable, for it denotes abundance and fullness, which led them to neglect godliness and to despise God. By the word "head" or "top," he alludes to the position of the country, because the Israelites chiefly inhabited rich valleys. He places on it a crown, which surrounds the whole kingdom; because it was flourishing and abounded in every kind of wealth. This denotes riches, from which arose sluggishness, presumption, rashness, intemperance, and cruelty. This doctrine relates to us also; for the example of these men reminds us that we ought to use prosperity with moderation, otherwise we shall be very unhappy, for the Lord will curse all our riches and abundance.

2. *Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one.* This may refer to the Assyrians, as if he had said, that they will be ready at God's command to fight under his authority, as soon as they shall be called. Yet I prefer to take it without a substantive, to mean either "a staff," or some other instrument, by which the Lord will cast them down from this lofty pride.

As a deluge of hail. He compares it to "a deluge" or to "hail," by which both herbs and flowers are thrown down, and all the beauty of the earth is marred. Thus he continues the metaphor of the "fading flower," which he had introduced at the beginning of the chapter; for nothing can be more destructive to flowers than a heavy shower or "hail." He makes use of the demonstrative particle הנה, (*hinnēh*,) *behold*; because wicked men are not moved by any threatenings, and therefore he shews that he does not speak of what is doubtful, or conjecture at random, but foretells those things which will immediately take place.

Casting them down with the hand to the earth. ביד, (*bĕyād*,) which I have translated "with the hand," is translated by Jerome, "a spacious country," which does not agree with the words. Others take it for "strength," so as to mean a violent casting down. But the plain meaning appears to me to be, that the glory and splendor of the Israelites will be laid low, as if one threw down a drunk man "with the hand." The same statement is confirmed by him in the third verse.

4. *And the excellence of its glory.* He repeats nearly the same words; for we know how difficult it is to terrify and humble those who have been blinded by prosperity, and whose eyes success covers in the same manner that fatness would. As Dionysius the Second, [481] in consequence of gorging himself at unseasonable banquets, was seized with such blindness that he constantly stumbled, so pleasures and luxuries blind the minds of men in such a manner that they no longer know either God or themselves. The Prophet therefore inculcates the same truth frequently on the minds of men who were stupid and amazed, that they might understand what would otherwise have appeared to them to be incredible. [482]

[481] "Tyran de Sicile;" — "Tyrant of Sicily."

[482] Justin, in a rapid sketch of that tyrant, informs us that, "after having defeated his rivals, he abandoned himself to indolence and gluttony, which brought on such weakness of sight that he could not bear day-light; that the consciousness of being despised on account of his blindness

As the hasty fruit before the summer. He now illustrates the subject by another metaphor exceedingly beautiful and appropriate; for the first-ripe fruits are indeed highly commended, because they go before others, and hold out the expectation of the rest of the produce; but they last but a short time, and cannot be preserved, for they are quickly eaten up either by pregnant women, or by children, or by men who do not make a proper selection of their food. He says that the happiness of the Israelites will be of that sort, because their flourishing prosperity will not be of long duration, but will be swallowed up in a moment. What Isaiah declared about the kingdom of Israel, applies also to the whole world. By their ingratitude men prevent all the goodness which the Lord has bestowed on them from reaching maturity; for we abuse his blessings and corrupt them by our wickedness. The consequence is, that hasty and short-lived fruits are produced, which could not yield to us continual nourishment.

5. *In that day shall the Lord of hosts.* After having spoken of the kingdom of Israel, he passes to the tribe of Judah, and shews that, amidst this severe vengeance of God, there will still be room for compassion, and that, although ten tribes perished, yet the Lord will preserve some *remnant*, which he will consecrate to himself; so that there will be in it *a crown of glory and diadem of excellence,* that is, that the Church is never disfigured in such a manner that the Lord does not adorn it with beauty and splendor.

Yet I do not extend this prophecy indiscriminately to all the Jews, but to the elect who were wonderfully rescued from death; for although he calls the tribe and half-tribe *a remnant*, as compared with the other ten tribes, yet, as we advance, we shall see that he makes a distinction between the tribe of Judah itself and the others. Nor ought we to wonder that the Prophet speaks differently about the same people, directing his discourse, sometimes to a body corrupted by crimes, and sometimes to the elect. Certainly, as compared with the ten tribes, which had revolted from the worship of God and from the unity of faith, he justly calls the Jews a *remnant* of the people; but when he leaves out of view this comparison, and considers what they are in themselves, he remonstrates with equal justice against their corruptions.

I am aware that some expound it differently, on account of what is said immediately afterwards about *wine and strong drink*, (verse 7,) and think that this statement ought to be viewed in connection with the beginning of the chapter. Yet perhaps the Lord spares the Jews. But how would he spare them? They are in no respect better than the others; for they are equally in fault, [483] and must also be exposed to the same punishments. But those commentators do not consider that the Prophet holds out an instance of the extraordinary kindness of God, in not exercising his vengeance at the same

made him more cruel than before, and led him to fill the city with murders as much as his father had filled the jails with prisoners, so that he became universally hated and despised." — Justin, Hist. 1. 21, c. 11. The appalling facts are confirmed by other historians. — Ed

[483] "Puis donc qu'ils sont coulpables d'une mesme ingratitude;" — "Since they are guilty of the same ingratitude."

time against the whole family of Abraham, but, after having overthrown the kingdom of Israel, granting a truce to the Jews, to see if they would in any degree repent. Neither do they consider that, by the same means, he employs the circumstance which he had stated for placing in a stronger light the ingratitude of the people, that is, that they ought to have been instructed by the example of their brethren; [484] for the calamity of Israel ought to have aroused and excited them to repentance, but it produced no impression on them, and did not make them better. Although therefore they were unworthy of so great benefits, yet the Lord was pleased to preserve his Church in the midst of them; for this is the reason why he rescued the tribe of Judah, and the half-tribe of Benjamin, from that calamity.

Now, since the tribe of Judah was a small portion of the nation, and therefore was despised by the haughty Israelites, the Prophet declares that in God alone there is enough of riches and of glory to supply all earthly defects. And hence he shews what is the true method of our salvation, namely, if we place our happiness in God; for as soon as we come down to the world, we gather fading flowers, which immediately wither and decay. This madness reigns everywhere, and more than it ought to be among ourselves, that we wish to be happy without God, that is, without happiness itself. Besides, Isaiah shews that no calamities, however grievous, can prevent God from adorning his Church; for when it shall appear that everything is on the eve of destruction, God will still be a crown of glory to his people. It is also worthy of observation, that Isaiah promises new splendor to the Church only when the multitude shall be diminished, that believers may not lose courage on account of that dreadful calamity which was at hand.

6. *And for a spirit of judgment.* He explains the manner in which the Lord will adorn that "remnant" with additional splendor; for he holds out instances of the true art of civil government, which mainly contributes to the upholding of nations. It consists chiefly of two things, *counsel* and *strength.* The internal administration must be conducted by counsel and wisdom, and "strength" and force are needed against enemies who are without. Since therefore it is by these two defences that kingdoms and commonwealths defend and uphold their rank, he promises to his people the spirit of "wisdom" and "strength." At the same time he shews that it is God who gives both, and that they ought not to be expected from any other; for magistrates will not be able to rule and to administer justice in a city, and military generals will not be able to repel enemies, unless the Lord shall direct them.

7. *But they also have erred through wine.* He returns to the irreligious despisers of God, who were Jews in name only, and proves their ingratitude to be highly aggravated, because, though they had before their eyes a striking proof of the anger of God, when they saw their brethren severely chastised, and not withstanding experienced God's forbearance towards themselves, yet neither that example of severity, nor the conviction of the divine goodness,

[484] "Aux despens de leurs freres;" — "At the expense of their brethren."

could bring them back into the right path, or make them in any respect better, although the Lord spared them. Here he speaks of "wine and strong drink" metaphorically; for I do not understand it to relate to ordinary drunkenness, against which he remonstrated at the beginning of the chapter, but, on the contrary, he says that they were like drunk men, because they wanted knowledge and sound understanding. If the word *as* be supplied before the words "through wine and through strong drink," the meaning will be more easily understood. I do acknowledge that by continued drunkenness men become, as it were, brutalized, and I have no doubt that drunkenness and excessive eating and drinking contributed also to stupefy the minds of the Jews; but if we examine the whole of the context, it will be easy to see that the madness which he condemns is metaphorical.

The priest and the prophet have erred. He proceeds still farther to exhibit their aggravated guilt, and says that not only the common people were drunk, but the priests themselves, who ought to have held out the light and pointed out the path to others; for, as Christ declares, they may be regarded as "the salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13.) If they are mad, what shall the common people be? "If the eye is blind," what shall become of the other parts of the body? (Matthew 6:23.)

They have erred in vision. The most grievous thing of all is, when he says that they err not only in the more flagrant transgressions of life, but in *vision* and *judgment.* Hence we ought to infer how desperate was the condition of the Jewish Church, and here, as in a mirror, we may behold our transgressions. It is indeed something monstrous that, after so many chastisements which God has employed for cleansing it, the Church is so deeply corrupted; but such is our wickedness that we fight against his strokes, [485] and though he continually restrains us, and uses unceasing efforts to purify us from our sins, we not only render all his remedies useless, but bring upon ourselves new diseases. We ought not therefore to wonder that in the present day, after the numerous scourges and afflictions with which the Church has been chastised, men appear to be obstinate, and even become worse, when Isaiah testifies that the same thing took place in the ancient Church. True, indeed, the goodness of the Lord rose above the base and shameful wickedness of that nation, and still preserved the Church; but this was accomplished by his secret power, contrary to the expectation of all; for it would be of no advantage to us, if he employed ordinary remedies.

Hence also it is evident how silly and childish is the boasting of the Papists, who always have in their mouth "The Church," and use as a pretext the names of priests, bishops, and pontiffs, and wish to fortify themselves by their authority against the word of God, as if that order could never err or mistake. They think that they have the Holy Spirit confined within their brains, and that they represent the Church, which God never forsakes. But we see what the Prophet declares concerning the priests, whose order was

[485] "Que nous regimbons contre l'esperon;" — "That we kick against the spur."

more splendid and illustrious. If ever there was a Church, there certainly was one at that time among the Jews; and that order derived from the word of God support to which they have no claim. And yet he shews that not only were they corrupt in morals, but erred "in vision and judgment," and that the prophets, whom we know that God added to the priests, out of the ordinary course, on account of the carelessness of the priests, were nevertheless blind in that sacred office of teaching and in revelations. Nothing therefore is more idle than, under the pretext of an office which bears a splendid title, to hold out as exempt from the danger of erring those who, having forsaken God, and not only cast away all regard to religion, but even trodden shame under their feet, defend their tyranny by every means in their power.

8. *For all tables are full of vomiting.* He pursues the same metaphor, and draws, as it were, a picture of what usually happens to men who are given up to drunkenness; for they forget shame, and not only debase themselves like beasts, but shrink from nothing that is disgraceful. It is certainly an ugly and revolting sight to see "tables covered with vomiting;" and, accordingly, under this figure Isaiah describes the whole life of the people as shameful beyond endurance. There can be no doubt that the Prophet intended to express by a single word, that no sincerity or uprightness was left among the Jews. If we approach their tables, we can find nothing but foul drunkenness; if we look at their life, no part of it is pure or free from crimes and enormities. Doctrine itself is so corrupt that it stinks as if it were polluted by vomiting and filth. In expounding allegories, I have no intention to enter, as some do, into ingenious disquisitions.

9. *Whom shall he teach knowledge?* Here the Prophet shews by an expression of amazement, that the disease of the people is incurable, and that God has no other remedies adapted to cure them, for he has tried every method without effect. When he calls wanderers to return to the right path, and unceasingly warns those who are thoughtlessly going astray, this undoubtedly is an extraordinary remedy; and if it do no good, the salvation of those who refuse to accept of any aid from a physician is utterly hopeless.

Those who are weaned from the milk. The Prophet complains that the stupidity of the people may be said to hinder God from attempting to cure them of their vices; and therefore he compares the Jews to very young infants, [486] or who are but beginning to prattle, and whom it would be a waste of time to attempt to teach. Justly indeed does Peter exhort believers to draw near, "like infants newly born, to suck the milk of pure doctrine;" for no man will ever shew himself to be willing to be taught until he has laid aside that obstinacy which is the natural disposition of all. [487] (1 Peter 2:2.) But now the Prophet condemns another kind of infancy, in which men who are stupefied by their vices pay no more regard to heavenly doctrine than if they had no understanding whatsoever. It is therefore a mistake to connect this

[486] "A des petis enfans n'agueres sevrez;" — "To young infants hardly weaned."

[487] "Que tous apportent du ventre de la mere;" — "Which all bring from their mother's womb."

statement of the Prophet with that passage in the Apostle Peter, as if Isaiah represented God as desirous to obtain disciples who had divested themselves of all pride, and were like infants lately weaned; for the Prophet, on the contrary, loudly complains, that to "teach doctrine" is useless, and merely provokes ridicule among stupid and senseless persons, who are "children, not in malice, but in understanding," as Paul speaks. (1 Corinthians 14:20.) From what follows it will more clearly appear that, since they were unfit for receiving doctrine, God cannot be accused of undue severity if he reject them, and if he resolve not to bestow useless labor by thundering in their ears any longer.

10. *For precept must be on precept.* This shews plainly that the Lord complains of spending his labor to no purpose in instructing this unteachable people, just as if one were to teach children, who must have elementary instructions repeated to them over and over again, and quickly forget them, and when the master has spent a whole day in teaching them a single letter, yet on the following day and afterwards, the same labor must be renewed, and though he leave nothing untried that care or diligence can do, still they will make no progress under him. Those who change the words of this verse, in order to avoid offending the ears of the readers, [488] obscure the Prophet's meaning through a foolish affectation of copiousness of language, and even destroy the elegance of the style; for, by using the same words, he intended to express a repetition which is constant and unceasing, and full of annoyance. The metaphor, as I have already said, is taken from children, to whom teachers do not venture to give long lessons, because they are incapable of them, but give them, as it were, in little drops. Thus, they convey the same instructions a second and third time, and oftener; and, in short, they continue to receive elementary instructions till they acquire reason and judgment. By a witty imitation he repeats the words, "here a little, there a little."

Instruction upon instruction. [489] The word קו (*kăv*) is improperly, in my opinion, translated by some interpreters *line*, as if the Prophet alluded to the slow progress of a building, which rises gradually by "lines." That would be a harsh and far-fetched metaphor, for this passage relates to elementary instruction conveyed to children. I acknowledge that the same Hebrew word is used in the eighteenth chapter, where we have translated it "Line by line," [490] and in many other passages; but here the connection demands a different meaning, as is also the case in Psalm 19:4, where, however, the word *line* [491] or *dimension* could be admitted with greater propriety than in this verse. Yet I admit that it is taken metaphorically for an instruction or rule; for as in buildings קו (*kăv*) denotes the "rule" or "plumb-line," as we shall see that

[488] "Afin de ne fascher les oreilles des lecteurs."

[489] "Line upon line." — Eng. Ver.

[490] "De toutes parts, ou, ligne apres ligne;" — "On all sides, or, line after line."

[491] The reader may consult the Author's exposition, and the Translator's notes Commentary on the Book of Psalms, vol. 1, pp. 312, 313. — Ed

it means in a later portion of this chapter, we need not wonder that it is applied to other rules.

11. *For with stammering lips.* [492] Some supply, that "it is as if one should say;" but that is superfluous. I therefore view these words as relating to God, who became, as the Prophet tells us, a barbarian [493] to a people without understanding. This reproof must have wounded them to the quick, because by their own fault they made God, who formed our tongues, to appear to be "a stammerer." He does not as yet threaten them, but lays the blame on their indolence, that they rendered the proclamation of heavenly doctrine a confused noise, because of their own accord they shut their eyes, and thus derived no advantage from it. Their infatuation, in not hearing God speaking to them, is compared by the Prophet to a prodigy.

12. *For he said to them.* Some explain it by circumlocution in this manner: "If one should say to them, This is the rest, they refuse to hear." But this is a feeble exposition, and does not connect the various parts of the passage in a proper manner. On the contrary, the Prophet assigns the reason why God appears to the Jews to be a barbarian: it is, because they had not ears. Words were spoken to the deaf. It was to no purpose that the Lord offered to them rest. This deafness arose from obstinacy, for they wickedly and rebelliously rejected doctrine. Their wickedness was doubly inexcusable in refusing rest which was offered to them, and which all men naturally desire. It was in itself intolerable baseness to be deaf to the voice of God speaking, but it was still more foul ingratitude deliberately to reject a blessing which was in the highest degree desirable. Accordingly, he points out the benefit which they might have derived from the obedience of faith, and of which they deprived themselves by their own wickedness. He therefore reproaches them with this ignorance and blindness; for it springs from their own stubbornness in maliciously turning away their eyes from the light which was offered to them, and choosing rather to remain in darkness than to be enlightened.

Hence it follows that unbelievers, as soon as God has exhibited to them his word, voluntarily draw down on themselves wretched uneasiness; for he invites all men to a blessed rest, and clearly points out the object by which, if we shape the course of our life, true happiness awaits us; for no man who has heard heavenly doctrine can go astray except knowingly and willingly. We learn from it how lovely in our eyes heavenly doctrine ought to be, for it brings to us the invaluable blessing of enjoying peace of conscience and true happiness. All confess loudly that there is nothing better than to find a place of security; and yet, when rest is offered, many despise it, and the greater part of men even refuse it, as if all men expressly desired to have wretched perplexity and continual trembling: and yet no man has a right to complain that he errs through ignorance; for nothing is clearer or plainer than the

[492] "For with stammering lips. (Heb. Stammerings of lips.)" — Eng. Ver.

[493] "But since this patience has been lost upon them, a stronger way shall be taken to force their attention. God will thunder in their ears, what to them will appear jargon, the language of a foreign nation, by whom they shall be carried into captivity." — Stock

doctrine of God, so that it is vain for men to plead any excuse. In short, nothing can be more unreasonable than to throw the blame on God, as if he spoke obscurely, or taught in a confused manner. Now, as God testifies in this passage that he points out to us in his word assured rest, so, on the other hand, he warns all unbelievers that they suffer the just reward of their wickedness when they are harassed by continual uneasiness.

Cause the weary to rest. Some explain it thus, that God demands the duties of brotherly kindness, in order that he may be reconciled to us, and that those duties are here included, a part being taken for the whole. But I think that the Prophet's meaning is different, namely, that God points out to us that rest by which our weariness may be relieved, and that consequently we are convicted of deeper ingratitude, if even necessity, which is a very sharp spur, does not quicken us to seek a remedy. This saying of the Prophet corresponds nearly to the words of Christ,

"Come to me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28.)

In a word, Isaiah informs the Jews that they have this choice, "Do they prefer to be refreshed and relieved, or to sink under the burden and be overwhelmed?" This confirms a passing remark which I made a little before, that God does not in vain exhort those who seek repose to come to him, as we shall elsewhere see,

"I have not in vain said to the house of Jacob, Seek me." (Isaiah 45:19.)

Since, therefore, if we do not stand in the way, we shall be taught by his word, we may safely rely on the doctrine which is contained in it; for he does not intend to weary us out by vain curiosity, as men often draw down upon themselves much distress and anguish by idle pursuits.

Besides, when he shews that this rest is prepared for the weary who groan under the burden, let us at least be taught by the distresses which harass us to betake ourselves to the word of God, that we may obtain peace. We shall thus find that the word of God is undoubtedly fitted to soothe our uneasy feelings, and to give peace to our perplexed and trembling consciences. All who seek "rest" in any other way, and run beyond the limits of the word, must always be subjected to torture or wretched uncertainty, because they attempt to be wise and happy without God. We see that this is the condition of the Papists, who, having despised this peace of God, are wretchedly tormented during their whole life; for Satan tosses and drives them about in such a manner that they are tormented with dreadful uneasiness, and never find a place of rest.

13. *The word of the Lord shall therefore be to them.* Although the Prophet repeats the same words, yet the meaning is somewhat different; for, having formerly spoken of voluntary stupidity, he now threatens the punishment of it, namely, that God will strike them with such bewilderment, that they shall be totally deprived of the benefit of saving doctrine, and shall perceive in it nothing but an empty sound. In short, he concludes, from what goes before,

that since they had not profited by the word of God, the Jews shall be justly punished for their ingratitude; not that the word shall be taken from them, but that they shall be deprived of sound judgment and understanding, and shall be blind amidst the clearest light. Thus God blinds and hardens the reprobate more and more on account of their disobedience.

Paul quotes this passage (1 Corinthians 14:21) when he reproves the Corinthians for foolish affectation, in consequence of their being so much under the influence of ambition, that they regarded with the highest admiration those who spoke in a foreign tongue, as the common people are accustomed to stare at everything that is unknown and uncommon. This passage in the writings of Paul has been misunderstood, because these words of the Prophet have not been duly weighed. Now, Paul applies these words most appropriately to his object; for he shews that the Corinthians are under the influence of a foolish and absurd admiration, and that they improperly aspire to those things from which they can derive no advantage; in short, that they are "like children, not in malice, but in knowledge and understanding;" that thus they voluntarily draw down on themselves the curse which the Prophet here threatens; and that the word of God becomes to them precept on precept, and they receive no more instruction from it than if a person were to bawl out to them in an unknown tongue. It is the height of madness to bring upon themselves, by idle affectation, that blindness and stupidity which the Lord threatens against obstinate and rebellious men. Paul therefore explains and renders more intelligible this statement made by the Prophet, for he shews that they who abuse the doctrine of salvation do not deserve to make progress in it in any way whatever.

We have seen a passage closely resembling it in which the Prophet compared his doctrine to "sealed letters." (Isaiah 8:16) Afterwards we shall find that the Prophet compares it to a book that is "shut." (Isaiah 29:11.) This takes place when, on account of the ingratitude of men, God takes from them judgment and sound understanding; so that, "seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear," and thus are most justly punished. (Isaiah 6:9; Mark 4:12.) This ought to be carefully observed; for frequently we think that all is well with us, and are highly delighted with ourselves, because we continue to enjoy the word. [494] But of what avail will it be to us, if it do not enlighten our understanding and regulate our hearts? We thus draw down upon ourselves a heavier judgment, and therefore we need a twofold grace; first, that God would shine on us by his word; and secondly, that he would open our understandings and dispose our hearts to obedience, otherwise we shall derive no more aid from the brilliancy of the gospel than blind men derive from the brightness of the sun. By this punishment, therefore, we are reminded that we must not abuse the word of God, but must look directly to the object which the Lord holds out to us in the word.

They shall fall backward, and be broken and snared. At length he describes

[494] "De ce que la parole est au milieu de nous;" — "Because the word is in the midst of us."

the destruction of those who are blind to this brightness of the word; for nothing remains for them but to be thrown down headlong, because they have departed from the right path, and therefore they must stumble and fall. He means that the fall will not be slight, for they shall be *bruised* by it. By the word *snared* he employs another metaphor, namely, that for all unbelievers "snares" are prepared, by which they shall be entangled and drawn to destruction. We had a similar sentiment on a former occasion, (Isaiah 8:15,) and expressed in nearly the same words; [495] for there the Prophet speaks on the same subject, the blinding of the people, who by their obstinacy had provoked the wrath of God. He shews that they who go astray, in opposition to the word of God, are always very near destruction. Either they shall meet with stumbling blocks on which they shall "stumble," or with snares by which they shall be "ensnared." In short, it will be impossible that evil shall not befall those who do not keep the path which God has pointed out; for either they shall openly "fall and be bruised," or through concealed traps they shall fall into a "snare."

14. *Wherefore hear ye the word of the Lord.* He goes on to address to them still stronger reproof, and at the same time mingles with it a consolation in order to encourage the hearts of the godly. While he threatens utter destruction against the wicked, he leaves for believers ground of consolation, by declaring that their salvation is dear and precious in the sight of God.

Ye scornful men. By this term he means men who are addicted to sophistry and deceit, who think that by jeers and cunning they can escape the judgment of God; for לוץ (*lūtz*) [496] signifies to *jeer* or *scorn*. Now, he addresses not ordinary men, but rulers and governors, who, in governing the people, thought that they surpassed other men in sharpness and dexterity, but turned their acuteness to cunning, by which they acted hypocritically towards God himself, and therefore, in keen irony, he calls them "scorners;" as if he had said,

"You think that you have enough of craftiness to mock God,
but you will not succeed in mocking him." (Galatians 6:7.)

The Prophet's chief and severest contest was with the nobles; for although all ranks were exceedingly corrupted, yet the nobles, being puffed up with a false belief of their own wisdom, were more obstinate than the rest. It has commonly been found, in almost every age, that the common people, though they are distinguished by unrestrained fierceness and violence, do not proceed to such a pitch of wickedness as nobles or courtiers, or other crafty men, who think that they excel others in ability and wisdom. The ministers of the word ought chiefly, therefore, to arm themselves against ingenious adversaries. None can be more destructive; for they not only of themselves do injury, but excite others to the same kind of scorn and

[495] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 282

[496] From which the noun לצון (lātzōn) is derived. The phrase לצון אנשי (ănshēlatzon) literally signifies ``men of scorn,'' and is so rendered by Stock and others; but the force of the Hebrew idiom is fully brought out by the word ``scoffers,'' as in Lowth, or by ``scornful men,'' as in the English Version. --- Ed

wickedness, and frequently, through the estimation in which they are held, and the splendor of their reputation, they dazzle the common people who are less clear-sighted. It is a dreadful and monstrous thing when the governors of the Church not only are themselves blinded, but even blind others, and excite them to despise God, and ridicule godly doctrine, and taunt it by their jeers, and, in short, employ their utmost ingenuity for overturning religion; but in opposition to such persons we ought to encourage our hearts by the example of the Prophet, that we may not sink or lose heart in this contest. He shews us also the way in which we ought to treat such persons. [497] We ought not to spend much time in teaching them, (for instruction would be of little use,) but must threaten them severely, and terrify them by the judgment of God.

This people which is in Jerusalem. Their guilt is highly aggravated by the consideration that they inhabit the very sanctuary of God, and infect with their pollution God's chosen people.

15. *Because ye have said.* The Prophet next assigns the reason why he called them "scorners;" it was because they had thrown off all fear of God. He likewise describes the manner in which they acted, by saying that they promised to themselves that they would escape punishment amidst all their crimes and enormities, and became the more daring, and, as if they had obtained greater liberty to pursue wicked courses, rushed forward without dread wherever their unruly passions carried them.

We have struck a league with death, and with hell have we made a compact. This is what he means by the league into which they had entered with death and the grave; for by despising and boldly ridiculing all God's threatenings and chastisements, they thought that they were out of all danger. חזה (*chōzĕh*) means what he had formerly expressed by ברית, (*bērīth*,) for it is a repetition of the same statement. Literally it signifies *seeing*, [498] and denotes what is conveyed by the French phrase, *avoir intelligence*, or by the English phrase, "to have a mutual understanding." There appears to be also an implied contrast between prophetic visions and that deceitful craftiness on which veterans in wicked arts value themselves.

We have made lies our refuge. It is certain that those cunning men never broke out into such boasting as to utter those offensive words, for that would have been childish and absurd. [499] Besides, though they despised God and set at nought all his admonitions, they undoubtedly wished to be held in

[497] "Ces moqueurs;" — "Those mockers."

[498] חזה (chōzĕh) is properly a participle (seeing) often used as a noun to denote a seer or prophet. Here the connection seems distinctly to require the sense of league or covenant. That there is no error in the text may be inferred from the substitution of the cognate form חזות (chŭzūth) in verse 18. Hitzig accounts for the transfer of meanings by the supposition that in making treaties it was usual to consult the seer or prophet. Ewald supposes an allusion to the practice of necromantic art or divination as a safeguard against death, and translates the word orafel, (oracle.) The more common explanation of the usage traces it to the idea of an interview or meeting, and the act of looking one another in the face, from which the transition is by no means difficult to that of mutual understanding or agreement." --- Alexander. Buxtorf renders it ``a seer, or prophet,'' and, by a transferred meaning, ``provision,'' or ``foresight,'' ``We have made provision, we have looked forward, we have acted with foresight;'' and adds, that the Chaldee version renders it שלמא, (shĕlūmā,) peace. --- Ed

[499] "Car c'eust esté une chose trop ridicule et dont les petits enfans se fussent moquez;" "For it would have been too absurd, and even young children would have laughed at it."

some estimation by the people, and would never have confessed that they "made lies their refuge;" but the Prophet looked at their feelings and aims, and not at their pretexts, and took into account their actions and dispositions, and not their words. Whoever, then, flatters himself and his vices, and fearlessly despises God's threatenings, declares that he has "entered into a league with death," which he does not at all dread, notwithstanding the Lord's threatenings.

The Prophet, therefore, reproves in general that carnal presumption by which men are led to forgetfulness of the judgment of God, and willingly deceive themselves, as if they could escape the arm of God: but chiefly he attacks Lucianists [500] and censorious men, who place their wisdom in nothing else than in irreligious contempt of God; and the more eager they are to conceal their dishonor, the more earnestly does the Prophet expose them, as if he had dragged forth to the light, from a deep concealment, their cunning wiles, and as if he had said, "This is the dexterity, skill, and cunning of the wise men of this world, who are exposed on every hand to troubles and afflictions, and yet imagine that they are concealed and safe. They unquestionably deserve to seek salvation from falsehood, for they disregard God's salvation, and despise and ridicule him." Their tricks, and cunning, and imposture, are indeed concealed by them under plausible names, and they do not think that they are falsehoods; but the Prophet calls them by their proper names.

When the overflowing scourge shall pass through. As to "the overflowing scourge," the Prophet here includes two metaphors; for he compares the calamities and afflictions by which God chastises the transgressions of the world to a "scourge," and then says, that they are so rapid and violent that they resemble a "flood." Against those calamities, however severe and distressing, wicked men of this description think that they are fortified by lying and deceit, and hope that they shall be able to escape them, though they overflow far and wide over the whole world. They perceive the judgments of God, and the calamities to which men are exposed; but, because they do not observe the hand and providence of God, and ascribe everything that happens to fortune, they therefore seek to obtain such defences and safeguards as may drive such "scourges" away from them.

16. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God.* Isaiah now comforts the godly, and threatens against the wicked such punishment as they deserved. In the first instance, he brings forward consolation, because the godly were a laughingstock to those crafty men, as we see at the present day that irreligious men laugh at our simplicity, and reckon us to be fools, because amidst such deep adversity and sore afflictions we still hope that it will turn out to our advantage. In opposition to this insolence of the reprobate, the Prophet encourages and supports the hearts of the godly to pass by with indifference,

[500] Lucian is often alluded to by our Author as the type of daring and scornful infidels. See Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, vol. 2, p. 283, n. 1. — Ed

and reckon of no account their jeers and reproaches, and to believe firmly that their hope will not be confounded or vain.

Behold, I lay in Zion a stone, a stone of trial. The demonstrative particle *behold* expresses certainty; as if he had said, "Though wicked men despise my words, and refuse to believe them, yet I will perform what I have promised." The pronoun *I* is emphatic, that the prophecy may be more firmly believed. As to the words, the genitive בחן, (*bōchăn*,) *of trial*, which is used instead of an adjective along with *stone*, may be taken both in an active and in a passive sense, either for a stone by which the whole building is "tried," or examined as by a standard, or for a "tried stone." The former meaning appears to me to be more appropriate, and undoubtedly the usage of the Hebrew language requires us to interpret it rather in an active sense. He calls it therefore a trying stone, or a trier, on account of the effect produced; because by this stone the whole building must be squared and adjusted, otherwise it must unavoidably totter and fall.

A precious corner-stone, a sure foundation. He calls it a corner-stone, because it supports the whole weight of the building, and by this name, which is also given to it in Psalm 118:22, he commends its force and strength. Lastly, he calls it a "foundation," and, so to speak, a "fundamental foundation," proceeding gradually in the commendation of it; for he shews that it is not an ordinary stone, or one of many which contribute to the building, but that it is a highly valuable stone, on which the whole weight of the building exclusively rests. It is a stone, but a stone which fills the whole corner; it is a corner-stone, but the whole house is founded on it. As "another foundation cannot be laid," so on it alone must the whole Church, and every part of it, rest and be built. (1 Corinthians 3:11.)

He that believeth shall not make haste. This clause is interpreted by some as an exhortation, "He that believeth, let him not make haste." But I prefer to take it in the future tense, both because that meaning agrees best with the context, and because it is supported by the authority of the Apostle Paul. I do acknowledge that the Apostles followed the Greek translation, [501] and used such liberty, that while they were satisfied with giving the meaning, they did not quote the exact words. Yet they never changed the meaning, but, taking care to have it properly applied, they gave the true and genuine interpretation. Whenever, therefore, they quote any passage from the Old Testament, they adhere closely to its object and design.

Now, Paul, when he quotes this prophecy, adopts the Greek version, "He that believeth shall not be ashamed." (Romans 9:33; 10:11.) And certainly the design of the Prophet is to shew, that they who believe will have peace and serenity of mind, so that they shall not desire anything more, and shall not wander in uncertainty, or hasten to seek other remedies, but shall be fully satisfied with this alone. That is not a departure from the meaning, for the word signifying *to make haste* conveys the idea of eagerness or trembling. In

[501] Commonly called the Septuagint. — Ed

short, the design of the Prophet is, to extol faith on account of this invaluable result, that by means of it we enjoy settled peace and composure. Hence it follows that, till we possess faith, we must have continual perplexity and distress; for there is but one harbour on which we can safely rely, namely, the truth of the Lord, which alone will give us peace and serenity of mind.

This fruit of faith is elsewhere described by the same Apostle Paul, when he says that, "being justified by faith, we obtain peace with God." (Romans 5:1.) The Apostles and evangelists shew that this "stone" is Christ, because the Church was actually settled and founded at the time when he was presented to the view of the world. (Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:6.) First, in him the promises have their firmness; secondly, the salvation of men rests on him alone, and therefore if Christ be taken away, the Church will fall down and be ruined. The state of the fact therefore shews, that these statements must undoubtedly be referred to Christ, without whom there is no certainty of salvation; and therefore at every moment ruin is at hand. Next, we have the authority of evangelists and Apostles; and indeed the Holy Spirit conveys that instruction by their mouth.

But it will be proper to examine it more closely, that we may see in what manner these things are applied to Christ. First, it is not without good reason that Isaiah represents God as speaking, whose peculiar work it is to found the Church, as we have already seen elsewhere, and as the Prophet will afterwards declare; and this statement occurs very frequently in the Psalms. For if all men devote their labor to it, they will not be able to lay the least stone. It is God alone, therefore, who founds and builds his Church, though he employs for this purpose the labors and services of men. Now, by whom was Christ given, but by the Father? So then it was the heavenly Father who did and accomplished these things, and who appointed Christ to be the only foundation on which our salvation rests.

But was not this stone laid before? Did not the Church always rest on this foundation? I acknowledge that it did, but only in hope; for Christ had not yet been revealed, and had not fulfilled the office of a Redeemer. On this account the Prophet speaks of it as a future event, that believers may be fully persuaded that the Church, which they saw not only tottering and falling, but grievously shaken and almost laid in ruins, will yet be made firm by a new support, when it shall rest on a stone laid by the hand of God.

I lay in Zion. He says that it is "in Zion;" because Christ must come out of it, which contributes greatly to confirm our faith, when we see that he came out of that place which was appointed for this purpose so long before. Now, at the present day, "Mount Zion" is everywhere; for the Church has spread to the ends of the world.

Christ is truly "the stone of trial," for by him must the whole building be regulated, and we cannot be the building of God, if we are not adapted to him. Hence also Paul exhorts us to

"grow in him who is the head, from whom the whole body must be joined

and united." (Ephesians 4:15.)

Our faith must be wholly applied to Christ, that he may be our rule. He is also the "corner-stone," on which rests not only one part of the building, but its whole weight, and the foundation itself.

"No man," as Paul says, "can lay any other foundation than Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11.)

This is the reason why, when the Lord promises by the mouth of Isaiah the restoration of his Church, he reminds us of the foundation; for it was wasted in such a manner that it resembled a ruin, and there was no way in which it could be restored but by Christ. As to Christ being called also the "stone of stumbling," this is accidental; for the fault lies on ungrateful men, who, having rejected him, find him to be altogether different from what he would have been to them. But on this subject we have spoken at 8:14. [502]

17. *And I will lay judgment to the line.* The ruinous condition of the Church being such that believers hardly ventured to hope that it would be improved, he shews that God has in his hand the ready means of forming the Church entirely anew. As he lately mentioned a building, so now, by a different metaphor, he shews that there is no reason to fear that God will not at length finish the work of building which has been begun. Yet indirectly he reproves the pride and insolence of those who wished to be accounted pillars of the Church, while they were endeavoring, as far as lay in their power, to raze it to the foundation. Although, in consequence of an almost total extinction of the light of faith, and a frightful corruption of the worship of God, the state of the people was hideous, yet they boasted of their royal priesthood, in the same manner as we see the Papists at the present day shamelessly utter similar boasting, though lamentable confusion cries aloud that the form of the Church has utterly perished among them. For this reason the Prophet describes what will be the reformation of the Church.

Judgment to the line, and righteousness to the measure or plummet. It is probable that קו, (*kāv,*) *a line*, and משקלת, (*mĭshkōlĕth,*) *a plummet*, mean the same thing, as may be inferred with greater certainty from another passage:

"I will stretch over Jerusalem the rope or line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab." (2 Kings 21:13.)

Yet I do not deny that he alludes to the examination of weights; but both metaphors are taken from buildings, in which the master-builders and masons try everything by a rule, in order to preserve a due proportion in every part. Thus it is said that the Lord administers equal judgment, when he restores the Church, in which otherwise everything is disordered and confused, as in a hideous ruin, when the ungodly are exalted and enjoy prosperity, while the godly are despised and sorrowful.

He makes the same statement concerning "righteousness," that he will measure or try it by his weights, and will regulate everything by a rule; for by *righteousness* and *judgment* he means a proper and lawful administration

[502] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 280

of the Church, as contrasting with the masks and disguises boasted of by those who fear the title of Bishops. The meaning is, that this foundation is laid, not only that the Church may be commenced, but that it may be perfectly restored, to use a common phrase, "from top to bottom" (De fonds en comble.)

The hail shall sweep away the reliance of falsehood. This second part of the metaphor denotes also a very exact equality. Nothing then will be wanting to the building, if Christ be laid for the foundation; and, on the other hand, if he be not there, all will be vanity and confusion. Now since there was no room for "judgment and righteousness," but by sweeping away the false confidences, he declares that they shall be all swept away, because the violence of God's anger shall cast down all loftiness, and the flood shall penetrate all the hiding-places of thoughtless indifference. He therefore threatens that hypocrites, with all their boasting, shall nevertheless perish, even though the Lord preserve the Church; for he does not speak of chastisements, as if the wicked would be corrected by them, because, on the contrary, they become hardened and more obstinate. The cleansing, therefore, he shews, will be such as to drag them forth from their hiding-places and strip them of false and empty confidence; for wicked men think that they are so thoroughly concealed by their falsehood and deceit, that they shall never feel strokes, and therefore they please and flatter themselves amidst their iniquities and crimes; but the *waters* will easily reach them; that is, the wrath of God, which shall rush down upon them like a deluge, will easily break through their lurking-places.

18. *And your covenant with death shall be disannulled.* Formerly he directed his reproof against hypocrites, who obstinately mocked at God and all his threatenings; and he checked their thoughts in imagining that "they had made a covenant with death," (verse 15,) that is, in promising to themselves that all their transgressions would pass unpunished; as if by jeers and laughter they could escape the arm of God. He now threatens that, when they shall be fully aware that they must render an account to God, they shall be struck with fear and dread, whether they will or not; [503] for that state of ease and indifference into which they are sunk, arises from a kind of lethargy or drunkenness, which hinders them from perceiving the alarming nature of their disease; but the Lord will arouse them from their sleep, however profound, and will annul their imaginary compacts.

In short, he means that that peace which the wicked enjoy, while they slumber in their sins, will not be perpetual; for they shall be compelled, even against their will, to acknowledge that God is their judge, and, when they shall wish to enjoy repose, and while they are careless and unprepared, they shall be suddenly seized and agitated by strange terrors and anguish of mind. Their case is similar to that of malefactors, who, if they have broken out of prison and escaped, mock their judges, and utter reproachful and

[503] "Voire en despit de leurs dents;" — "Even in spite of their teeth."

forward and insolent language against them, but, when they see the officers of justice close at their heels, suddenly tremble, and find that all their joy is turned into mourning, and that their condition is far worse than if they had not broken out of prison. Thus the wicked enjoy some momentary gladness, which they obtain by forgetfulness of their guilt; but the Lord immediately lays his hand on them, and terrifies their consciences in such a manner that they can find no rest.

19. *From the time that it shall pass.* He expresses more in this verse than in the preceding one; for he declares that the destruction of the reprobate is close at hand, though they promise to themselves everlasting happiness. Wicked men indeed perceive that they are liable to many calamities, but yet they flatter and stupefy themselves, and imagine that in this way they can ward off their calamities. They have in their mouth proverbs of this sort, "Let us not distress ourselves before the time: Let us enjoy the season while it lasts: Let us be cheerful, and not give ourselves uneasiness when we can avoid it." But he threatens that there hangs over their heads a hidden destruction, [504] and adds:

It shall seize you every morning, and shall pass every day by day and night. By "every morning" is meant "quickly and continually;" for it is only when they feel distress that wicked men are touched with the fear of God. Frequently indeed they are afraid when there is no danger; but it is a blind terror, for they do not understand whence their alarm proceeds. While God threatens, they are unconcerned, because they do not acknowledge him to be their judge, and thus they have no serious thoughts about God till they feel his hand. When he again repeats "in the morning," and afterwards adds, "by day and by night," he means, as I have said, that the scourge will be constant and daily; that they may not persuade themselves that it will be a light calamity, or deceive themselves by the hope of any mitigation; for, while the wrath of God against believers is momentary, against unbelievers it is eternal, for it never ceases to pursue them to the end.

Terror alone shall cause them to understand the report. [505] Here commentators differ. Jerome's translation is, "Terror shall give understanding to the report." But they come nearer to the meaning of the Prophet who give this interpretation, "The report alone shall make you understand," that is, "The men to whom the messenger shall come will be rendered obedient to God by the report alone." For my own part, I adopt a simpler view, though I do not choose to refute the expositions given by others. "It will come to pass that terror alone shall enable you to understand doctrine." As if he

[504] "Qu'il leur pend une horrible calamité sur leurs testes, laquelle ils ne voyent point;" — "That there hangs over their heads a dreadful calamity which they do not see."

[505] "And it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. Or, when he shall make you to understand doctrine." — (Eng. Ver.) "And even the report alone shall cause terror." — Lowth. "And it shall be terror merely to hear the report of it." — Stock. "And only vexation (or distress) shall be the understanding of the thing heard." — Alexander. "E'l sentirne il grido non produrrà altro che commovimento;" — "And to hear the cry of it will produce nothing but distress." — (Ital. Ver.)

had said, "Hitherto I have not succeeded in my exhortations to you, but the Lord will find out a new method of instructing you, that is, chastisements and calamities, by which he will terrify you in such a manner that you shall know with whom you have to do." It is as if a grieved and sorrowful father were thus to remonstrate with a disobedient and incorrigible son, "Since you despise my advices, you must one day be taught by the executioner." [506]

Thus Isaiah threatens wicked men, who mocked at all his threatenings, and tells them that they do not care for the assistance of prophets, but that one day they will actually know with what sincerity and truth they addressed them, and yet that it will be of no advantage to them, because knowledge so late will leave no room for repentance. We must "seek the Lord while there is time." (Isaiah 55:6.) Pharaoh was made no better by the chastisements which he received, (Exodus 8:15,) and Esau gained nothing by his tears, when he saw that he had been stripped of his birthright, (Genesis 27:38; Hebrews 12:17;) for they were not followed by any repentance or any amendment of life. By the word "terror" he shews how "dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the living God," (Hebrews 10:31,) and that they who despise his word are never allowed to pass unpunished. He employs the word שמועה (*shĕmūgnāh*) to denote what is heard, that is, doctrine.

20. *For the bed shall be short.* By this metaphor he adorns the former statement; for he compares the reprobate, who are pressed down by the hand of God, to those who have concealed themselves in a "short and narrow bed," in which they can scarcely stretch their limbs or lift their head, and where, in short, instead of rest, they feel sharp pains. He means that the Jews will be shut up in such a manner that they shall be overwhelmed with the severity of their distresses, and that the "bed," which is given to man for rest, will be an instrument of torture.

If they seek a "covering," he says that "it will be too short to wrap themselves in it," and that it is an addition to their former distress, that amidst those heavy calamities they will want all necessary comforts. He chose to express this by the metaphor of a "narrow covering," that they may know that their condition will be in the highest degree wretched; because the vengeance of God will pursue them on all sides, both above and below, so that they shall have no abatement or mitigation, and shall find no relief. The Lord employs these metaphors, in order to accommodate himself to our weakness; because otherwise we cannot understand how dreadful is the judgment of God. Hence therefore we learn how dreadful are the terrors which shake and confine wicked men, when the Lord pursues them; they search eagerly for places of concealment, and would willingly hide themselves in the center of

[506] "There are three interpretations of the last clause, one of which supposes it to mean, that the mere report of the approaching scourge should fill them with distress; another, that the effect of the report should be universal distress; a third, that nothing but a painful experience would enable them to understand the lesson which the Prophet was commissioned to teach them. שמועה (shĕmūgnāh) meaning simply what is heard, may of course denote either rumor or revelation. The latter seems to be the meaning in verse 9, where the noun stands connected with the same verb as here. Whether this verb ever means simply to perceive or hear, may be considered doubtful; if not, the preference is due to the third interpretation above given, viz., that nothing but distress or suffering could make them understand or even attend to the message from Jehovah." --- Alexander

the earth; but the Lord drags them forth to light, and confines and hems them in, so that they cannot move.

21. *For as in Mount Perazim.* Since he speaks here of the reprobate, the Prophet holds out nothing but terrors and cruel punishment; for while the Lord deals kindly and gently with his children, he shews that he will be an object of terror to the reprobate. For this purpose he produces examples, in which the Lord displayed his arm in defense of his people, as when he routed the Philistines in the valley of Perazim, when David pursued them, (2 Samuel 5:20; 1 Chronicles 14:11,) and at another time, when the Amorites and other enemies were slain by the Israelites in the valley of Gibeon, with Joshua as their leader, to whom the Lord granted that the "sun and moon should stand still," that they might more easily pursue their enemies. (Joshua 10:10-14.)

Shall Jehovah rise up. By the word "rise up" he points out the power of God, because we think that he is lazy and indolent, when he does not punish the reprobate. It is therefore said that he "rises up" or stands erect, when he openly exhibits to us proofs of his power, and such as especially manifest the great care which he takes of his Church. Although the manner was different, (for in ancient times he "rose up" in defense of his chosen people against foreigners, but now he threatens war against the Jews,) yet Isaiah skillfully applies these examples; for by driving out internal enemies God will promote the advantage of his Church not less than if he directed his strength and arms against foreigners. He would thus reckon them in the number of enemies, though they falsely boasted that they were his people.

His strange work. [507] Some think that this "work" is called "strange," because nothing corresponds better to the nature of God than to be merciful and to pardon our sins; and that when he is angry, he acts against his will, and assumes a character that is foreign to him and that is contrary to his nature. By nature he is gentle, compassionate, patient, kind, slow to anger, as Scripture declares by many words and by a variety of expressions his infinite compassion. (Exodus 34:6; Psalm 103:8.) Others explain it to mean that the "work" is "strange," because formerly he was wont to defend his people, and that it is monstrous that he now proceeds to attack and exterminate them, as if they were enemies.

For my own part, I consider "strange" to mean simply what is uncommon or wonderful; for this appellation is given to what is rare and unusual among men, and we know that they almost always view with astonishment whatever is new. It is as if he had said, "The Lord will punish you, and that not in a common or ordinary way, but in a way so amazing that at the sight or hearing of it, all shall be struck with horror." It is certain that all the works of God are so many proofs of his power, so that they ought justly to excite our admiration; but because, through constant habit and looking at them, they are despised by us, we think that he does nothing unless he adopt some

[507] "La sua opera strana, la sua operazione straordinaria;" — "His strange work, his extraordinary act." — Ital. Ver.

extraordinary methods. On this account Isaiah quotes ancient examples, in order that we may know that, though to men this vengeance be new and amazing, yet to God it is far from being new, since for a long period he has given proofs of his power and ability not less remarkable than these. Yet I willingly admit that the Prophet contrasts the wicked Israelites with the Philistines and Canaanites, as if he had said, "The Lord formerly performed miracles when he wished to save his people; he will now perform them in order to destroy that people; for since the Israelites have degenerated, they shall feel the hand of God for their destruction which their fathers felt for their salvation."

22. *Now therefore.* He again reminds those wicked men, whom he had formerly called "scorners," (verse 14,) that their cunning, and contempt, and jeers, and mockery, will avail them nothing, because all their ingenuity will be thwarted; and he exhorts them to repentance, if there still be any of them that are capable of being cured. For this reason he repeats the same threatenings, in order to arouse them.

Lest your chains be more firmly fastened. He says that all that they will gain by resistance will be to draw themselves more firmly into their nets. Instead of "chains," there are some who render מוסרים (*mōsĕrīm*) "chastisements;" but this does not agree with the context. The metaphor of "chains" is highly appropriate in this passage; for, as the fox which has fallen into a snare, fastens the knot more firmly by his attempts to extricate himself and escape, so wicked men by their disobedience entangle and fasten themselves more and more. They desire to escape the hand of God, and kick against the spur, like an unruly horse which bends all its strength to shake of its rider; but all that they accomplish by their obstinacy and stubbornness is to receive heavier and severer blows.

Be ye not mockers. This shews us how we ought to deal with wicked men, when we see that they are altogether destitute of the fear of God. All that remains for us to do is, to warn them that their jeers and scorn will be attended by no success in resisting the vengeance of God which hangs over them. We are also reminded that we ought not to sport with God, since we see, as in a mirror, what has been the end of those who despised the warnings and threatenings of the prophets since the beginning of the world.

For I have heard a consumption. That his prediction may be firmly believed, he declares that he brings nothing forward which God did not reveal. כלה (*chālāh*) sometimes signifies "perfection," and sometimes "consumption," as we formerly stated [508] (Isaiah 10:23.) Here it must denote "consumption," for the Prophet means nothing else than that God has determined speedily to destroy the whole earth by a general slaughter. This includes two things; first, that dreadful and grievous destruction is about to overtake the world, (unless it be thought better to limit the word "earth" to Judea, to which I do not object,) and, secondly, that the day is fixed and is not distant. The

[508] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 360

word *hearing* is here used to denote Revelation. He says that it has been made known to him; for, as the Lord determined to make use of the ministry of the prophets, so he revealed to them his secrets, that they might be, as it were, interpreters of them.

Upon the whole earth. As if he had said, "The whole world abounds with shocking impiety, reprobate men have grown wanton in their wickedness, as if there would be no judgment of God; but throughout the whole world, or in every part of Judea, God will shew that he is judge and avenger, and not a corner of the earth will be exempted from troubles and calamities, because they have despised the word." Now, although these things were revealed in the age of Isaiah, yet they belong not less to other times, in which God shews that he is always like himself, and is wont to execute his judgments by the same method and rule. [509]

23. *Give ear and hear my voice.* Isaiah makes use of a preface, as if he were about to speak of something important and very weighty; for we are not wont to demand attention from our hearers, unless when we are about to say what is very important. And yet he seems here to speak of common and ordinary subjects, as for example, about agriculture, sowing, thrashing, and such like operations. But the Prophet intended to direct the minds of his hearers to higher matters; for when he discourses about the judgments of God, and shews with what wisdom God governs the world, though wicked men think that everything moves by chance and at random, he intended to lay down and explain a difficult subject, in a plain style, by metaphors drawn from objects which are well known and understood. We often complain that God winks too much at the crimes of wicked men, because he does not immediately punish them agreeably to our wish; but the Prophet shews that God appoints nothing but what is just and proper.

The design of this preface therefore is, that men may perceive their stupidity in carping at the judgments of God, and putting an unfavourable construction on them, while even in the ordinary course of nature they have a very bright mirror, in which they may see them plainly. There is an implied expostulation with men who shut their eyes amidst so clear light. He shews that they are dull and stupid in not understanding the works of God which are so manifest, and yet are so rash and daring that they presume to judge and censure what is hidden. In like manner Paul also, when speaking of the resurrection, pronounces that those who do not perceive the power of God in the seeds which are thrown into the earth are madmen.

"Thou fool, that which thou sowest does not grow or vegetate till it has rotted."
(1 Corinthians 15:36.)

Thus Isaiah here declares that those who do not see the wisdom of God in things so obvious are stupid, and, in short, that men are blind and dull in beholding the works of God.

[509] "Avec mesme raison et equité;" — "With the same reason and justice."

24. *Doth the ploughman plough every day* [510] *to sow?* This passage is commonly explained as if the Lord reproached his people for ingratitude, because he had cultivated the field as a husbandman, and had spent on it all his care and industry, and yet did not reap such fruit as it ought to have yielded. Such is the interpretation given by the Jews, who have been followed also by the Greek and Latin commentators; but Isaiah's meaning was quite different. He connects this doctrine with his former statement, that the destruction of Judea, or of the whole world, had been revealed to him; and therefore he adds, that still God does not always display his hand, or constantly punish the wickedness of men; for he often appears as if he did not see it, and delays the punishment of it for a time. The Lord's forbearance and slowness to punish, which is thus manifested, is abused by wicked men for leading them to greater lengths in wickedness, as Solomon remarks that men are encouraged to commit wickedness by observing that

"all things happen alike to the good and to the bad," (Ecclesiastes 8:14,)

that all the worst and basest men enjoy prosperity, while the godly are liable to distresses not less and even greater than those of other men. [511]

In short, when the wicked perceive no difference in outward matters, they think either that there is no God, or that everything is governed by the blind violence of fortune. To such thoughts therefore Isaiah replies, "Do you not know that God has his seasons, and that he knows what he ought to do at the proper time?" If ploughmen do not "every day" cleave the earth or break the clods, this ought not to be attributed to their want of skill; for, on the contrary, their skill requires them to desist. [512] What would they gain by continually turning over the soil, but to weary themselves to no purpose, and prevent it from yielding any fruit? Thus God does not act with bustle or confusion, but knows the times and seasons for doing his work. [513]

25. *When he hath levelled its surface.* He now speaks about sowing. The sower will not put into the earth as much as he can, nor will he throw it in at random, but will measure the ground, and give to it as much as is necessary; for otherwise the superfluous mass would rot, and not a single grain would take root.

Wheat in measure, and barley measured. [514] He will not mix various

[510] "The common version, 'all day,' though it seems to be a literal translation, does not convey the sense of the original expression, which is used both here and elsewhere to mean 'all the time,' or 'always.'" — Alexander

[511] "Et les fideles sont sujets à beaucoup de miseres, voire plus que ne sont pas les reprouvez;" — "And believers are liable to many afflictions, even more than the reprobate are."

[512] "Will the ploughman never sow, but always cut the earth by spades and instruments for ploughing?" — Jarchi

[513] "This apposite simile from the various methods used by the husbandman in preparing his land, and in managing the crop after it is gathered, is addressed to those who might question divine providence, because sentence against the wicked is not executed speedily. God, who teacheth the farmer the proper time and manner of treating his crop, knoweth best when and how to punish sinners: he reduceth them not to dust at once, any more than corn is suffered to lie under pressure till it is rendered unserviceable, but chastiseth in mercy, in order to reclaim them." — Stock

[514] "The principle wheat and the appointed barley. Or, wheat in the appointed place, and barley in the appointed place." — Eng. Ver. "The choice wheat and the picked barley." —

seeds, but will allot one part of the field for "wheat," another for "vetches," and another for "cummin." He will do this in measure, for that I consider to be the proper interpretation of שורה (*sōrāh.*) [515] It does not mean excellent or good; for he is speaking about measurement. Similar statements are made about reaping and thrashing; for all kinds of grain are not thrashed in the same manner. Wheat is thrashed with the wheel of a cart or wagon, vetches with a staff, and cummin with a thicker rod. He speaks according to the custom of the country. This mode of thrashing is unknown in any part of France, except Provence. [516] In short, he means that the manner of thrashing which is suitable to the grain does not apply equally to all. Besides, the husbandman is not constantly or incessantly employed in thrashing, but exercises moderation, that he may not bruise the grain.

26. *His God instructeth and teacheth him what is right.* From whom did the husbandman learn these things but from God? If they are so well educated and taught in the smallest matters, what ought we to think of so great a teacher and instructor? Does he not know how to apply a fixed measure and equity to his works? Does he not see the time for executing his judgment; when he ought to cut down the people, and, as we may say, to harrow [517] them; when he ought to thrash; what strokes, what kind of chastisements he ought to inflict; in short, what is most suitable to each time and to each person? Will not he who appointed the universal order of nature regulate these things also by a just proportion? Are men so headstrong that they will venture to remonstrate with him, or to impugn his wisdom? The general meaning is, that we ought not to judge rashly, if God does not immediately punish the wickedness of men.

This shews that we ought to restrain the presumption of men, who, even in the smallest matters, often fall into mistakes. If a person ignorant of agriculture should see a husbandman cutting fields with a plough, making furrows, breaking clods, driving oxen up and down and following their footsteps, he would perhaps laugh at it, imagining that it was childish sport; but that man would be justly blamed by the husbandman, and convicted of ignorance and rashness; for every person of great modesty will think that those things are not done idly or at random, though he does not know the reason. When the seed is committed to the ground, does it not appear to be lost? If ignorant men find fault with these things, as ignorance is often rash and presumptuous in judging, will not intelligent men justly blame and pronounce them to have been in the wrong? If this be the case, how shall the Lord deal with us, if we dare to find fault with his works which we do

Stock. "The wheat in due measure." — Lowth

[515] "The words שורה (sōrāh) and נמסן (nīmsān) are by some explained as epithets of the grain; principal wheat, appointed or sealed barley. Ewald makes them descriptive of the soil; wheat in the best ground, barley in the rough ground. But the explanation best sustained by usage and analogy is that of Gesenius, who takes נמסן (nĭmsān) in the sense of appointed, designated, and שורה (sōrāh) in that of a row or series." --- Alexander

[516] "Car en France on n'escout point le bled sinon avec le fleau, excepté en Provence;" — "For in France corn is not thrashed in any way but with the flail, except in Provence."

[517] "Et comme faire passer la charue et la herse sur les peuples;" — "And, as it were, to pass the waggon and the harrow over the nations."

not understand?

Let us therefore learn from this how carefully we ought to avoid this rashness, and with what modesty we ought to restrain ourselves from such thoughts. If we ought to act modestly towards men, and not to condemn rashly what exceeds our understanding or capacity, we ought to exercise much greater modesty towards God. When we consider therefore the various calamities with which the Church is afflicted, let us not complain that loose reins are given to the wicked, [518] and that consequently she is abandoned to her fate, or that all is over with her; but let us believe firmly, that the Lord will apply remedies at the proper time, and let us embrace with our whole heart his righteous judgments.

If any person carefully examining those words shall infer from them that some are punished more speedily and others more slowly, and shall pronounce the meaning to be, that punishment is delayed, such a view is not merely probable, but is fully expressed by the Prophet. We draw from it a delightful consolation, that the Lord regulates his thrashing in such a manner that he does not crush or bruise his people. The wicked are indeed reduced by him to nothing and destroyed; but he chastises his own people, in order that, having been subdued and cleansed, they may be gathered into the barn.

29. *This also hath proceeded from Jehovah of hosts.* This passage is explained by some, as if The Prophet had said that the science of agriculture proceeded from the Lord; but I consider it to be the application of what goes before. Having pointed out the wisdom of God, even in the smallest matters, he bids us, in like manner, raise our eyes to higher subjects, that we may learn to behold with greater reverence his wonderful and hidden judgments. A passing observation on the 26th verse may be made, and indeed ought to be made, that not only agriculture, but likewise all the arts which contribute to the advantage of mankind, are the gifts of God, and that all that belongs to skillful invention has been imparted by him to the minds of men. Men have no right to be proud on this account, or to arrogate to themselves the praise of invention, as we see that the ancients did, who, out of their ingratitude to God, ranked in the number of the gods those whom they considered to be the authors of any ingenious contrivance. Hence arose deification and that prodigious multitude of gods which the heathens framed in their own fancy. Hence arose the great Ceres, and Triptolemus, and Mercury, and innumerable others, celebrated by human tongues and by human writings. The Prophet shews that such arts ought to be ascribed to God, from whom they have been received, who alone is the inventor and teacher of them. If we ought to form such an opinion about agriculture and mechanical arts, what shall we think of the learned and exalted sciences, such as Medicine, Jurisprudence, Astronomy, Geometry, Logic, and such like? Shall we not much more consider them to have proceeded from God? Shall we not in

[518] "Comme si les meschans avoyent la bride sur le col;" — "As if the wicked had the bridle on their neck."

them also behold and acknowledge his goodness, that his praise and glory may be celebrated both in the smallest and in the greatest affairs?

Chapter 29

CHAPTER 29

Isaiah 29:1-24

1. Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

1. Heus Ariel, Ariel, urbs quam incoluit David. Addite annum ad annum, quibus jugulentur agni.

2. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

2. Atqui in angustum redigam Ariel, et erit mœror et tristitia, eritque mihi tanquam Ariel.

3. And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

3. Et castrametabor adversum te in circuitu, et oppugnabo te in statione, et erigam contra te aggeres.

4. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

4. Tum humiliaberis, e terra loqueris, et e pulvere exibit eloquium tuum, et erit quasi Pythonis e terra vox tua, et e pulvere eloquium tuum mussitabit.

5. Moreover, the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away; yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

5. Et erit quasi pulvisculus sonitus extraneorum tuorum, et quasi stipula transiens multitudo fortium, et erit ad momentum repente.

6. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and

with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.
6. Ab Iehova exercituum visitaberis, in tonitru, et tumultu, et fragore magno, in turbine, et tempestate, et flamma ignis vorantis.
7. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night-vision.
7. Et erit quasi somnium visionis nocturnæ multitudo omnium gentium pugnantium adversus Ariel; omnis, inquam, pugnantis, et munitiones erigentis in eam, et constringentium eam.
8. It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against mount Zion.
8. Fiet ergo quemadmodum famelicus somniat, et ecce comedit; cum autem evigilat, inanis est anima ejus; et quemadmodum sitiens somniat, et ecce bibit; cum autem evigilat, lassus est, et anima ejus appetens; sic erit multitudo omnium gentium pugnantium adversus montem Sion.
9. Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.
9. Immoremini, et admiremini. Excæcati sunt et excæcant; ebrii sunt, et non vino; concussi sunt, et non sicera.
10. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.
10. Quia obtexit super vos Iehova spiritu soporis, obstruxit oculos vestros: Prophetas vestros et præcipuos Videntes caligine obduxit.
11. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed.
11. Itaque facta est vobis omnis visio quasi verba libri obsignati; quem si tradant scienti literas, ac dicant, Lege, quæso, in eo; tum dicet, Non possum, quia est obsignatus:
12. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.
12. Quod si detur ei liber qui non didicit literas, ac dicatur, Lege, quæso, in eo; tum dicet, Nescio literas.
13. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have

removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:
13. Ergo dicit Dominus: propterea quod appropinquat populus iste ore suo, et labiis suis honorat me, ac cor suum longè a me removit, et fuit timor eorum erga me præcepto hominum doctus;
14. Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.
14. Propterea ecce adjicio ut faciam rem mirandam in populo hoc, miraculum, inquam, et portentum; nam peribit sapienta sapientum ejus, et prudentia prudentum ejus evanescet.
15. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us.
15. Væ latitantibus ab Iehova, ut abscondant consilium; nam sunt in tenebris opera eorum, ac dicunt, Quis videt nos? et, Quis scit nos?
16. Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?
16. Vestra concersio an sicut lutum figuli reputatur? nempe, dicit opus de auctore suo, Non fecit me; et figmentum de fictore suo, Non intellexit?
17. Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?
17. Nonne adhuc paululum, paululum, et redigetur Libanus in Carmelum, et Carmelus in sylvam reputabitur.
18. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.
18. Et audient in die illa surdi verba libri, et de caligine et tenebris oculi cæcorum videbunt.
19. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
19. Tunc repentent humiles in Iehova lætitiam, et pauperes hominum exultabunt in Sancto Israelis.
20. For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:
20. Quoniam in nihilum redactus est violentus, contemptus est derisor; perierunt qui manè festinabant ad iniquitatem.
21. That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for

him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.
21. Facientes hominem peccare in verbo, qui arguentem in porta illaquearunt, et justum flexerunt ad nihilum.
22. Therefor thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.
22. Propterea sic dicit Iehova ad domun Iacob, qui redemit Abraham: Non confundetur nunc Iacob, neque pallescet nunc facies ejus.
23. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.
23. Nam ubi viderit natos suos, opus manuum mearum, in medio sui, sanctificabunt nomen meum, sanctificabunt Sanctum Iacob, Deum Israel timebunt.
24. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.
24. Tum errantes spiritu discent intelligentiam; et murmuratores discent doctrinam.

1. This appears to be another discourse, in which Isaiah threatens the city of Jerusalem. He calls it "Altar," [519] because the chief defense of the city was in the "Altar;" [520] for although the citizens relied on other bulwarks, of which they had great abundance, still they placed more reliance on the Temple (Jeremiah 7:4) and the altar than on the other defences. While they thought that they were invincible in power and resources, they considered their strongest and most invincible fortress to consist in their being defended by the protection of God. They concluded that God was with them, so long as they enjoyed the altar and the sacrifices. Some think that the temple is here called "Ariel," from the resemblance which it bore to the shape of a lion,

[519] "Il l'appelle Ariel, c'est à dire, autel de Dieu;" — "He calls it Ariel, that is, Altar of God."

[520] "Some, with the Chaldee, suppose it to be taken from the hearth of the great altar of burnt-offerings, which Ezekiel plainly calls by the same name; and that Jerusalem is here considered as the seat of the fire of God, la אל אור (ōr ēl,) which should issue from thence to consume his enemies. Compare chap. Isaiah 31:9. Some, according to the common derivation of the word, אל ארי (ărīēl,) the lion of God, or the strong lion, suppose it to signify the strength of the place, by which it was enabled to resist and overcome all its enemies." --- Lowth. ``Jonathan interprets it the altar of the Lord, and Ezekiel also (Ezekiel 43:15) gives it this name. It is so called, on account of the fire of God, which couched like ארי (ărī,) a lion on the altar. Our Rabbins explain אריאל (ărīēl) to denote the temple of Jerusalem, which was narrow behind, and broad in front." --- Jarchi. ``The greater part of interpreters are agreed, that אריאל (ărīēl) compounded of ארי (ărī) and אל (ēl,) denotes the lion of God, or, as Castalio renders it, The Lion --- God. But they differ in explaining the application of this name to Jerusalem." --- Rosenmüller. ``The meaning of the Prophet, in my opinion, is, that `God will make Jerusalem the heart of his anger, which shall consume not only the enemies but the obstinate rebellious Jews.' This meaning is elegant and emphatic, and agrees well with the wisdom of the prophet Isaiah. Ariel is here taken, in its true signification, not for the altar, but for the hearth of the altar, as in Ezekiel. The import of the name lies here. The hearth of the altar sustained the symbol of the most holy and pure will of God, by which all the sacrifices offered to God must be tried; and to this applies the justice of God, burning like a fire, and consuming the sinner, if no atonement be found. Jerusalem would become the theater of the divine judgments." --- Vitringa. ``Isaiah foresees that the city will, in a short time, be besieged by a very numerous army of the Assyrians, and will be reduced to straits, and yet will not be vanquished by those multitudes, but, like a lion, will rise by divine power out of the severest encounters." --- Doederlein

being broader in front and narrower behind; but I think it better to take it simply as denoting "the Altar," since Ezekiel also (Ezekiel 43:15) gives it this name. This prediction is indeed directed against the whole city, but we must look at the design of the Prophet; for he intended to strip the Jews of their foolish confidence in imagining that God would assist them, so long as the altar and the sacrifices could remain, in which they falsely gloried, and thought that they had fully discharged their duty, though their conduct was base and detestable.

The city where David dwelt. He now proceeds to the city, which he dignifies with the commendation of its high rank, on the ground of having been formerly inhabited by David, but intending, by this admission, to scatter the smoke of their vanity. Some understand by it the lesser Jerusalem, that is, the inner city, which also was surrounded by a wall; for there was a sort of two-fold Jerusalem, because it had increased, and had extended its walls beyond where they originally stood; but I think that this passage must be understood to relate to the whole city. He mentions *David*, because they gloried in his name, and boasted that the blessing of God continually dwelt in his palace; for the Lord had promised that "the kingdom of David would be for ever." (2 Samuel 7:13; Psalm 89:37.)

Hence we may infer how absurdly the Papists, in the present day, consider the Church to be bound to Peter's chair, as if God could nowhere find a habitation in the whole world but in the See of Rome. We do not now dispute whether Peter was Bishop of the Church of Rome or not; but though we should admit that this is fully proved, was any promise made to Rome such as was made to Jerusalem? "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have chosen it." (Psalm 132:14.) And if even this were granted, do not we see what Isaiah declares about Jerusalem? That God is driven from it, when there is no room for doctrine, when the worship of God is corrupted. What then shall be said of Rome, which has no testimony? Can she boast of anything in preference to Jerusalem? If God pronounces a curse on the most holy city, which he had chosen in an especial manner, what must we say of the rest, who have overturned his holy laws and all godly institutions.

Add year to year. This was added by the Prophet, because the Jews thought that they had escaped punishment, when any delay was granted to them. Wicked men think that God has made a truce with them, when they see no destruction close at hand; and therefore they promise to themselves unceasing prosperity, so long as the Lord permits them to enjoy peace and quietness. In opposition to this assurance of their safety the Prophet threatens that, though they continue to "offer sacrifices," [521] and though they renew them year by year, still the Lord will execute his vengeance. We ought to learn from this, that, when the Lord delays to punish and to take vengeance, we ought not, on that account, to seize the occasion for delaying

[521] Instead of "Let them kill sacrifices," Vitringa's rendering, in which he has been followed by Lowth, Stock, and Alexander, is, "Let the feasts revolve." — Ed

our repentance; for although he spares and bears with us for a time, our sin is not therefore blotted out, nor have we any reason to promise that we shall make a truce with him. Let us not then abuse his patience, but let us be more eager to obtain pardon.

2. *But I will bring Ariel into distress.* I think that ו (*vau*) should here be taken for a disjunctive conjunction: "And yet I will execute my judgments and take vengeance, though, by delaying them for a time, it may seem as if I had forgiven." He next threatens that he will give them *grief* and *mourning*, instead of the joy of the festivals. אניה (*ănīāh*) is viewed by some as an adjective, [522] but improperly; for it is used in the same manner by Jeremiah. [523] (Lamentations 2:5.) He declares that the Lord will reduce that city to straits, that the Jews might know that they had to contend with God, and not with men, and that, though the war was carried on by the Assyrians, still they might perceive that God was their leader.

And it shall be to me as Ariel. This clause would not apply to the Temple alone; for he means that everything shall be made bloody by the slaughter which shall take place at Jerusalem; [524] and therefore he compares it to an "Altar," on which victims of all kinds are slain, in the same manner as wicked men destined for slaughter are frequently compared to a sacrifice. In short, by alluding here to the word "Altar," he says, that the whole city shall be "as Ariel," because it shall overflow with the blood of the slain. Hence it is evident that the outward profession of worship, ceremonies, and the outward demonstrations of the favor of God, are of no avail, unless we sincerely obey him. By an ironical expression he tells hypocrites, (who with an impure heart present sacrifices of beasts to God, as if they were the offerings fitted to appease his anger,) that their labor is fruitless, and that, since they had profaned the Temple and the Altar, it was impossible to offer a proper sacrifice to God without slaying victims throughout the whole city, as if he had said, "There will be carnage in every part." He makes use of the word "Sacrifice" figuratively, to denote the violent slaughter of those who refused to offer themselves willingly to God.

3. *And I will camp against thee round about.* By the word כדור (*kāddūr*) [525] he alludes to the roundness of a ball; and the expression corresponds to one commonly used, ("Je l'environneray,") "I shall surround it." Thus he shews that all means of escape will be cut off.

And will lay siege against thee. This alludes to another method of in-

[522] Symmachus, on whom Montfaucon bestows the exaggerated commendation of having adhered closely to the Hebrew text, wherever it differed from the Septuagint, renders the clause, , which has been closely followed by Jerome's version, "Et erit tristis ac moerens;" — "And she shall be sad and sorrowful." — Ed

[523] In both cases there are two synonyms, ואניה תאניה (thăănīāh văănīāh,) which are derived from the same root. This peculiarity is imitated by the version of Symmachus quoted above, κατώδυνος καὶ ὀδυνωμένη, and by that of Vitringa, (``mœstitia et mœror,'') who remarks: ``It is somewhat unusual to bring together words of the same termination and derived from the same root, but in this instance it produces an agreeable echo, which convinces me that it must have been frequently employed in poetical writings.'' --- Ed

[524] "Que les ennemis feront en Jerusalem;" — "Which the enemies shall make in Jerusalem."

[525] "Like a circle of tents. ,נדור (kăddūr,) like a Dowar; so the Arabs call a circular village of tents, such as they still live in.'' --- Stock

vading the city; for either attacks are made at various points, or there is a regular siege. He confirms the doctrine of the former verse, and shews that this war will be carried on under God's direction, and that the Assyrians, though they are hurried on by their passions and by the lust of power, will undertake nothing but by the command of God. He reckoned it to be of great importance to carry full conviction to the minds of the Jews, that all the evils which befell them were sent by God, that they might thus be led to enter into an examination of their crimes. As this doctrine is often found in the Scriptures, it ought to be the more carefully impressed on our minds; for it is not without good reason that it is so frequently repeated and inculcated by the Holy Spirit.

4. *Then shalt thou be laid low.* He describes scornfully that arrogance which led the Jews to despise all threatenings and admonitions, so long as they enjoyed prosperity, as is customary with all hypocrites. He says therefore, that, when their pride has been laid aside, they will afterwards be more submissive; not that they will change their dispositions, but because shame will restrain that wantonness in which they formerly indulged. We ought therefore to supply here an implied contrast. He addresses those who were puffed up by ambition, carried their heads high, and despised every one, as if they had not even been subject to God; for they ventured to curse and insult God himself, and to mock at his holy word. "This pride," says Isaiah, "shall be laid low, and this arrogance shall cease."

And thy voice shall be out of the ground. [526] What he had formerly said he expresses more fully by a metaphor, that they will utter a low and confused noise as out of caverns. [527] The voice of those who formerly were so haughty and fierce is compared by him to the speech *of soothsayers*, who, in giving forth their oracles out of some deep and dark cave under ground, uttered some sort of confused muttering; for they did not speak articulately, but whispered. He declares that these boasters (ἀλάζονες) shall resemble them. Some interpret this expression as if the Prophet meant that they will derive no benefit from the chastisement; but the words do not convey this meaning, and he afterwards says that the Jews will be brought to repentance. Yet he first strikes terror, in order to repress their insolence; for they arrogantly and rebelliously scorned all the threatenings of the Prophet. By their being "brought down," therefore, he means nothing else than that they shall be covered with disgrace, so that they will not dare to utter, as from a lofty place, their proud and idle boastings.

5. *And as the small dust.* [528] I shall first state the opinions of others, and

[526] "Qu'ils parleront bas, et comme du creux de la terre;" — "That they will speak low, and as out of the heart of the earth."

[527] "And from the dust thou shalt chirp thy words, or, utter a feeble, stridulous sound, such as the vulgar supposed to be the voice of a ghost. This sound was imitated by necromancers, who had also the art of pitching their voice in such a manner as to make it appear to proceed out of the ground, or from what place they chose." — Stock

[528] The Septuagint renders it, , "and as the small dust from the wheel shall be the multitude of the wicked." Here it is necessary to attend to the distinction between and — Ed

afterwards I shall bring forward what I consider to be more probable. Almost all the commentators think that this expression denotes the enemies of the Jews; for they consider "foreigners" to mean "enemies," and allege that the multitude of those who shall oppress the Jews shall be "like dust;" that is, it shall be innumerable. But when I examine closely the whole passage, I am more disposed to adopt a contrary opinion. I think that the Prophet speaks contemptuously of the garrisons on which the Jews foolishly relied, for they had in their pay foreign soldiers who were strong men.

The multitude of the mighty ones. Such is the interpretation which I give to עריצים (*gnărītzīm*), which is also its literal meaning; and I see no reason why some of the Jews should suppose it to mean ungodly or wicked persons. Since, therefore, the Jews brought various garrisons from a distance, they thought that they were well defended, and dreaded no danger. The Prophet threatens that their subsidiary troops, though they were a vast multitude, shall in vain create a disturbance, for they shall be like "dust" or "chaff," that is, useless refuse, for they shall produce no effect. [529] Hence we ought to infer, that our wealth and resources, however great they are, shall be reduced to nothing, as soon as the Lord shall determine to deal with us as he has a right to do. The assistance of men lasts indeed for a time; but when the Lord shall lift up his hand in earnest, their strength must crumble down, and they must become like chaff.

And it shall be in a moment suddenly. Some explain the concluding clause of this verse to mean, that the noise of the enemies' attack shall spring up suddenly, and, as it were, in a moment. But I consider והיה, (*vĕhāyāh,*) *and it shall be*, to relate to the time of duration, which he declares will be momentary; that is, those military aids shall not last long, but shall quickly vanish away. [530] In vain do men boast of them, for God is their enemy.

6. *From Jehovah of hosts shalt thou be visited.* He next assigns the reason why all this multitude of garrisons shall be "like chaff;" and he expresses this by an opposite metaphor, for with those soldiers he contrasts the anger and "visitation of the Lord." What is "chaff" to the flame of "a devouring fire?" What is "dust" to the force and violence of a "whirlwind?" He shews that the vengeance of God will be such as all their preparations shall be unable to resist. This meaning, in my opinion, makes the passage to flow easily, and the clauses will not be so well adjusted, if we follow a different interpretation.

Hence we learn that those who assail us can do no more than what the Lord permits them to do. If therefore the Lord determine to save us, the enemies will accomplish nothing, though they raise up the whole world against us. On the other hand, if he determine to chastise us, we shall not be able to

[529] The military forces of Sennacherib, which shall be fuel for the fire, and shall be reduced to powder." — Jarchi

[530] "They shall be destroyed by the pestilential blast Simoom, whose effects are instantaneous. Thevenot describes this wind with all the circumstances here enumerated, with thunder and lightning, insufferable heat, and a whirlwind of sand. By such an 'angel of Jehovah,' as it is called below, (Isaiah 37:36,) was the host of Assyria destroyed." — Stock

ward off his wrath by any force or bulwarks, which shall quickly be thrown down as by a "whirlwind," and shall even be consumed as by "a flame."

7. *As a dream of a night-vision.* This verse also I interpret differently from others; for they think that the Prophet intended to bring consolation to the godly. There is undoubtedly great plausibility in this view, and it contains an excellent doctrine, namely, that the enemies of the Church resemble "dreamers" in this respect, that the Lord disappoints their hopes, even when they think that they have almost gained their object. [531] But this interpretation does not appear to me to agree well with the text. Sometimes it happens that, when a sentence is beautiful, it attracts us to it, and causes us to steal away from the true meaning, so that we do not adhere closely to the context, or spend much time in investigating the author's meaning. Let us therefore inquire if this be the true meaning of the Prophet.

Since he afterwards proceeds again to utter threatenings, I have no doubt that here he follows out the same subject, which otherwise would be improperly broken off by the present statement. He censures the Jews, and rebukes them for their obstinacy, in boldly despising God and all his threatenings. In short, by a most appropriate metaphor, he reproves them for their false confidence and presumption, when he threatens that the enemies shall arrive suddenly and unexpectedly, while the Jews shall imagine that they are enjoying profound peace, and are very far from all danger; and that the event shall be so sudden and unexpected, that it will appear to be "a dream." "Although then," says he, "thou indulgest the hope of uninterrupted repose, the Lord will quickly awake thee, and will drive away thy presumption."

The Prophet says wittily, that the Jews are "dreaming," because, in consequence of being drowned in their pleasures, they neither see nor feel anything, but, amidst the dizzy whirl, stupidly fancy that they are happy. Hence he infers that the enemies will come, as in "a dream," to strike terror into those who are asleep, as it frequently happens that a pleasant and delightful sleep is disturbed by frightful dreams. It follows from this, that the pleasures which have lulled them to sleep will be of no advantage to them; for, though they do not at all think of it, yet a tumult will arise suddenly. This might still have been somewhat obscure, if he had not explained the subject more fully in the following verse.

8. *It shall be therefore as when a hungry man dreameth.* He compares the Jews to "hungry men," who are indeed asleep, but whose empty stomach craves for food; for it is natural for men to dream about food and entertainments when they are in want of them. Thus, while the Jews watched, they were like "hungry men." The Lord continually warned them by his prophets, and invited them to the divine feasts of the word; but they despised those feasts, and chose rather to take refuge wholly in their vices, and to fall asleep in them, than to partake fully of those sacred feasts. Accordingly, while

[531] "As a dream, when one thinks that he sees, and yet does not in reality see, so shall be the multitude of nations; they will indeed think that they are subduing the city of Jerusalem, but they shall be disappointed of that hope, they shall not succeed in it." — Jarchi

they quieted their consciences, they imagined that they had abundance of all things, and that they were free from every inconvenience. Isaiah declares that they greatly resemble this "dream" and airy "vision;" for, when they have been aroused by a sudden calamity, they shall feel how empty and insubstantial those "dreams and visions" were, and how false and delusive was the opinion which they had formed that they enjoyed abundance. As "hungry men," who have had such dreams, are rendered more feeble by them, so the people, who had been falsely persuaded that everything was going on well with them, will endure much greater uneasiness than if they had never cherished in their minds such a thought, but, on the contrary, had been aware of their poverty and nakedness.

So shall be the multitude. At first sight, the expression appears to be harsh, when he says, "The multitude of those who fight against Ariel shall be as a dream;" but it ought to be explained in this manner: — "When the Jews, through false hope, shall promise to themselves deliverance, as if the enemies would be driven far away, they shall quickly feel that they had been deceived; in the same manner as a person whom hunger leads to dream that he is feasting luxuriously, as soon as he awakes, feels that his hunger is keener than before." I see nothing here, therefore, that is fitted to yield consolation, for the Prophet pursues the same subject, and exclaims against the scorn and rebellion of the Jews, on whom the Prophet could make no impression by exhortation or threatenings. [532]

9. *Tarry and wonder.* Isaiah follows out the same subject, and attacks more keenly the gross stupidity of the people. Instead of "tarry," some render the term, "Be amazed;" but the view which I prefer may be thus expressed: "Though they dwell much and long on this thought, yet it will end in nothing else than that, by long continued thought, their minds shall be amazed." In short, he means that the judgment of God will so completely overwhelm their minds, that though they torture themselves by thinking and reflecting, still they will be unable to find any outlet or conclusion.

They are drunken, and not with wine. He now assigns the reason why fixed thought does not aid them in conquering their slowness of apprehension. It is, because they resemble *drunkards.* When, therefore, they neither see nor understand anything in the works of God, he shews that this is owing to their indolence and stupidity. A proof of this is given daily in many persons; for spiritual "drunkenness" engrosses and stupefies all their senses to such a degree, that they are blind to the plainest subjects; and, when God shews the brightest light of justice and equity, they are so completely dazzled, that their dim vision bewilders them more and more. This stupidity is a just

[532] The comparison is elegant and beautiful in the highest degree, well wrought up, and perfectly suited to the end proposed: the image is extremely natural, but not obvious; it appeals to our inward feelings, not to our outward senses, and is applied to an event in its concomitant circumstances exactly similar, but in its nature totally different. For beauty and ingenuity it may fairly come in competition with one of the most elegant of Virgil, (greatly improved from Homer, Iliad, 22:199,) where he has applied to a different purpose, but not so happily, the same image of the ineffectual working of imagination in a dream. Virg. Æn. 12:908. Lucretius expresses the very same image with Isaiah, (iv. 1091.)" — Lowth

punishment which the Lord inflicts on them on account of their unbelief.

In order that we may apply this statement of the Prophet for our own use, it is proper to observe, that these words of the Prophet must not be understood to be commands, as if he enjoined them to stop and think longer; but, on the contrary, he mocks and reproves their stupidity, as we have already said. (Pensez y tant que vous voudrez, vous n'y entendres rien) "Think as much as you please about it, you will not at all understand it."

They are blinded, and they blind. [533] He means, that they are destitute of judgment and understanding, and that consequently it is useless for them to contemplate these works of God; for as the brightness of the sun is of no avail to the toad, so a blinded understanding in vain does its utmost to comprehend the majestic works of God. When he says that "they are blinded," he means that by nature we are created so as to be endued with reason and understanding for contemplating the works of God; that our being "blinded" is, so to speak, an accidental fault, and that the drunkenness does not naturally belong to us, for it is owing to the ingratitude of men, which the Lord justly censures.

They stagger. This "staggering" of the mind is contrasted by him with a calm and quiet exercise of reason; for he means that violence of the passions which agitates the mind, and causes it to waver and reel.

10. *Because Jehovah hath overpowered you with the spirit of slumber.* For the purpose of shewing more clearly the source of this blindness, he attributes it to the judgment of God, who determined to punish in this manner the wickedness of the people. As it belongs to him to give eyes to see, and to enlighten minds by the spirit of judgment and understanding, so he alone deprives us of all light, when he sees that by a wicked and depraved hatred of the truth we of our own accord wish for darkness. Accordingly, when men are blind, and especially in things so plain and obvious, we perceive his righteous judgment.

Your prophets and principal seers. [534] He adds, that the people are deprived of those aids and helps which ought to have imparted light to the understanding and given direction to others. [535] Such was the office of the prophets, whom he describes by both of these names, נביאים, (*nēbīīm,*) and חזים, (*chōzīm,*) "prophets" and "seers." In short, he means not only that men who are endued with reason and understanding will be deprived of common sense, but that their teachers also, whose duty it was to enlighten others, will be altogether senseless so as not to know the road, and, being covered with the darkness of ignorance, will shamefully go astray, and will be so far

[533] "Cry ye out, and cry, or, Take your pleasure and riot." — Eng. Ver. "Turn yourselves and stare around." — Stock. Lowth's rendering resembles this, but is somewhat paraphrastic, "They stare with a look of stupid surprise." Professor Alexander's comes nearer that of Calvin, "Be merry and blind!" — Ed

[534] "Your prophets, and your rulers (Heb. heads)." — Eng. Ver. Our translators very correctly state that the literal meaning of רשיכם (rāshēchĕm) is, ``your heads.'' Calvin treats it as an adjective, ``your principal seers.'' --- Ed

[535] "Et monstrer le chemin aux autres;" — "And point out the way to others."

from directing others that they will not even be able to guide themselves.

11. *Therefore every vision hath become to you.* The Prophet expresses still more clearly what he had formerly said, that the blindness of the Jews will be so great that, though the Lord enlightens them by the clearest light of his word, they will understand nothing. Nor does he mean that this will happen to the common people alone, but even to the rulers and teachers, who ought to have been wiser than others, and to have held out an example to them. [536] In short, he means that this stupidity will pervade all ranks; for both "learned and unlearned," he declares, will be so dull and stupid as to be altogether dazzled by the word of God, and to see no more in it than in a "sealed letter." He makes the same statement, but in different words, which he had made in the former chapter, that the Lord will be to them as "precept upon precept, line upon line;" for they will always remain in the first rudiments, and will never arrive at solid doctrine. (Isaiah 28:13.)

In the same sense he now shews that, from the highest to the lowest, they will derive no benefit from the word of God. He does not say that doctrine will be taken away, but that, though it be in their possession, they will not have reason and understanding. In two ways the Lord punishes the wickedness of men; for sometimes he takes away entirely the use of the word, and sometimes, when he leaves it, he takes away understanding, and blinds the minds of men, so that "seeing they do not see." (Isaiah 6:9.) First, therefore, he deprives them of reading, either by taking away the books through the tyranny of wicked men, as frequently happens, or by a false conviction of men, which leads them to think that the books were not delivered to be read universally by all. Secondly, although he allows them to handle and read the books, yet, because men abuse them, and are ungrateful, and do not look straight to the glory of God, they are blinded, and see no more than if not a single ray of the word had shone upon them. We must not boast, therefore, of the outward preaching of the word; for it will be of no avail unless it produce its fruit by enlightening our minds. It is as if he had said,

"On account of that covenant which he made with your fathers, the Lord will leave to you the tables of that covenant; but they shall be to you 'a sealed letter,' for you shall learn nothing from them." (Deuteronomy 4:20, 37; 7:6.)

When we see that these things happened to the Jews, as Isaiah threatened, and when we take into view the condition of that people, which God had adopted and separated, it is impossible that we should not altogether tremble at such dreadful vengeance. Though they had been instructed both by the law and by the prophets, and had been enlightened by a light of surpassing brightness, yet they fell into frightful superstitions and shocking impiety; the worship of God was corrupted, all religion was scattered and overthrown, and they were rent and divided into various and monstrous sects. At length,

[536] "Et monstrer le chemin aux autres;" — "And point out the way to others."

when the Sadducees, the most wicked of them all, held the chief power, when all faith and all hope of a resurrection, and even of immortality, had been taken away, what, I ask, could they resemble but cattle or swine? for what is left to man if the hope of a blessed and eternal life be taken from him?

And yet the Evangelists (Matthew 22:23; Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27; Acts 23:8) plainly tell us that there were such persons when Christ came; for at that time these things were actually fulfilled, as they had been foretold by the Prophet, that we may know that these threatening were not thrown out at random or by chance, and that they did not fail of accomplishment, because at that time they were obstinately and rebelliously despised and scorned by wicked men. At that time, therefore, both their unbelief and their folly were clearly seen, when the true light was revealed to the whole world, that is, Christ, the only light of truth, the soul of the law, the end of all the prophets. At that time, I say, there was, in an especial manner, placed before the eyes of the Jews "that vail which was shadowed out in Moses," (Exodus 34:30,) whom they could not look at on account of his excessive brightness; and it was actually fulfilled in Christ, to whom it belonged, as Paul tells us, to take away and destroy that vail. (2 Corinthians 3:16.) Till now, therefore, the vail lies on their hearts when they read Moses; for they reject Christ, to whom Moses ought to be viewed as related. In that passage "Moses" must be viewed as denoting the law; and if it be referred to its end, that is, to Christ, that vail will be taken away.

While we contemplate these judgments of God, let us also acknowledge, that he who was formerly the Judge is still the Judge, and that the same vengeance is prepared for those who shall refuse to lend their ear to his most holy warnings. When he expressly names the "learned and unlearned," [537] it ought to be observed, that we do not understand spiritual doctrine, in consequence of possessing an acute understanding, or having received a superior education in the schools. Learning did not prevent them from being blinded. We ought, therefore, to embrace the word sincerely and earnestly, if we wish to escape this vengeance, which is threatened not only against the ignorant but also against the "learned."

13. *Therefore the Lord saith.* The Prophet shews that the Lord, in acting with such severity towards his people, will proceed on the most righteous grounds; though it was a severe and dreadful chastisement that their minds should be stupefied by the hand of God. [538] Now, since men are so foolhardy and obstinate, that they do not hesitate to contend with him, as if he were unjustly severe, the Prophet shews that God has acted the part of a righteous judge, and that the blame lies wholly on men, who have provoked him by their baseness and wickedness.

[537] "The common version, I am not learned, is too comprehensive and definite. A man might read a letter without being learned, at least in the modern sense, although the word was once the opposite of illiterate or wholly ignorant. In this case it is necessary, to the full effect of the comparison, that the phrase should be distinctly understood to mean, I cannot read." — Alexander.

[538] "Par le jugement de Dieu;" — "By the judgment of God."

Because this people draweth near with their mouth. He shews that the people have deserved this punishment chiefly on account of their hypocrisy and superstitions. When he says that "they draw near with the *mouth* and the *lips*," he describes their hypocrisy. This is the interpretation which I give to נגש, (*nāgăsh*,) and it appears to me to be the more probable reading, though some are of a different opinion. Some translate it, "to be compelled," and others, "to magnify themselves;" but the word contrasted with it, *to remove,* [539] which he afterwards employs, shews plainly that the true reading is that which is most generally received.

And their fear toward me hath been taught by the precept of men. By these words he reproves their superstitious and idolatrous practices. These two things are almost always joined together; and not only so, but hypocrisy is never free from ungodliness or superstition; and, on the other hand, ungodliness or superstition is never free from hypocrisy. By the *mouth* and *lips* he means an outward profession, which belongs equally to the good and the bad; but they differ in this respect, that bad men have nothing but idle ostentation, and think that they have done all that is required, if they open their lips in honour of God; but good men, out of the deepest feeling of the heart, present themselves before God, and, while they yield their obedience, confess and acknowledge how far they are from a perfect discharge of their duty.

Thus he makes use of a figure of speech, very frequent in Scripture, by which one part or class denotes the whole. He has selected a class exceedingly appropriate and suitable to the present subject, for it is chiefly by the tongue and the mouth that the appearance of piety is assumed. Isaiah therefore includes, also, the other parts by which hypocrites counterfeit and deceive, for in every way they are inclined to lies and falsehood. We ought not to seek a better expositor than Christ himself, who, in speaking of the washing of the hands, which the Pharisees regarded as a manifestation of holiness, and which they blamed the disciples for neglecting, in order to convict them of hypocrisy, says,

"Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you, This people honoureth me with the lips, but their heart is far from me."
(Matthew 15:7, 8.)

With the "lips" and "mouth," therefore, the Prophet contrasts the "heart," the sincerity of which God enjoins and demands from us. If this be wanting, all our works, whatever brilliancy they possess, are rejected by him; for "he is a Spirit," and therefore chooses to be "worshipped" and adored by us "with the spirit" and the heart. (John 4:24.) If we do not begin with this, all that men profess by outward gestures and attitudes will be empty display. We may easily conclude from this what value ought to be set on that worship which Papists think that they render to God, when they worship God by useless ringing of bells, mumbling, wax candles, incense, splendid dresses,

[539] "Retirer."

and a thousand trifles of the same sort; for we see that God not only rejects them, but even holds them in abhorrence.

On the second point, when God is worshipped by inventions of men, he condemns this "fear" as superstitious, though men endeavour to cloak it under a plausible pretence of religion, or devotion, or reverence. He assigns the reason, that it "hath been taught by men." I consider מלמדה (*mělŭmmādāh*) [540] to have a passive signification; for he means, that to make "the commandments of men," and not the word of God, the rule of worshipping him, is a subversion of all order. [541] But it is the will of the Lord, that our "fear," and the reverence with which we worship him, shall be regulated by the rule of his word; and he demands nothing so much as simple obedience, by which we shall conform ourselves and all our actions to the rule of the word, and not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Hence it is sufficiently evident, that those who learn from "the inventions of men" how they should worship God, not only are manifestly foolish, but wear themselves out by destructive toil, because they do nothing else than provoke God's anger; for he could not testify more plainly than by the tremendous severity of this chastisement, how great is the abhorrence with which he regards false worship. The flesh reckons it to be improper that God should not only reckon as worthless, but even punish severely, the efforts of those who, through ignorance and error, weary themselves in attempts to appease God; but we ought not to wonder if he thus maintains his authority. Christ himself explains this passage, saying, "In vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines, the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9.) Some have chosen to add a conjunction, "teaching doctrines *and* commandments of men," as if the meaning had not been sufficiently clear. But he evidently means something different, namely, that we act absurdly when we follow "the commandments of men" for our doctrine and rule of life.

14. *Therefore, behold, I add to do.* [542] He threatens that he will punish by blinding not only the ignorant or the ordinary ranks, but those wise men who were held in admiration by the people. From this vengeance we may easily learn how hateful a vice hypocrisy is, and how greatly it is abhorred by God, as the Prophet spoke a little before about human inventions; for what kind of punishment is more dreadful than blindness of mind and stupidity? This indeed is not commonly perceived by men, nor are they aware of the greatness of this evil; but it is the greatest and most wretched of all.

For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish. He does not speak of the common herd of men, but of their very leaders, who ought to have been like eyes. The common people in themselves are blind, like the other members of the body; and when the eyes are blinded, what shall become of the rest of the body? "If the light be darkness," as Christ says, "how great shall be the

[540] "Qui signifie enseigné;" — "Which signifies taught."
[541] "Qu'on renverse tout ordre."
[542] "I will proceed to do. (Heb. I will add)." — Eng. Ver.

darkness!" This is added in order to place that vengeance in a more striking light.

Hence also, we may infer how vain and foolish is the boasting of the Papists, who think that they have shut the mouths of all men, when they have brought forward the name of Bishops, or other titles of the same kind, such as Doctors, or Pastors, or the Apostolic See. They have perhaps a different kind of wisdom from that which was possessed by the Jews; but whence did they derive it? They pretend that it came from God; but we see that the Prophet does not speak of the wise men of the Chaldeans or Egyptians, but of the order of priesthood which God had appointed, of the teachers, and chief rulers, and ensign bearers, of the chosen people and of the only Church; for under this term "wise men," he includes all superior excellence and authority among the people.

15. *Woe to them that conceal themselves from Jehovah.* The Prophet again exclaims against those wicked and profane despisers of God, whom he formerly called לצים, (*lētzīm*,) "scorners," who think that they have no other way of being wise than to be skilful in mocking God. They regard religion as foolish simplicity, and hide themselves in their cunning, as in a labyrinth; and on this account they mock at warnings and threatenings, and, in short, at the whole doctrine of godliness. From this verse it is sufficiently evident that the pestilence, which afterwards spread more widely, prevailed even at that time in the world, namely, that hypocrites delighted in mocking inwardly at God, and in despising prophecies. The Prophet therefore exclaims against them, and calls them מעמיקים, (*măgnămīkīm*,) that is, "diggers," [543] as if they "dug" for themselves concealment and lurking-places, that by means of them they might deceive God.

That they may hide counsel. This clause is added for the sake of exposition. Some interpret the beginning of this verse, as if the Prophet condemned that excessive curiosity by which some men, with excess of hardihood, search into the secret judgments of God. But that interpretation cannot be admitted; and the Prophet plainly shews to whom he refers, when he immediately adds the mockeries of those who thought that their wickedness was committed in a manner so secret and concealed, that they could not be detected. The "hiding of counsel" means nothing else than hardihood in wickedness, by which wicked men surround themselves with clouds, and obscure the light, that their inward baseness may not be seen. Hence arises that daring question —

Who seeth us? For, although they professed to be worshippers of God, yet they thought that, by their sophistry, they had succeeded not only in refuting the prophets, but in overturning the judgment of God; not openly, indeed, for even wicked men wish to retain some semblance of religion, that they may more effectually deceive, but in their heart they acknowledge no God but the god which they have contrived. This craftiness, therefore, in which wicked men delight and flatter themselves, is compared by Isaiah to a

[543] "C'est à dire, Fonisseurs."

hiding-place, or to coverings. They think that they are covered with a veil, so that not even God himself can see and punish their wickedness. As rulers are principally chargeable with this vice, it is chiefly to them, in my opinion, that the Prophet's reproof is directed; for they do not think that they have sufficient acuteness or dexterity, if they do not scoff at God, and despise his doctrine, and, in short, believe no more than what they choose. They do not venture to reject it altogether, or rather, they are constrained, against their will, to hold by some religion; but they do so only as far as they think that they can promote their own convenience, and are not moved by any fear of the true God.

At the present day this wickedness has been abundantly manifested, and especially since the gospel was revealed. Under Popery men found it easy to transact with God, because the Pope had contrived a god who changed himself so as to suit the disposition of every individual. Every person had a different method of washing away his sins, and many kinds of worship for appeasing his deity. Consequently, none ought to wonder that wickedness was not seen at that time, for it was concealed by coverings of that sort; and when these had been taken away, men declared openly what they had formerly been. Yet not less common in our age is the disease which Isaiah bewailed in his nation; for men think that they can conceal themselves from God, when they have interposed their ingenious contrivances, as if "all things were not naked and open to his eyes," (Hebrews 4:13,) or as if any man could deceive or be concealed from him. For this reason he says, by way of explanation —

For their works are in darkness. He assigns this as the cause of that foolish confidence by which ungodly men are intoxicated. Though they are surrounded by light, they are so slow of perception, that when they do not see it, they endeavour to flee from the presence of God. They even promise to themselves full escape from punishment, and commit sin with as much freedom as if they had been protected and fortified on all sides against God. Such is the import of their question, *Who seeth us?* Not that wicked men ventured openly to utter these words, as we have said, but because they thus spoke or thus thought in their hearts, which was manifested by their presumption and vain confidence. They abandoned themselves to all wickedness, and despised all warnings, in such a manner as if there would never be a judgment of God. The Prophet, therefore, had to do with ungodly men, who in appearance and name professed to have some knowledge of God, but in reality denied him, and were very bitter enemies of pure doctrine. Now, this is nothing else than to affirm that God is not a Judge, and to cast him down from his seat and tribunal; for God cannot be acknowledged without doctrine; and where that is set aside and rejected, God himself must be set aside and rejected.

16. *Is your turning reckoned like potter's clay!* There are various ways of explaining this verse, and, indeed, there is some difficulty on account of

the two particles, אם (*ĭm*) and כי (*kī*). אם (*ĭm*) is often used in putting a question, and sometimes in making an affirmation; and therefore some translate it *truly.* The word הפך (*hāphăch*) is considered by some to mean "turning upside down," [544] as if he had said, "Shall your turning upside down be reckoned like clay?" Others render it "turning," that is, the purposes which are formed in the heart. But the most generally received rendering is, "turning upside down" or "destruction." As if he had said, "I would care no more about destroying you, than the potter would care about turning the clay; for you are like clay, because I have created you with my hand."

But as the Prophet appears to contrast those two particles אם (*ĭm*) and כי (*kī*), I am more inclined to a different opinion, though I do not object to the former exposition, which contains a doctrine in other respects useful. My view of it therefore is this, "Shall your turning, that is, the purposes which you ponder in your heart, be like potter's clay? Is it not as if the vessel said to the potter, Thou hast not formed me? Your pride is astonishing; for you act as if you had created yourselves, and as if you had everything in your own power. I had a right to appoint whatever I thought fit. When you dare to assume such power and authority, you are too little acquainted with your condition, and you do not know that you are men." [545]

This diversity of expositions makes no difference as to the Prophet's meaning, who had no other object in view than to confirm the doctrine taught in the preceding verse; for he still exclaims against proud men, who claim so much power to themselves that they cannot endure the authority of God, and entertain a false opinion about themselves, which leads them to despise all exhortations, as if they had been gods. Thus do they deny that God has created them; for whatever men claim for themselves, they take from God, and deprive him of the honour which is due to him.

Only in the first clause would the meaning at all differ; for those who interpret אם (*ĭm*) affirmatively, consider this verse to mean, "*Truly*, I will destroy you as a potter would break the pot which he had made." But as the Prophet had to do with proud men, who sought out lurking-places in order to deceive God, I rather view it as a question, "Are you so able workmen that the revolutions of your brain can make this or that, as a potter, by turning the wheel, frames vessels at his pleasure?" Let every person adopt his own opinion: I follow that which I consider to be probable.

17. *Is it not yet a little while?* The Lord now declares that he will make those wicked men to know who they are; as if he had said, "You are now asleep in your pride, but I shall speedily awake you." Men indulge themselves, till they feel the powerful hand of God; and therefore the Prophet threatens that the judgment of God will overtake such profound indifference.

[544] This corresponds with the English version. — Ed

[545] In almost all the ancient versions ,הפככם (hŏphchĕchĕm,) generally rendered ``your turning,'' is construed as the nominative to the verb ``shall be.'' Modern critics treat it as a separate clause, and exclamation. ``Perverse as ye are!'' --- Lowth. ``Perverseness of yours!'' --- Stock. ``Your perversion!'' --- Alexander. The same meaning had been brought out by Luther, though in a paraphrastic form, Wie seyb ihr so verfehrt! ``How are you so perverse!'' --- Ed

And Lebanon shall be turned into Carmel. [546] Under the names "Lebanon" and "Carmel" he intended to express a renovation of the world and a change of affairs. But as to the object of the allusion, commentators differ widely from each other. As Mount "Lebanon" was clothed with trees and forests, and "Carmel" had fruitful and fertile fields. Many think that the Jews are compared to "Carmel," because they will be barren, and Christians to "Lebanon," because they will yield a great abundance of fruits. That opinion is certainly plausible, as men are usually gratified by everything that is ingenious; but a parallel passage, which we shall afterwards see, (Isaiah 32:15), will shew that the Prophet here employs the comparison for the purpose of magnifying the grace of God; for, when he shall again begin to bless his people, the vast abundance of all blessings will take away from "Carmel" the celebrity which it possessed. He therefore threatens that he will turn "Lebanon" into "Carmel," that is, a forest will become a cultivated field, and will produce corn, and the cultivated fields shall yield so great an abundance of fruits that, if their present and future conditions be compared, they may now be pronounced to be unfruitful and barren. This mode of expression will be more fully explained when we come to consider Isaiah 32:15

Others view "Carmel" as an appellative, but I prefer to regard it as a proper name; for it means that those fruitful fields may now be reckoned uncultivated and barren, in comparison of the new and unwonted fertility. Others explain it allegorically, and take "Lebanon" as denoting proud men, and "Carmel" as denoting mean and ordinary persons. This may be thought to be acute and ingenious, but I choose rather to follow that more simple interpretation which I have already stated. That the godly may not be discouraged, he passes from threatenings to proclaim grace, and declares that when, by enduring for a little the cross laid on them, they shall have given evidence of the obedience of their faith, a sudden renovation is at hand to fill them with joy. And yet, by shutting out the ungodly from this hope, he intimates that, when they are at ease, and promise to themselves peace or a truce, destruction is very near at hand; for, "when they shall say, Peace and Safety," as Paul tells us, "then sudden destruction will overtake them." (1 Thessalonians 5:3.)

18. *And in that day shall the deaf hear.* He promises that the Church of God, as we have said, shall still be preserved amidst those calamities. Though the world be shaken by innumerable tempests, and tossed up and

[546] This rendering is followed by Lowth and Stock. "Ere Lebanon beams like Carmel. A mashal, or proverbial saying, expressing any great revolution of things, and, when respecting two subjects, an entire reciprocal change." — Lowth. "And Lebanon shall be turned into a Carmel. That which is now desert shall become a fruitful field, and the reverse. Or, to quit the figure, the poor and illiterate shall change conditions with the great ones and the wise of this world, with respect to happiness, when the gospel shall be promulgated." — Stock. Jarchi, on the other hand, views "Carmel" as meaning "a fruitful field," and Alexander regards this point as decided by the use of the article. "That הכרמל (hăkkārmĕl) is not the proper name of the mountain, may be inferred from the article, which is not prefixed to `Lebanon.'" ``The mention of the latter,'' he adds, ``no doubt suggested that of the ambiguous term Carmel, which is both a proper name and an appellative.'' --- Ed

down, and though heaven and earth shall mingle, yet the Lord will preserve the multitude of the godly, and will raise up his Church, as it were, out of the midst of death. This ought to strengthen in no ordinary manner the faith of the godly; for it is an extraordinary miracle of God that, amidst the numerous and extensive ruins of empires and monarchies, which happen here and there, the seed of the godly is preserved, among whom the same religion, the same worship of God, the same faith, and the same method of salvation, are continued.

And the eyes of the blind shall see. But Isaiah appears here to contradict himself; for formerly he foretold that among the people of God there would be so great stupidity that nobody would understand, and now he says that even "the deaf" shall understand, and "the blind shall see." He therefore means that the Church must first be chastised and purified, and that not in a common and ordinary way, but in a way so unusual that it will appear to have altogether perished. He therefore says, *in that day*, that is, after having punished the wicked and purified his Church, not only will he enrich the earth with an abundance of fruits, but, by renewing the face of it, he will at the same time restore "hearing to the deaf" and "sight to the blind," that they may receive his doctrine. Men have no ears and no eyes, so long as this dreadful punishment lasts; the minds of all are stupefied and confounded, and do not understand anything. When the plagues and distresses shall have come to an end, the Lord will open his eyes, that they may behold and embrace his goodness and compassion.

This is the true method of restoring the Church, when it gives sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, which we see that Christ also did, not only to the bodies but also to the souls. (John 9:7,39.) We too have experienced this in our own time, when we have been brought out of the darkness of ignorance, in which we were enveloped, and have been restored to the true light; and eyes have been restored to see, and ears to hear it, which formerly were shut and closed; for the Lord "pierced them," (Psalm 40:6,) that he might bring us to obey him. The blessing which he promised in the renovation of the earth was indeed a kind of proof of reconciliation; but far more excellent is that illumination of which he now speaks, without which all God's benefits not only are lost, but are turned to our destruction. Justly does God claim for himself a work so glorious and excellent; because there is nothing for which there is less ground of hope than that the blind should recover sight, and that the deaf should recover hearing, by their own strength. This is evidently promised, in a peculiar manner, to the elect alone; for the greater part of men always continue in their darkness.

19. *Then shall the humble again take joy in Jehovah.* Such is my translation of this passage, while others render it, "They shall add," or "continue to rejoice;" for the Prophet describes not a "joy" which is continued but rather a "joy" which is new. As if he had said, "Though they are now distressed and sorrowful, yet I will give them occasion of gladness, so that they shall

again be filled with "joy." He speaks of the "humble;" and hence it ought to be observed that our afflictions prepare us for receiving the grace of God; for the Lord casts us down and afflicts us, that he may afterwards raise us up. Thus, when the Lord corrects his people, we ought not to lose heart, but should recall to remembrance those statements, that we may always hope for better things, and may believe that, after such calamities and distresses, he will at length bring joy to his Church. Yet we again learn from it what I briefly mentioned a little before, that the grace of illumination does not belong indiscriminately to all; for, although all have been chastened together, yet not all have had their hearts subdued by affliction, so as truly to become "poor in spirit," or "meek." (Matthew 5:3, 5.)

20. *For the violent man is brought to nought.* He states more clearly what we have already mentioned in the former verse, namely, that the restoration of the Church consists in this, that the Lord raises up those who are cast down, and has compassion on the poor. But that purification of the Church, of which we have already spoken, is first necessary; for so long as the Lord does not execute his judgment against the wicked, and the bad are mixed with the good, so as even to hold the highest place in the Church, everything is soiled and corrupted, God is not worshipped or feared, and even godliness is trampled under feet. When therefore the ungodly are removed or subdued, the Church is restored to its splendour, and the godly, freed from distresses and calamities, leap for joy.

First, he calls them עריצים, (*gnărītzīm*,) "violent." There are various interpretations of this word; but I think that the Prophet distinguishes between those who are openly wicked, and have no shame, [547] and those who have some appearance of goodness, and yet are not better than others, for they mock at God in their hearts. But perhaps by the two adjectives, "violent" and "scorners," he describes the same persons; because, like robbers among men, they seize, oppress, treat with cruelty, and commit every kind of outrage, and yet are not withheld by any fear of God, because they regard religion as a fable.

And they who hastened early to iniquity. [548] Under this class he includes other crimes. He speaks not of the Chaldeans or Assyrians, but of those who wished to be reckoned in the number of the godly, and boasted of being the seed of Abraham.

21. *That make a man an offender for a word.* We have formerly stated who were the persons with whom the Prophet had to do, namely, with hypocrites and profane scorners, who set at nought all the reproofs and threatenings of the Prophets, and who wished to frame a God according to their own fancy. Such persons, desiring to have unbounded license, that they might indulge freely in their pleasures and their crimes, bore very impatiently the keen reproofs of the prophets, and did not calmly submit to be restrained.

[547] "Ceux qui n'ont point honte de commettre leurs meschancetez devant tous;" — "Those who are not ashamed to commit their acts of wickedness in presence of all."

[548] "Ceux qui se levoyent de matin pour mal faire;" — "They who rose early to do evil."

On this account they carefully observed and watched for their words, that they might take them by surprise, or give a false construction. I have no doubt that he reproves wicked men, who complained of the liberty used by the prophets, and of the keenness of their reproofs, as if they had intended to attack the people, and the nobles, and the priests; for hence arise the calumnies and false accusations which are brought even against the faithful servants of God. Hence arise those doubtful and ensnaring questions which are spread out as snares and nets, that they may either bring a righteous man into danger of his life, or may practice some kind of deceit upon him. We see that the Pharisees and Sadducees did so to Christ himself. (Matthew 21:23; 22:17; John 8:6.)

Who have laid a snare for him that reproveth in the gate. This latter clause, which is added for the sake of exposition, does not allow us to interpret the verse as referring generally to calumnies, and other arts by which cunning men entrap the unwary; for now the Prophet condemns more openly those wicked contrivances by which ungodly men endeavor to escape all censure and reproof. As it was "in the gates" that public assemblies and courts of justice were held, and great crowds assembled there, the prophets publicly reproved all, and did not spare even the judges; for at that time the government was in the hands of men whom it was necessary to admonish and reprove sharply. Instead of repenting, as they ought to have done when they were warned, they became worse, and were enraged against the prophets, and laid snares for them; for "they hated," as Amos says, "him that reproveth in the gate, and abhorred him that speaketh uprightly." (Amos 5:10.) This relates to all, but principally to judges, and those who hold the reins of government, who take it worse, and are more highly displeased that they should receive such reproofs; for they wish to be distinguished from the rank of other men, and to be reckoned the most excellent of all, even though they be the most wicked.

Who have laid snares. Commentators differ as to the meaning of the word! יקשון, (*yĕkōshūn*;) for some render it "have reproved," and others "have reproached," as if the Prophet censured the obstinacy of those who resort to slanders, in order to drive reprovers far away from them. But I trust that my readers will approve of the meaning which I have followed.

And have turned aside the righteous man for nothing, that is, when there is no cause. [549] By wicked and deceitful contrivances, they endeavor to cause the righteous to be hated and abhorred by all men, and to be reckoned the most wicked of all; but, after having thus sported with the world, they will at length perish. Such is the consolation which the Lord gives, that he will not suffer the wickedness of the ungodly to pass unpunished, though they give way to mirth and wantonness for a time, but will at length restrain them. Yet "we have need of patience, that we may wait for the fulfillment

[549] "Il dit aussi que le juste est renversé sans raison;" — "He says also, that the righteous man is overthrown without any good reason."

of these promises." (Hebrews 10:36.)

22. *Therefore thus saith Jehovah.* This is the conclusion of the former statement; for he comforts the people, that they may not despair in that wretched and miserable condition to which they shall be reduced. We ought to observe the time to which those things must relate, that is, when the people have been brought into a state of slavery, the temple overturned, the sacrifices taken away, and when it might be thought that all religion had fallen down, and that there was no hope of deliverance. The minds of believers must therefore have been supported by this prediction, that, when they were shipwrecked, they might still have this plank left, which they might seize firmly, and by which they might be brought into the harbour. We too ought to take hold of these promises, even in the most desperate circumstances, and to rely on them with our whole heart.

To the house of Jacob. The address made to them should lead us to remark, that the power of the word of God is perpetual, and is so efficacious that it exerts its power, so long as there is a people that fears and worships him. There are always some whom the Lord reserves for himself, and he does not allow the seed of the godly to perish. Since the Lord hath spoken, if we believe his word, we shall undoubtedly derive benefit from it. His truth is firm, and therefore, if we rely on him, we shall never want consolation.

Who redeemed Abraham. Not without good reason does he add, that he who now declares that he will be kind to the children of Jacob is the same God "who redeemed Abraham." He recalls the attention of the people to the very beginning of the Church, that they may behold the power of God, which had formerly been made known by proofs so numerous and so striking that it ought no longer to be doubted. If they gloried in the name of Abraham, they ought to consider whence it was that the Lord first delivered him, that is, from the service of idols, which both he and his fathers had worshipped. (Genesis 11:31; 12:1; Joshua 24:2.) But on many other occasions he "redeemed" him; when he was in danger in Egypt on account of his wife, (Genesis 12:17,) and again in Gerar, (Genesis 20:14,) and again when he subdued kings, (Genesis 14:16,) and likewise when he received offspring after being past having children. (Genesis 21:2, 5.) Although the Prophet has chiefly in view the adoption of God, when the Lord commanded him to leave "his father's house," (Genesis 12:1,) yet under the word "redeemed" he includes likewise all blessings; for we see that Abraham was "redeemed" on more than one occasion, that is, he was rescued from very great dangers and from the risk of his life.

Now, if the Lord raised up from Abraham alone, and at a time when he had no children, a Church which he should afterwards preserve, will he not protect it for ever, even when men shall think that it has perished? What happened? When Christ came, how wretched was the dispersion, and how numerous and powerful were the enemies that opposed him! Yet, in spite of them all, his kingdom was raised up and established, the Church

flourished, and drew universal admiration. No one therefore ought to doubt that the Lord exerts his power whenever it is necessary, and defends his Church against enemies, and restores her.

Jacob shall not now be ashamed. He means that it often happens that good men are constrained by shame to hang down their heads, as Jeremiah declares in these words, "I will lay my mouth in the dust." (Lamentations 3:29.) Micah also says, "It is time that wise men should hide their mouth in the dust." (Micah 7:16.) [550] For when the Lord chastises his people so severely, good men must be "ashamed." Now, the Prophet declares that this state of things will not always last. We ought not to despair therefore in adversity. Though wicked men jeer and cast upon us every kind of reproaches, yet the Lord will at length free us from shame and disgrace. At the same time, however, the Prophet gives warning that this favor does not belong to proud or obstinate persons who refuse to bend their neck to God's chastisements, but only to the humble, whom shame constrains to hang down their heads, and to walk sorrowful and downcast.

It may be asked, Why does he say, "Jacob shall not be ashamed?" For "Jacob" had been long dead, and it might be thought that he ascribed feeling to the dead, and supposed them to be capable of knowing our affairs. [551] Hence also the Papists think that the dead are spectators of our actions. But the present instance is a personification, such as we frequently find in Scripture. In the same manner also Jeremiah says,

"In Ramah was heard the voice of Rachel bewailing her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not;"

for he describes the defeat of the tribe of Benjamin by the wailing of "Rachel," who was their remote ancestor. (Jeremiah 31:15.)

Isaiah introduces Jacob as moved with shame on account of the enormous crimes of his posterity; for Solomon tells us that "a wise son is the glory of his father and a foolish son brings grief and sorrow to his mother." (Proverbs 10:1.) Though mothers bear much, still they blush on account of the wicked actions of their children. What then shall be the case with fathers, whose affection for their children is less accompanied by foolish indulgence, and aims chiefly at training them to good and upright conduct? Do they not on that account feel keener anguish, when their children act wickedly and disgracefully? But here the Prophet intended to pierce the hearts of the people and wound them to the quick, by holding out to them their own patriarch, on whom God bestowed blessings so numerous and so great, but who is now dishonored by his posterity; so that if he had been present, he would have been compelled to blush deeply on their account. He therefore accuses the people of ingratitude, in bringing disgrace on their fathers whom

[550] Both of the above quotations are made inaccurately. The words of Jeremiah are, "He putteth his mouth in the dust," and of Micah, "They shall lay their hand upon their mouth." But while the Author, quoting from memory, has altered the words, the passages are exceedingly apposite to his purpose. — Ed

[551] "Qu'ils peuvent savoir ce que nous faisons au monde;" — "That they can know what we are doing in the world."

they ought to have honored.

23. *Because, when he shall see his children.* The particle כי (*kī*) is here used in its natural and original meaning of *for* or *because*. The Prophet assigns the reason why the disgrace of Israel shall be taken away. It is, because he will have children, and those who were thought to have perished will be still alive.

The work of my hands in the midst of him. By giving them this name, he intended, I have no doubt, to describe the astonishing work of redemption; for those whom God adopts to be his children, and receives into fellowship with himself, are made by him, as it were, new men, agreeably to that saying,

"And the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord." (Psalm 102:18.)

In that passage the Psalmist describes in a similar manner the renewal of the Church; for this description, as we have repeatedly stated on former occasions, does not relate to the general creation which extends to all, but leads us to acknowledge his power, that we may not judge of the salvation of the Church by the present appearances of things. And here we ought to observe various contrasts; first, between the ruinous condition of the Church and her surpassing beauty, between her shame and her glory; secondly, between the people of God and other nations; thirdly, between "the works of God's hands" and the works of men, (for by God's hand alone can the Church be restored;) and fourthly, between her flourishing condition and the ruinous and desolate state to which she had formerly been reduced. By the phrase, "in the midst of him," is meant a perfect restoration, by which the people shall be united and joined together in such a manner as to occupy not only the extremities, but the very heart and the chief places of the country.

They shall hallow my name. Last of all, he points out the end of redemption. We were all created, that the goodness of God might be celebrated among us. But as the greater part of mankind have revolted from their original condition, God hath chosen a Church in which his praises should resound and dwell, as the Psalmist says, "Praise waiteth for thee in Zion." (Psalm 65:1.) Now, since many even of the flock have degenerated, the Prophet assigns this office to believers, whom God had miraculously preserved.

They shall fear the God of Israel. Because hypocrites, as we have formerly seen, honor God with their lips, but are far removed from him in their heart, after speaking of the ascription of praise, he next mentions *fear*; thus meaning that our praises are reckoned of no value, unless we honestly and sincerely obey God, and unless our whole life testify that we do not hypocritically utter the name of God.

24. *Then shall the erring in spirit learn wisdom.* He again repeats that promise which he formerly noticed briefly; for so long as the understandings of men shall be struck with ignorance and blindness, even though they enjoy abundance of every kind of blessings, yet they are always surrounded and besieged by ruin. In making preparation for the restoration of the Church,

the Lord therefore enlightens by his word, and illuminates by the light of understanding, his own people, who formerly wandered astray in darkness. He does this by the secret influence of the Spirit; for it would be of little value to be taught by the external word, if he did not also instruct our hearts inwardly.

And the murmurers shall learn doctrine. Some commentators translate רוגנים (*rōgĕnīm*) "whisperers," and others, "wanderers." But it means that those who formerly murmured against the prophets, and could not endure their warnings, would be obedient and submissive; and therefore I have chosen to render it *murmurers.* Hence we see how wonderful is the mercy of God, who brings back into the path those who were highly unworthy, and makes them partakers of so great blessings. Let us carefully ponder this subject in private. Is there any one of us that has not sometimes "murmured" against God, and despised pure doctrine? Nay, more, if God had not softened the obstinate, and brought them mildly to obey, nearly the whole human race would have perished in their madness.

Chapter 30

CHAPTER 30

Isaiah 30:1-33

1. Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

1. Væ filiis contumacibus, (vel, perversis) dicit Iehova, ut capiant consilium, et non ex me; ut operiant arcanum. (vel, fundant fusionem,) et non ex spiritu meo; ut peccatum addant peccato.

2. That walk to go down into Egyst, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!

2. Proficiscuntur ut descendant in Ægyptum, et os meum non interrogaverunt, roborantes se robore Pharaonis, et sperantes in umbra Ægypti.

3. Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

3. Erit autem vobis fortitudo Pharaonis in pudorem, et fiducia in umbra Ægypti in ignominiam.

4. For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.

4. Fuerunt enim principes ejus in Zoan et legati ejus in Hanes venerunt.

5. They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

5. Omnes pudefient in populo qui eis non proderit, neque auxilio erit, neque commodum afferet; sed erit in pudorem, atque etiam in opprobrium.

6. The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit

them

6. Onus jumentorum Austri. In terra afflictionis et angustiæ, leo, et leo major ab illis, vipera et prester volans, dum portabunt super humerum pullorum divitias suas, et super gibbos camelorum thesauros suos ad populum qui non proderit.

7. For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.

7. Certe Ægyptii vanitas, et frustra auxiliabuntur. Propterea clamavi ad illam: Robur illorum quiescere.

8. Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever;

8. Nunc vade, et scribe hanc visionem in tabula coram ipsis, et in libro insculpe eam; ut sit in diem novissimum, in perpetuum usque in secula.

9. That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord:

9. Quod populus hic rebellis sit, filii mendaces, filii qui recusant audire legem Iohivæ.

10. Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:

10. Qui dicunt videntibus, ne videatis, et prospicientibus, ne prospiciatis nobis recta; loquimini nobis blanditias, videte errores.

11. Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

11. Recedite a via, declinate a semita; facite ut a facie nostra facessat Sanctus Israel.

12. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:

12. Propterea sic dicit Sanctus Israel: quia respuistis verbum hoc, et confisi estis in violentia et pravitate, et innixi estis in eam;

13. Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

13. Ideo erit vobis iniquitas hæc quasi ruptura cadens, tumor in alto muro, cujus repente et subito venit fractura.

14. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potter's vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.

14. Et contritio ejus quasi contritio vasis figulorum, quod absque misericordia comminuitur; nec in ejus fractura invenitur testa adignem e foco ferendum, vel aquam e puteo hauriendum.

15. For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength; and ye would not.

15. Quoniam sic dixit Dominus Iehova Sanctus Israel: In requie et quiete

salvi eritis; in tranquillitate et fiducia erit fortitudo vestra, sed noluistis.

16. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

16. Et dixistis, Non, sed equis effugiemus; propterea fugietis; super celerem conscendemus; propterea celeriores erunt qui vos persequentur.

17. One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

17. Mille unus a facie increpationis unius a facie increpationis quinque fugietis, donec relicti fueritis sicut malus navis in vertice montis, et sicut vexillum in colle.

18. And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgement: blessed are all they that wait for him.

18. Propterea expectabit vos Iehova, ut misereatur vestri; et propterea exaltabitur, ut propitius sit vobis; quia Deus judicii Iehova. Beati omnes qui expectant eum.

19. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

19. Certe populus in Sion habitabit in Ierusalem; flendo non flebis; miserendo miserebitur tui; ad vocem clamoris tui, simulac audierit, respondebit tibi.

20. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

20. Ubi dederit vobis Dominus panem angoris et aquam afflictionis, non arcebitur pluvia tua, et oculi tui videbunt pluviam tuam.

21. And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

21. Tum aures tuæ audient verbum a tergo tuo, dicendo: Hæc via, ambulate in ea, sive ad dextram sive ad sinistram eatis.

22. Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.

22. Tum profanabitis tectorium sculptilium argenti tui, et operimentum conflatilis auri tui, separabisque ea tanquam pannum menstruo infectum, dices qui illi: Egredere (vel, Apage.)

23. Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

23. Tum dabit pluviam semini tuo, cum seminaveris terram, et panem proventus terræ; et erit uber et pinguis, et pascentur pecora tua in die illo

in amplis pascuis.

24. The oxen likewise, and the young asses that ear the ground, shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.

24. Boves etiam tui, et pulli asinorum colentes terram, pabulum purum comedent, quod in pala ventilatum erit et in vanno.

25. And there shal be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

25. Et accidet, ut super omnem montem excelsum, et super omnem collem elevatum, sint rivi, rivi aquarum in die cædis magnæ cum turres corruerint.

26. Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

26. Et erit lux lunæ sicut lux solis, et lux solis septuplo major, quasi lux septem dierum, in die qui alligaverit Iehova fracturam populi sui, et perfossionem plagæ ejus sanaverit.

27. Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire:

27. Ecce nomen Iehovæ venit e loco remoto; ardens facies ejus, et grave onus; labia ejus plena sunt indignatione; et lingua ejus quasi ignis devorans.

28. And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.

28. Et spiritus ejus quasi torrens inundans, usque ad collum dividet; ad ventilandas gentes in cribro inutili, et frænum errare faciens in maxillis populorum.

29. Ye shall have a song, as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel.

29. Canticum erit vobis, quemadmodum in nocte dum celebratur dies festus, et lætitia cordis quasi ejus qui ad tibiam incedit, ut veniat ad montem Iehovæ, ad Fortem Israelis.

30. And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

30. Et audiri faciet Iehova potentiam vocis suæ, et descensionem brachii sui videri faciet, cum furore vultus et flamma ignis vorantis, dissipatione, inundatione, et lapide grandinis.

31. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.

31. Sane a voce Iehovæ conteretur Assur, qui virga percussit.

32. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it.

32. Et erit in omni transitu baculus fundatus, quam infliget Iehova super eum cum tympanis, et citharis, et præliis elevationis pugnabit contra eam.

33. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared: he heath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

33. Quoniam ordinata est ab hesterno Tophet: etiam Regi præparata est: quam in profundum posuit et dilatavit. Pyra ejus ignis, et ligna multa; flatus Iehovæ quasi torrens sulphuris succendit eam.

1. *Woe to the rebellious children.* The Prophet exclaims against the Jews, because, when they were unable to bear the burden, when they were hard pressed by the Assyrians and other enemies, they fled to Egypt for help. This reproof might appear to be excessively severe, were we merely to consider that weak and miserable men, especially when they are unjustly oppressed, have a right to ask assistance even from wicked persons; for it is a principle implanted in us by nature, that all human beings should willingly, and of their own accord, endeavour to assist each other. But when we come to the very sources, we shall find that no ordinary or inconsiderable guilt had been contracted by the people.

First, it is no light offense, but wicked obstinacy, to disregard and even despise God's government, and follow their own inclinations. But God had strictly forbidden them to enter into any alliance or league with the Egyptians. (Exodus 13:17; Deuteronomy 17:16.) There were chiefly two causes of this prohibition. One was general, and related to alliances and leagues with other nations; for God did not wish that his people should be corrupted by the superstitions of the Gentiles. (Exodus 23:32; 34:15; Deuteronomy 7:2.) We are gradually infected, I know not how, by the vices of those with whom we have intercourse and familiarity; and as we are more prone by nature to copy vices than virtues, we easily become accustomed to corruptions, and, in short, the infection rapidly spreads from one person to another. This has happened to our own country, France, in consequence of having intercourse with many nations, which leads her too eagerly to imitate their vices, and has covered her with frightful pollution. This immoderate desire of forming alliances unlocked Asia to the Mahometans, and next laid Europe open to them; and though they still retain their moderation in eating and drinking, all that has been subdued by their arms has contracted nothing but filth and debasement. This is what we Frenchmen have also derived from our intercourse with other nations.

The second reason was special and peculiar to this nation; for, since the Lord had delivered the Jews out of Egypt, and commanded them to remember so remarkable a benefit, he forbade them to have any intercourse with

the Egyptians. And if they had entered into an alliance with the Egyptians, the remembrance of that benefit might easily have been obliterated; for they would not have been at liberty to celebrate it in such a manner as had been commanded. (Exodus 13:3, 8,14.) It was excessively base to disregard the glory of God for the purpose of cultivating friendship with an irreligious and wicked nation. Since God intended also to testify to his people that he alone was more than sufficient to secure their safety, they ought to have valued that promise so highly as to exclude themselves willingly from other assistance. It was a very heinous crime to endeavour to gain the favour of heathen nations on all sides, and to deprive God of the honour due to him; for if they had been satisfied with having God's protection alone, they would not have been in such haste to run down to Egypt. Their noisy eagerness convicted them of infidelity.

Yet I have no doubt that the Prophet directed his indignation against that sacrilege, because, by laboring earnestly to obtain the assistance of the nations around them, they withheld from God the praise of almighty power. Hence also the Spirit elsewhere compares that ardor to the extravagances of love, and even to licentious courses. (Jeremiah 5:8.) Ezekiel shews that, by joining the Egyptians, they acted as if a woman, shamefully transgressing the bounds of decency, not only ran furiously after adulterers, but even desired to associate with horses and asses. (Ezekiel 16:26.) And yet here he does not absolutely condemn all leagues that are made with idolaters, but has especially in view that prohibition by which the law forbade them to enter into alliance with the Egyptians. It is chiefly on account of the prohibition that he kindles into such rage; for it was not without pouring grievous contempt on God that they ran trembling into Egypt. For this reason he calls them סוררים, (*sōrĕrīm*,) *obstinate* and *rebellious*. We have explained this word at the first chapter. [552] It denotes men of hardened wickedness, who knowingly and willingly revolt from God, or whose obstinacy renders them objects of disgust, so that no integrity or sincerity is left in them. At first he reproves that vice on this ground, that they neglected the word of God, and were devoted to their own counsels.

That they may cover the secret. The words לנסך מסכה, (*lĭnsōch măssēchāh*,) are explained by some commentators to mean, "to pour out the pouring out." Though this is not at variance with the Prophet's meaning, yet it is more correctly, in my opinion, translated by others, "that they may cover a covering." I have followed that version, because the words relate to counsels held secretly and by stealth, by which they cunningly endeavored to deceive the prophets, and, as it were, to escape from the eyes of God. Another rendering, "that they may hide themselves by a covering," is absurd; for although it was for the sake of protection that they sought the Egyptians, yet he rather alludes to that craftiness of which I have spoken. Both expositions

[552] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 75.

amount to the same thing. [553]

By three modes of expression he makes nearly the same statement; that they "cover their counsels," that is, keep them apart from God; that they do not ask at "the mouth of the Lord;" and that they do not suffer themselves to be governed by "his Spirit." They who are guided by their own views turn aside to cunning contrivances, that they may conceal their unbelief and rebellion; and because they have resolved not to obey the word of God, neither do they ask his Spirit. Hence arises that miserable and shameful result. Wretchedly and ruinously must those deliberations and purposes end, over which the Lord does not preside. There is no wisdom that is not obtained from "his mouth;" and if we "ask at his mouth," that is, if we consult his word, we shall also be guided by his Spirit, from whom all prudence and wisdom proceeds.

Let it be observed that two things are here connected, the word and the Spirit of God, in opposition to fanatics, who aim at oracles and hidden revelations without the word; for they wish to come to God, while they neglect and forsake the word, and thus they do nothing else than attempt, as the saying is, to fly without wings. First of all, let it be held as a settled principle, that whatever we undertake or attempt, without the word of God, must be improper and wicked, because we ought to depend wholly on his mouth. And indeed, if we remember what feebleness of understanding, or rather, what lack of understanding, is found in all mankind, we shall acknowledge that they are excessively foolish who claim for themselves so much wisdom, that they do not even deign to ask at the mouth of God.

If it be objected, that the Scriptures do not contain everything, and that they do not give special answers on those points of which we are in doubt, I reply, that everything that relates to the guidance of our life is contained in them abundantly. If, therefore, we have resolved to allow ourselves to be directed by the word of God, and always seek in it the rule of life, God will never suffer us to remain in doubt, but in all transactions and difficulties will point out to us the conclusion. Sometimes, perhaps, we shall have to wait long, but at length the Lord will rescue and deliver us, if we are ready to obey him. Although, therefore, we are careful and diligent in the use of means, as they are called, yet we ought always to attend to this consideration, not to undertake anything but what we know to be pleasing and acceptable to God.

The Prophet condemns the presumption of those who attempt unlawful methods, and think that they will succeed in them, when they labor, right

[553] The phrase מסכה לנסך (līnsōch măssēchāh) has been variously explained. The Peshito makes it mean to pour out libations, probably with reference to some ancient mode of ratifying covenants, and the Septuagint accordingly translates it ἐποιήσατε συνθήκας, `you made covenants.' Cocceius applies it to the casting of molten images, (ad fundendum fusile,) De Dieu to the molding of designs or plots. Kimchi and Calvin derive the words from the root to cover, and suppose the idea here expressed to be that of concealment. Ewald follows J. D. Michaelis in making the phrase mean to weave a web, which agrees well with the context, and is favored by the similar use of the same verb and noun in Isaiah 25:7. Knobel's objection, that this figure is suited only to a case of treachery, has no force, as the act of seeking foreign aid was treasonable under the theocracy, and the design appears to have been formed and executed secretly. (Compare Isaiah 29:15, where the reference may be to the same transaction.)" --- Alexander

or wrong, to secure their safety, as if it could be done contrary to the will of God. It is certain that this proceeds from unbelief and distrust, because they do not think that God alone is able to protect them, unless they call in foreign though forbidden assistance. Hence come unlawful leagues, hence come tricks and cheating, by which men fully believe that their affairs will be letter conducted than if they acted towards each other with candour and fairness. There are innumerable instances of this unbelief in every department of human life; for men think that they will be undone, if they are satisfied with the blessing of God, and transact all their affairs with truth and uprightness. But we ought to consider that we are forsaken, rejected, and cursed by God, whenever we have recourse to forbidden methods and unlawful ways. In all our undertakings, deliberations, and attempts, therefore, we ought to be regulated by the will of God. We ought always to consider what he forbids or commands, so as to be fully disposed to obey his laws, and to submit ourselves to be guided by his Spirit, otherwise our rashness will succeed very ill.

That they may add sin to sin. The Prophet says this, because the Jews, by those useless defences which they supposed to fortify them strongly, did nothing else than stumble again on the same stone, and double their criminality, which already was very great. Our guilt is increased, and becomes far heavier, when we endeavor, by unlawful methods, to escape the wrath of God. But we ought especially to consider this expression as applicable to the Jews, because, after having brought the Assyrians into Judea, (for they had called them to their assistance against Israel and Syria,) they wished to drive them out by the help of the Egyptians. (2 Kings 16:7, 17:4, 18:21.) The Jews were hard pressed by the Assyrians, and were justly punished for their unbelief, because they resorted to men, and not to God, for aid; and we see that this happened to many nations who called the Turk to their assistance. So far were the Jews from repenting of their conduct, and acknowledging that they had been justly punished, that they even added evil to evil, as if crime could be washed out by crime. On this account they are more severely threatened; for they who persevere in their wickedness, and rush with furious eagerness against God, and do not allow themselves to be brought back to the right path by any warnings or chastisements, deserve to be more sharply and heavily punished.

2. *They walk that they may go down into Egypt.* The reason why the Prophet condemns this "going down" has been already explained; [554] but as their guilt was aggravated by open and heinous obstinacy, he again repeats that they did this without asking at the mouth of God, and even in the face of his prohibition.

Strengthening themselves with the strength of Pharaoh. He again draws their attention to the source of the evil, when he says that it was done for the purpose of acquiring strength, because they placed confidence in the forces

[554] See page 345

of the Egyptians. Hence arose that lawless desire of entering into a league. In this way they shewed that they cared little about the power of God, and did not greatly trust in him; and they openly displayed their unbelief.

It might be objected, that men are the servants of God, and that it is lawful for any one to make use of their services, whenever they are needed. I reply, that while we make use of the labors and services of men, it ought to be in such a manner as to depend on God alone. But there was another reason peculiar to the Jews, for they knew that God had forbidden them to call the Egyptians to their assistance, and, by doing so, they withheld from God all that they ascribed to Pharaoh and to his forces. Thus it is not without good reason that Isaiah contrasts Pharaoh with God; for the creatures are opposed to God, and enter, as it were, into contest with him when they rise up against God, or whenever men abuse them, or place their hearts and confidence in them, or desire them more than is lawful.

3. *But to you shall the strength of Pharaoh be shame.* He now shews what shall be the end of the wicked, who despise God and his word, and follow those schemes which are most agreeable to their own views. All that they undertake shall tend to their ruin. He threatens not only that they shall be disappointed of their hope, but also that they are seeking with great toil, destruction and ruin, from which they will gain nothing but sorrow and disgrace. To all wicked men it must unavoidably happen that, although for a time they appear to gain their object, and though everything succeeds to their wish, yet in the end all shall be ruinous to them. It is the just reward of their rashness, when they go beyond the limits of the word; for nothing that has been acquired by wicked and unlawful methods can be of advantage to any person.

By way of admission he calls it "the strength of Pharaoh," as if he had said, "You think that you gain much protection from Pharaoh, but it will yield you reproach and disgrace. *The shadow of Egypt*, by which you hoped to be covered, will make you blush for shame." Accordingly, both expressions, "shame" and "disgrace," have the same meaning; and as חרפה, (*chĕrpāh*,) [555] *reproach*, is a stronger expression than "shame," it is afterwards added for the purpose of bringing out the meaning more fully.

4. *For his princes were in Zoan.* The Prophet not only says that the aid of the Egyptians was sought, and that they were invited to assist, but expresses something more, namely, that the Jews obtained it with great labor and expense. They had to perform long and painful journeys, to endure much toil, and to expend vast sums of money, in order to arrive, loaded with presents, at the most distant cities of Egypt, which are here named by the Prophet. On this embassy were sent, not persons of mean or ordinary rank, but "princes" and nobles; and therefore the censure was more severe, because they slavishly solicited an alliance with Egypt, and wandered like suppliants through various countries. It is proper also to bear in mind the

[555] The allusion is to the concluding clause of the fifth verse." — Ed

contrast which we have already pointed out. They did not need to go far to seek God; they did not need to endure much toil, or spend large sums of money, in calling on him. He invited them by his promise, "This is my rest," and assured them that in that place they would not call upon him in vain. (Psalm 132:14; Isaiah 28:12.) But those wretched persons despised God, and chose rather to torment themselves, and to run to the very ends of the world, than to receive the assistance which was offered to them.

5. *They shall all be ashamed.* He confirms the former statement; for it was very difficult to convince ungodly men that all that they undertook without the word of God would be ruinous to them. In order to punish them more severely, God sometimes bestows on them prosperity, that they may be more and more deceived, and may throw themselves down headlong; for by the righteous judgment of God it is brought about, that Satan draws them by these allurements, and drives them into his nets. Yet the final result is, that not only are they deprived of the assistance which they expected, but they are likewise severely punished both for their presumption and for their unbelief.

Of a people that will not profit them. He threatens not only that the Egyptians will prove false, as wicked men often forsake at the utmost need, or even treacherously ruin, those whom they have fed with empty promises, but that even though they endeavor to the utmost to fulfill the promises which they have made, still they will be of no use. Whatever may be the earnestness with which men endeavor to help us, yet, as events are in the hand of God, they will "profit nothing" without his blessing. It was difficult to believe when the Prophet spoke, that a nation so powerful could yield no assistance; but we ought always to hold it as a principle fully settled, that all the advantage that dazzles us in the world will vanish away, except in so far as God is gracious and kind, and makes it sure for our advantage.

6. *The burden of the beasts of the south.* After having spoken loudly against the consultations of the Jews about asking assistance from the Egyptians, he ridicules the enormous cost and the prodigious inconveniences which they endured on that account; for at so high a price did they purchase their destruction; and he threatens the same curse as formerly, because unhappily they acted in opposition to the word of God. He mentions "the south," because they journeyed through a southern region, Egypt being situated to "the south" of Judea. He therefore calls them "beasts of burden" on account of the journey, and addresses them in order to pour contempt on men, because it was in vain to speak to them, and they were deaf to all exhortations. Accordingly, he threatens that the effect of this prediction shall reach the very "beasts of burden," though men do not understand it.

In the land of trouble and distress. The people having proudly disregarded the threatenings, the Prophet seasonably turns to the horses and camels; and declares that, although they are void of reason, yet they shall perceive that God hath not spoken in vain, and that, though the people imagined that

there was uninterrupted prosperity in Egypt, it would be a land of anguish and affliction even to the brute animals. The journey was labourious and difficult, and yet they shrunk from no exertion in order to satisfy their mad desire; and to such a pitch of madness was their ardor carried, that they were not discouraged by the tediousness of the journey.

The young lion and the strong lion. In addition to the inconveniences already mentioned, Isaiah threatens the special vengeance of God, that they shall encounter "lions" and beasts of prey. There was nothing new or uncommon in this to persons who traveled from Judea into Egypt; but here he threatens something extraordinary and more dangerous. In addition to the inconveniences and toils, and to the sums of money which they shall expend, God will also send disastrous occurrences, and at length they shall be miserably ruined.

This doctrine ought to be applied to us, who are chargeable with a fault exceedingly similar; for in dangers we fly to unlawful remedies, and think that they will profit us, though God disapproves of them. We must therefore experience the same result and fall into the same dangers, if we do not restrain our unbelief and wickedness by the word of God. We ought also to observe and guard against that madness which hurries us along to spare no expense and to shrink from no toil, while we obey with excessive ardor our foolish desire and wish. We had abundant experience of this in Popery, when we were held captives by it, running about in all directions, and wearying ourselves with long and toilsome pilgrimages to various saints; yet the greatest possible annoyances were reckoned by us to be light and trivial. But now, when we are commanded to obey God and to endure "the light yoke" of Christ, (Matthew 11:30,) we find that we cannot endure it.

7. *Surely the Egyptians are vanity.* [556] This verse contains the explanation of the former statement; for he repeats and threatens the same thing, that the Egyptians, after having worn out the Jews by various annoyances and by prodigious expense, will be of no service to them. "The strength of Egypt" will do them no good, even though he be earnest in assisting them, and employ all his forces. Thus shall the Jews be disappointed of their hope, and deceive themselves to their great vexation. The particle ו (ū) signifies here either *for* or *surely*, as I have translated it.

Therefore have I cried to her. He now shews that the Jews have no excuse for fleeing with such haste into Egypt, and that they are willingly foolish and unworthy of any pardon, because they do not repent when they are warned. When he says that he "cried" to Jerusalem, I consider this to refer to God himself, who complains that his distinct warnings and instructions produced no effect, and that his exhortation to them *to sit still* was not without foundation, but was intended to meet the troubles and calamities which he foresaw. Whence came that restlessness, but because they refused to believe the words of the Lord? In a word, he shews that it is mere obstinacy that

[556] "For the Egyptians shall help in vain." — Eng. Ver.

drives them to flee into Egypt; for by "sitting still" they might provide for their safety.

By the word "cry" he means that he not only warned them by words, but likewise chastised them; and this makes it evident that their obstinacy and rebellion were greater. "To sit still" means here "to remain and to stay at home," though he will afterwards shew (verse 15) that they ought to have peaceable dispositions. The cause of their alarm and impassioned exertions was, that they were terrified and struck with dismay, and did not think that God's protection was sufficient, if they had not also the Egyptians on their side. Thus, they who do not give sufficient honor to God have their hearts agitated by unbelief, so that they tremble and never find peace.

8. *Now go, and write this vision on a tablet.* After having convicted the Jews of manifest unbelief, he means that it should be attested and sealed by permanent records, that posterity may know how obstinate and rebellious that nation was, and how justly the Lord punished them. We have said that it was customary with the prophets to draw up an abridgment of their discourses and attach it to the gates of the temple, and that, after having allowed full time to all to see and read it, the ministers took it down, and preserved it among the records of the temple; and thus the book of the prophets was collected and compiled. [557] But when any prediction was remarkable and peculiarly worthy of being remembered, then the Lord commanded that it should be written in larger characters, that the people might be induced to read it, and to examine it more attentively. (Isaiah 8:1; Habakkuk 2:2.) The Lord now commands that this should be done, in order to intimate that this was no ordinary affair, that the whole ought to be carefully written, and deserved the closest attention, and that it ought not only to be read, but to be engraven on the remembrance of men in such a manner that no lapse of time can efface it.

Yet there can be no doubt that Isaiah, by this prediction, drew upon himself the intense hatred of all ranks, because he intended to expose and hold them up for abhorrence, not only among the men of his own age, but also among posterity. There is nothing which men resent more strongly than to have their crimes made publicly known and fastened on the remembrance of men; they reckon it ignominious and disgraceful, and abhor it above all things. But the Prophet must obey God, though he should become the object of men's hatred, and though his life should be in imminent danger. Here we ought to observe his steadfastness in dreading nothing, that he might obey God and fulfill his calling. He despised hatred, dislike, commotions, threatenings, false alarms, and immediate dangers, that he might boldly and fearlessly discharge the duties of his office. Copying his example, we ought to do this, if we wish to hear and follow God who calls us.

Before them. אתם (*ĭttām*) is translated by some, "with them," but it is better to translate it "before them," or, "in their sight;" for it was proper

[557] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 32

that he should openly irritate the Jews, to whom he presented this prediction written "on a tablet." Hence we ought to infer, that wicked men, though they cannot bear reproof and are filled with rage, ought nevertheless to be reproved sharply and openly; and that threatenings and reproofs, though they be of no advantage to them, will yet serve for an example to others, when those men shall be stamped with perpetual infamy. In them will be fulfilled what is written elsewhere,

"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond engraven on their hearts." (Jeremiah 17:1.)

They must not think that they have escaped, when they have despised the prophets and shut their ears against them; for their wickedness shall be manifest to men and to angels. But as they never repent willingly or are ashamed of their crimes, God commands that a record of their shame shall be prepared, that it may be placed continually before the eyes of men. As victories and illustrious actions were commonly engraved on tables of brass, so God commands that the disgrace which the Jews brought upon themselves by their transgressions, shall be inscribed on public tablets.

That it may be till the last day. It was very extraordinary, as I remarked a little before, that the Prophet was charged by a solemn injunction to pronounce infamy on his countrymen. For this reason he adds "till the last day," either that they may be held up to abhorrence through an uninterrupted succession of ages, or because, at the appearance of the Judge, the crimes of the wicked shall be fully laid open when he shall "ascend his judgment seat, and the books shall be opened;" for those things which formerly were hidden and wrapped in darkness will then be revealed. (Daniel 7:10; Revelation 20:12.)

Here it ought to be carefully observed, that prophecies were not written merely for the men of a single age, but that their children and all posterity ought to be instructed by them, that they may know that they ought not to imitate their fathers.

"Harden not your hearts as your fathers did." (Psalm 95:8.)

What Paul affirms as to the whole of Scripture is applicable to prophecy, that it

"is profitable for warning, for consolation, and for instruction," (2 Timothy 3:16;)

and this is proper and necessary in every age. We must therefore reject the fancies of fanatics and wicked men, who say that this doctrine was adapted to those times, but affirm that it is not adapted to our times. Away with such blasphemies from the ears of the godly; for, when Isaiah died, his doctrine must flourish and yield fruit.

9. *For this is a rebellious people.* The word *for* or *because* points to the explanation of what has been already said; for the Prophet explains what the Lord intends to declare to posterity, namely, that the perverseness of this nation is desperate, because they cannot submit to be restrained by any doctrine. That the honorable appellation of the "people" wounded to

the quick the hearts both of the ordinary ranks and of the nobles, may be inferred from their loud vaunting; for they boasted that they were the holy and elect seed of Abraham; as if God's adoption had been a veil to cover the grossest crimes. But God commands that their crimes shall nevertheless be brought to light and openly proclaimed.

Who refuse to hear the law of Jehovah. By accusing them of this, he points out the source of all evils, namely, contempt of the word, which discovers their wickedness and their contempt of God himself; for it is idle to pretend that they worship God, when they are disobedient to his word. Isaiah likewise aggravates their guilt, by saying that they reject the remedy which doctrine offers for curing their diseases. On this account he calls them not only "rebellious," and untameable or abandoned, but *liars* or treacherous persons; for they who refuse to obey the word of God, openly revolt from him, as if they could not endure his authority; and at the same time, they shew that they are given up to vanity and the delusions of Satan, so that they take no pleasure in sincerity.

10. *Who say to the seers, See not.* He now describes more clearly, and shews, as it were, to the life, the contempt of God and obstinacy which he formerly mentioned; for wicked men not only pour ridicule on doctrine, but furiously drive it away, and would even wish to have it utterly crushed and buried. This is what Isaiah intended to express. Not only do they turn away their ears, and eyes, and all their senses, from doctrine, but they would even wish that it were destroyed and taken out of the way; for wickedness is invariably attended by such rage as would lead them to wish the destruction of that which they cannot endure. The power and efficacy of the word wounds and enrages them to such a degree, that they give vent to their fierceness and cruelty like wild and savage beasts. They would gladly escape, but whether they will or not, they are constrained to hear God speaking, and to tremble at his majesty. This bitterness is followed by hatred of the prophets, snares, alarms, persecutions, banishment, tortures, and deaths, by which they think that they can overturn and root out both the doctrine and the teachers; for men are more desirous to have dreams and fabulous tales told them than to be faithfully instructed.

See not, prophesy not to us right things. The Prophet does not relate the words of wicked men, as if they openly made use of these words, but he describes the state of the fact and their actual dispositions; for he had not to do with men who were such fools as to make an intentional discovery of their wickedness. They were singularly cunning hypocrites, who boasted of worshipping God, and complained that they were unjustly reproached by the prophets. Isaiah tears off the mask by which they concealed themselves, and discovers what they are, because they refused to give place to the truth; for whence came the murmurs against the prophets, but because they could not bear to hear God speaking?

The prophets were called *seers*, because the Lord revealed to them what

would afterwards be made known to others. They were stationed, as it were, in a lofty place, that they might behold from on high, and as if from "a watch-tower," (Habakkuk 2:1,) the prosperous or adverse events which were approaching. The people wished that nothing of an adverse nature should be told them; and therefore they hated the prophets, because, while they censured and sharply reproved the vices of the people, they at the same time were witnesses of the approaching judgment of God. Such is the import of those words, "Do not see, do not prophesy right things." Not that they spoke in this manner, as we have already said, but because such was the state of their feelings, and because they desired that the prophets should speak with mildness, and could not patiently bear the sharpness of their reproofs. Not one of them was so impudent as to say that he wished to be deceived, and that he abhorred the truth; for they declared that they sought it with the greatest eagerness, as all our adversaries boast of doing at the present day; but they denied that what Isaiah and the other prophets told them was the word of God. In like manner they plainly told Jeremiah that he was "a liar," (Jeremiah 43:2,) and threatened him more insolently,

"Thou shalt not prophesy in the name of the Lord,
lest thou die by our hand." (Jeremiah 11:21.)

To them the truth was intolerable; and when they departed from it, they could find nothing but falsehood, and thus they willingly chose to be deceived and to have falsehood told them.

Speak to us smooth things. When he says that they desire "smooth things," [558] he points out the very source; for they were ready to receive flatterers with unbounded applause, and would willingly have allowed their ears to be tickled in the name of God. And this is the reason why the world is not only liable to be carried away by delusions, but earnestly desires them; for almost all wish to have their vices treated with forbearance and encouragement. But it is impossible that the servants of God, when they endeavor faithfully to discharge their duty, should be chargeable with being severe reprovers; and hence it follows that it is an idle and childish evasion, when wicked men pretend that they would willingly be God's disciples, provided that he were not rigorous. It is as if they bargained that, for their sake, he should change his nature and deny himself; as Micah also says, that no prophets were acceptable to the Jews, but such as "prophesied of wine and strong drink." (Micah 2:11.)

11. *Depart from the way.* The amount of what is stated is, that when the prophets are set aside, the Lord is also rejected and set aside, and no regard is paid to him. Wicked men pretend the contrary, for they are ashamed to acknowledge so great wickedness. But they gain nothing by it; for God wishes that we should listen to him by means of those to whom he gave injunctions to declare his will to us, and to administer the doctrine of the word. If therefore it is our duty to listen to God, if we are bound to pay him

[558] "Disant qu'ils demandent d'estre flattez;" — "When he says that they ask to be flattered."

any homage, we ought to shew it by embracing his word, as it is contained in the writings of the prophets and evangelists. This ought to be carefully observed in commendation of the word; for they who set it aside act as if they denied that he is God.

Cause the Holy One of Israel to depart. Here he again points out the cause of so great wickedness, which doubles their guilt; namely, that God does not spare or flatter their vices, but acts the part of a good and skillful physician. Men desire to be flattered, and cannot patiently endure that God should threaten them. Hence it comes that men hate and reject the word. Hence proceeds the furious attack on the prophets, whose reproofs and threatenings they cannot endure; for there is no reason why men should revolt from the government of God, but because they take delight in what is wrong and crooked, and abhor the right way. Appropriately, therefore, does the Prophet join these two things, dislike of heavenly doctrine and hatred of uprightness.

12. *Because you have disdained this word.* He next declares the punishment of ungodliness, threatening that they shall not pass unpunished for refusing to hear God speaking; and he expresses their contempt more strongly by the word "disdain." He calls it "this word," making use of the demonstrative; for men would willingly contrive some word adapted to their manner of life, but refuse to listen to God when he speaks.

And trusted in violence and wickedness. God's gentle invitation, and his exhortation to quiet rest, are here contrasted with their disorderly pursuits. The Hebrew word עשק (*gnōshĕk*) denotes "robbery," and "seizing property which belongs to another." Others render it "ill-gotten wealth." Those who render it "calumny," do not sufficiently express the Prophet's meaning. For my own part, I do not view it as referring to riches gained by unlawful methods, but rather to that rebelliousness in which that nation insolently indulged.

The word "wickedness," [559] which is added, ought not to be limited to decisions of courts of law; for, in my opinion, it has a more extensive signification; and by these two words he intended to express the presumption of wicked men, by which they fiercely and wantonly rose up against God, because they always dared to follow their own lawless desires, and to do what was forbidden. And as the poets feign that the giants made war with God, [560] so those men resisted God's threatenings, and thought that they would speedily overcome his power by their fierceness and presumption.

13. *Therefore shall your iniquity be like a breach falling.* This is a threatening of punishment, and Isaiah expresses it by a very appropriate metaphor. He compares wicked men to a wall that is rent, or that bulges out. As the "swelling out" of a wall threatens the ruin of it, because it cannot stand

[559] נלוז (nālōz) seems to denote perverseness or moral obliquity in general. It is rendered in a strong idiomatic form by Hitzig, (verschmitztheit, craftiness,) and Ewald, (querwege, crossway.) --- Alexander. Luther's term, (muthwillen, wantonness,) conveys the same general idea. --- Ed

[560] See Commentary on John's Gospel, vol. 1 p. 223 note 1.

unless all the parts of it adhere closely to each other, so the haughtiness and insolence of wicked men are a sign and very sure proof of their approaching ruin; because the more they are puffed up and swelled without any solid value, [561] the more readily do they throw themselves down headlong, and it is impossible for them not to fall speedily by their own weight. "Rise up," says he, "and act insolently against God; he will quickly put down your presumption and insolence, for it is but an empty swelling." Hence we learn that nothing is better for us than to submit wholly to God, and to keep charge of all our senses, so as to remain chained and bound by his authority; for they who raise themselves by shaking off all humility, destroy themselves by collecting much wind. For a time, indeed, the Lord permits wicked men to swell and utter their big words, that at length, by their "swelling" and idle boasting, they may bring upon themselves ruin and destruction.

14. *And the breaking of it shall be.* When a wall has fallen, some traces of the ruin are still to be seen, and the stones of it may be applied to use, and to some extent the wall may even be rebuilt. But here the Prophet threatens that they who are puffed up with obstinacy against God shall perish in such a manner that they cannot be restored, and all that is left of them shall be utterly useless. Accordingly, he employs the metaphor of a potter's vessel, the broken fragments of which cannot be repaired or put together. These threatenings ought to make a deep impression upon us, that we may embrace with reverence the word of God, when we learn that punishments so severe are prepared for those who despise it; for the Prophet threatens that they shall be utterly destroyed and ruined, and takes away all hope of their being restored. Nor is the threatening groundless; for we see how they that despise God, when they have been twice and three times cast down, still do not cease to raise their crests; for nothing is more difficult than to root out the false confidence from their hearts. [562]

15. *For thus saith the Lord.* Here he describes one kind of contempt of God; for when warnings are addressed to hypocrites in general terms, they commonly produce little effect. In addition to the general doctrine, therefore, the prophets specify particular instances, which they specially accommodate to the conduct of those with whom they have to do, so as always to aim at a definite object. They might have wrangled and urged, "Why do you accuse us of so great impiety, as if we rejected the word of the Lord?" He therefore brings forward this class, in order to strike their consciences and cut short their idle sophistry. "Was it not the word of the Lord, In hope and silence shall be your strength? why did you not rely on God? why did you raise a commotion?" Thus the Prophet holds them to be convicted, so that they

[561] "Estans pleins de vent;" — "Being full of wind."

[562] Here the Author departs from his usual manner, by omitting all mention of the concluding and highly expressive clause of the verse. "For גבה, (gĕbĕh,) the English version has `pit,' Lowth, `cistern,' and most other writers `well;' but in Ezekiel 47:11, it denotes a `marsh' or `pool.' Ewald supposes a particular allusion to the breaking of a poor man's earthen pitcher, an idea which had been suggested long before by Gill: `as poor people are wont to do, to take fire from the hearth, and water out of a well in a piece of broken pitcher.'" --- Alexander. All must admit, that when one cannot find a ``sherd'' fit for the meanest purpose, the vessel is broken in pieces. --- Ed

cannot cavil without the grossest impudence, or, if they do so, will derive no advantage.

The Holy One of Israel. He makes use of this appellation, in order to reproach them the more for their ingratitude, that they may know how great protection they would have found in God: for God wished to be their protector and guardian. When they had forsaken him, their distrust carried them away to solicit the aid of the Egyptians, which was very great and intolerable wickedness. This title contains a bitter complaint, that they shut out God from entering, when he drew near to them.

In rest and quietness shall you be safe. Some render שובה (*shūbāh*) "repentance." Others render it "rest," [563] and I am more disposed to adopt that rendering; for I think that the Prophet intended frequently to impress upon the people, that the Lord demands more from them than to rely fully upon him. Nor is the repetition of the statement by two words superfluous; for he expressly intended to bring together the words "rest and quietness," in order to reprove the people the more sharply for their distrust and unbelief.

This verse consists of two clauses, a command and a promise. He enjoins the people to be of a quiet disposition, and next promises that their salvation shall be certain. The people do not believe this promise, and consequently they do not obey the command; for how would they render obedience to God, whom they do not believe, and on whose promises they do not rely? We need not wonder, therefore, that they do not enjoy peace and repose; for these cannot exist without faith, and faith cannot exist without the promises, and as soon as the promises have been embraced, souls that were restless and uneasy are made calm. Thus, unbelief alone produces that uneasiness; and therefore the Prophet justly reproves it, and shews that it is the source of the whole evil.

Though our condition be not entirely the same with that of the Jews, yet God commands us to wait for his assistance with quiet dispositions, not to murmur, or be troubled or perplexed, or to distrust his promises. This doctrine must belong equally to all believers; for the whole object of Satan's contrivances is to distress them, and to cast them down from their condition. In like manner had Moses long before addressed them,

"You shall be silent, and the Lord will fight for you." (Exodus 14:14.)

Not that he wished them to sleep or to be idle, but he enjoined them to have this peace in their hearts. If we have it, we shall feel that it yields us sufficient protection; and if not, we shall be punished for our levity and rashness.

16. *We will flee on horses; therefore shall you flee.* He shews how they refused to wait calmly for the salvation of the Lord; for they chose rather to "flee" to the Egyptians. This is a very beautiful instance of

[563] Jarchi says, that in this passage שובה (shūbāh) ``signifies rest and quietness,'' and adduces as a parallel passage one in which the word is commonly viewed as the imperative of ,שוב (shūb,) with He paragogic. ``Give rest, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel.'' (Numbers 10:36.) Breithaupt supports that interpretation, and derives the word from ,ישב (yāshăb,) ``to sit, to rest.'' --- Ed

(ἀνταπάκλασις) throwing back an expression, by which he causes their words, so full of confidence, to recoil on themselves. In the first of these clauses, "to flee" means "to escape," and in the second it means "to take flight." The Jews said that it would be better for them, if they adopted timely measures for guarding against the danger which was close at hand, and consequently, that they would best provide for their safety by calling in the aid of the Egyptians. "You shall certainly flee," says Isaiah, "not to find a place of refuge, but to turn your back and to be pursued by horses swifter than yours."

We now perceive more clearly what is the fault which Isaiah describes. By the distinct reply, *No*, he shews how obstinately they refused to comply with the advice which was given to them by the prophets, and chose rather to provide for their safety in another manner. Thus, by despising God, they gave a preference to a groundless appearance of safety, which they had allowed themselves to imagine. We ought, therefore, to turn away our minds from looking at present appearances and outward assistance, that they may be wholly fixed on God; for it is only when we are destitute of outward aid that we rely fully on him. It is lawful for us to use the things of this world for our assistance, but we altogether abuse them by our wickedness in forsaking God.

It is proper also to observe how unhappy is the end of those who rely more on outward aids than on God; for everything must be unsuccessful and contrary to their expectation; as we see that these men, in their attempts to find safety, are constrained to undertake a flight which is highly disgraceful, and from which they obtain no advantage. At first there is some appearance of prosperity; but the only effect is, that the change of condition makes the final result more bitter and distressing. And yet Isaiah does not affirm that they will receive no assistance from Egypt, but forewarns them that the Lord will find new methods of thwarting that assistance, so that they will not be able to escape his hand; for, although all men agree together, yet they will not succeed in opposition to God and to his purposes.

17. *A thousand, as one, shall flee at the rebuke of one.* Because the Jews, on account of their vast numbers, relied on their forces, as men are wont to do when they possess any power, therefore the Prophet threatens that all the protection which they have at home will be of no more avail to them than foreign aid, because the Lord will break and take away their courage, so that they shall not be able to make use of their forces. For what avail arms and a vast multitude of men? What avail fortresses and bulwarks, when men's hearts fail and are dismayed? It is therefore impossible for us to be strong and powerful, unless the Lord strengthen and uphold us by his Spirit. This statement occurs frequently in the law, that when they should revolt from God, a vast number of them would be put to flight by a very small number of enemies. But there is this difference between the law and the prophets, that the prophets apply to a particular subject what Moses announced in

general terms, as we have formerly explained. [564]

Here two observations must be made. First, we shall have just as much courage as the Lord shall give us; for we immediately lose heart, if he do not support us by his power. Secondly, it is the result of the righteous vengeance of God, that we are terrified by men, when he could not prevail upon us to fear him; that, when we have despised God's word and warnings, we fall down in terror at the words and threatenings of men. But we must also add, thirdly, God needs not extensive preparations to chastise us; for, if he lift up but a finger against us, we are undone. A small and feeble army will be sufficient to destroy us, even though we be well prepared, and have great numbers on our side. Next, he threatens that there will be no end to these calamities till they have been reduced to the last extremity, and until, amidst the frightful desolation of the earth, but few tokens of God's compassion are left.

As the mast of a ship on the top of a mountain. This may be explained in two ways. Some consider the metaphor to be taken from trees which have been cut down; for, when a forest is cut down, lofty trees are left which may be of use for building ships. But הר, (*hār*,) "a mountain," probably denotes also a rock or promontory, against which ships are dashed, and to which they adhere, and on which a "mast," the emblem of shipwreck, is afterwards seen. [565]

As a banner on a hill. Another metaphor is now added, borrowed from trophies erected to commemorate the defeat of enemies. In short, the Prophet declares that they will be so few that all that remains shall be an indication of very great ruin. As if he had said, "This great multitude which you now have dazzles your eyes; but there will be such ruin and decrease that you shall no longer have the face of a people." We are thus reminded how humbly and modestly we ought to conduct ourselves, even though we have great wealth and numerous forces; for if our mind be puffed up, God will speedily beat down our pride, and render us more feeble and cowardly than women and children, so that we shall not be able to bear the sight even of a single enemy, and all our strength shall melt away like snow.

18. *Therefore will Jehovah wait.* The Prophet now adds consolation; for hitherto he threatened to such an extent that almost all the godly might be thrown into despair. He intended therefore to soothe their minds, and encourage them to hope for better things, that they might embrace the mercy of God in the midst of those miseries, and might thus nourish their souls by his word. He contrasts this "waiting" with the excessive haste against

[564] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 29

[565] " (tōrĕn) is taken as the name of a tree by Augusti (Tannenbaum, the fir-tree) and Rosenmüller, (pinus, the pine-tree,) by Gesenius and Ewald as a signal or a signal-pole. In the only two cases where it occurs elsewhere, it has the specific meaning of a mast. The allusion may be simply to the similar appearance of a lofty and solitary tree, or the common idea may be that of a flag-staff, which might be found in either situation. The word 'Beacon,' here employed by Gataker and Barnes, is consistent neither with the Hebrew nor the English usage." — Alexander

which he spoke loudly at the beginning of the chapter, where he reproved the people for noisy haste, and condemned them for unbelief; but now, on the contrary, he reproaches them by saying that the Lord will not render like for like in consequence of the contempt with which they have treated him, and will not in that manner hasten to punish them. Others explain it, "He commands you to wait," or "he will cause you to wait." But the meaning which I have brought forward appears to me to be more appropriate.

For Jehovah is a God of judgment. To make the former statement more plain, we must lay down this principle, that God exercises moderation in inflicting punishment, because he is inclined to mercy. This is what he means by the word "judgment;" for it denotes not only punishment, but also the moderation which is exercised in chastening. In like manner, Jeremiah says,

"Chasten me, O Lord, but in judgment,
not in thy wrath, lest thou crush me." (Jeremiah 10:24.)

And again, I will not consume thee, but will chastise thee in judgment. [566] (Jeremiah 30:11.) "Judgment" is thus contrasted with severity, when the Lord observes a limit in punishing believers, that he may not ruin those whose salvation he always promotes; and, accordingly, as Habakkuk says, "in the midst of wrath he remembers his mercy." (Habakkuk 3:2.) He is not like us, therefore; he does not act with bustling or hurry, otherwise at every moment we must perish, but he calmly waits. Nor is it a slight confirmation of this when he adds, that God gives a proof of his glory by pardoning his people.

And therefore will he be exalted, that he may be gracious to you. Others translate the words, "till he be gracious to you;" but I think that the former translation is more appropriate, and it agrees better with the meaning of the particle ל (*lamed.*) The Lord appears to lie still or to sleep, so long as he permits his Church to be assailed by the outrages of wicked men; and the customary language of Scripture is to say that he sits, or lies unemployed, when he does not defend his Church. It might be thought that he lay still when he gave loose reins to the Chaldeans to oppress the Jews; and therefore the Prophet says, that the Lord will arise and ascend his judgment-seat. Why? "That he may be gracious to you."

Blessed are all that wait for him. This is an inference from the former statement, in which he called Jehovah "a God of judgment." While he thus restrains himself, he draws from it an exhortation to patience and "waiting," and makes use of a part of the same verb, "wait," which he had formerly used. They were chargeable with distrust, and were distressed by strange uneasiness and restlessness of mind; for they were fearfully harassed by their unbelief, so that they could not "wait" for God calmly. To cure this vice, he enjoins them to "wait," that is, to hope. Now, hope is nothing else than

[566] The latter quotation may appear to be inaccurate, for in the English version it runs thus, "I will correct thee in measure;" but Calvin adheres closely to the Hebrew original, which employs in both passages the word משפט (mīsphāt) ``judgment.'' --- Ed

steadfastness of faith, that is, when we wait calmly till the Lord fulfil what he has promised. When he says that they who shall patiently "wait" for him will be "blessed," he declares, on the other hand, that they who allow themselves to be hurried away by impatience, and do not repent of their crimes and their wickedness, are wretched and miserable, and will at length perish; for without hope in God there can be no salvation or happiness.

19. *Surely the people in Zion shall dwell in Jerusalem.* He confirms the former statement, that the people will indeed be afflicted, but will at length return to "Zion." Now, this might be thought incredible after the desolation of the city and of the whole country, for it seemed as if the whole nation had perished; yet Isaiah promises that the Church shall be preserved. He begins with Mount "Zion," on which the temple was built, and says that there men will henceforth call on the Lord. He likewise adds, "in Jerusalem," by which he means that the Church shall be enlarged and increased, and that all that had formerly been laid waste shall be restored. Yet he intimates that "Jerusalem" shall again be populous, because God had chosen it to be his sanctuary.

Weeping thou shalt not weep. [567] The meaning is, that this mourning shall not be perpetual. The Church, that is, all believers, while they were in this wretched and distressed condition, must have been exceedingly sorrowful; but he says that those tears shall come to an end. To the same purport is it said by the Psalmist, "They who sow in tears shall reap in joy." (Psalm 126:5.) The Lord permits us indeed to be afflicted with great anguish; but at length he cheers us, and gives us reason for gladness, when he restores his Church; for that is the true joy of believers. Besides, as it is difficult to taste any consolation when the mind is overwhelmed by a conviction of God's vengeance, he holds out a ground of consolation in the mercy of God, because, when he is appeased, there is no reason to dread that joy and peace shall not immediately return. But, as the Prophet Habakkuk says in the passage already quoted, "in his wrath the Lord remembers mercy;" and he never punishes believers with such severity as not to restrain and moderate his strokes, and put a limit to his chastisements. (Habakkuk 3:2.)

At the voice of thy cry. The Prophet points out the manner of obtaining pardon, in order to arouse believers to pray earnestly, and to supplicate with earnest groanings; for if there be no repentance, if we do not ask pardon from God, we are altogether unworthy of his mercy. If, therefore, we wish that the Church should be gathered together, and rescued from destruction by a kind of resurrection, let us cry to God to listen to our sighs and groanings; and if there be no sorrow of heart that excites us to prayer, we have no right to expect any alleviation.

He will answer thee. This means nothing else than that he will give evidence of his kindness and aid; for the Lord "answers," not by word, but by deed. Yet let us not think that he will instantly comply with our wishes,

[567] Ft555 "Thou shalt weep no more." — Eng. Ver.

which are often hasty and unseasonable. He will undoubtedly assist us when the proper time arrives, so that we shall know that he had in view our salvation.

20. *When the Lord shall have given you.* He continues the same subject, and strengthens believers, that they may not faint; for patience springs from the hope of a more prosperous issue. Accordingly, he prepares them for enduring future chastisement, for the wrath of God will press hard on them for a time; but he immediately promises that a joyful issue awaits them, when they shall have endured those calamities and distresses; for God will restrain his severity. Thus, I consider ו (*vau*) to mean "When" or "After;" as if he had said, "*When* you shall have endured those troubles, then will the Lord bless you; for he will change your condition for the better."

Thy rain shall no longer be restrained. [568] The word מורה (*mōrĕh*) is viewed by some commentators as meaning "a teacher." But this does not agree with the context; for, although the chief fruit of our reconciliation to God is to have faithful "teachers," yet, as the ignorant multitude was more deeply affected by the want of food, Isaiah accommodates his language to their ignorance, and gives them a taste of God's fatherly kindness under the emblem of abundance of food.

By the words "bread" and "water," he means extreme want and scarcity of all things, and therefore he calls it "bread of anguish and water of affliction." [569] Instead of this famine, he says that he will send them plenty and abundance. This is what he means by the word *rain*; for he describes the cause instead of the effect, as if he had said, "The earth shall yield fruit in abundance." This had a literal and special reference to a country, the fertility of which depended entirely on heaven; for it was not watered by rivers or fountains, but by rains.

"The land whither ye go to possess it," says Moses, "is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven." (Deuteronomy 11:11.)

He declares that the fruits of the earth, which the Lord took away or diminished by barrenness, will return; because, in consequence of the copious "rains," [570] there will be large and abundant produce. Thus, when the Lord shall punish us, let us comfort our hearts with these statements and promises.

21. *Then shall thine ears hear.* It was indeed no despicable promise

[568] "Yet shall not thy teachers be removed." — Eng. Ver.

[569] "Though ye find yourselves reduced to extremities usual in long sieges, though ye be stinted to a short allowance of 'bread and water,' and are forced to undergo a great many other inconveniences, yet use not my prophets ill, make them not to run into corners to hide themselves from the violence of an impatient multitude; but be glad to see them among you, and let their examples encourage you to bear up handsomely under the short afflictions which shall then be upon you. This is the plain meaning of the words, without running to the whimsical expositions of some who by 'Panis Angustiæ,' as the Vulgate renders צר לחם (lēchĕm tzār,) make the prophet mean the compendious doctrine of the gospel, or Christ himself, or the eucharist, and like dreams." --- Samuel White

[570] "Kimchi's explanation of the word ,) mōrĕh, or rather ,מורים mōrīm,) as meaning the early rain, (which sense it has in Joel 2:23, and perhaps also in Psalm 84:6,) has been retained only by Calvin and Lowth. The great majority of writers adhere not only to the sense of `teacher,' but to the plural import of the form, (מורים) with 2 Sing. Affix.,) and understand the word as a designation or description of the prophets, with particular reference, as some suppose, to their reappearance after a period of severe persecution or oppression." --- Alexander

which he made of an abundant produce of the fruits of the earth, but the chief ground of gladness and joy is, when God restores to us pure and sound doctrine; for no scarcity of wheat ought to terrify and alarm us so much as a scarcity of the word; and indeed, in proportion as the soul is more excellent than the body, so much the more ought we to dread this kind of famine, as another prophet also reminds us. (Amos 8:11.) Isaiah promises this to the Jews as the most valuable of all blessings, that they shall be fed with the word, by the want of which they had formerly been heavily afflicted. The false prophets also boast of the word, and in a more haughty and disdainful manner than godly teachers: they wish to be reckoned and declared to be the best guides; but they lead men into error, and at length plunge them into destruction. But the word which points out the right path comes from God alone, though it would be of little service to us, if he did not also promise that he would give us ears; for otherwise he would speak to the deaf, and we should hear nothing but a confused sound.

A word behind thee. These words must be extended so far as to mean that he will not permit what he speaks to us to be useless, but will inwardly move our understandings and hearts, so as to train them to true obedience; for by nature we are not willing to learn, and must be altogether formed anew by his Spirit. The word *hear* is very emphatic. He compares God to a schoolmaster, who places the children before his eyes, that he may more effectually train and direct them; by which he expresses the wonderful affection and care manifested towards us by God, who does not reckon it enough to go before us, but also "with his eye upon us gives us direction." (Psalm 32:8.) But the Prophet declares that they who follow God as their guide will be in no danger of going astray.

Walk ye in it. This is an exhortation to cheerful progress, so that their journey may not be retarded, as frequently happens, by any uncertainty. What he adds, about *the right hand* and *the left*, might be thought absurd; for when Moses pointed out to the people the way in which they should walk, he at the same time charged them "not to turn aside to the right hand or to the left." (Deuteronomy 5:32; 17:20.) The road is straight and we ought not to seek any departures from it.

What then does the Prophet mean? I reply, he uses the words "Right" and "Left" in a different sense; for he means by them every kind of transactions which we must undertake to perform. These are various, as there are also various modes of living; and every person meets with difficulties of many kinds, and is under the necessity of deliberating about them. By the "right and left hand," therefore, he means all the actions of human life, whatever they are, so that, in all that we undertake, we may have God for our guide, and may always regulate our transactions by his authority, whether we must go "to the right hand or to the left." And hence we derive very great consolation, that the Lord will favor our undertakings, and will direct our steps, to whatever hand we turn, provided only that we do not turn aside

from the path which he points out to us.

22. *Then shall you profane the covering.* This shews that the heavenly direction will not be without effect; for they will bid adieu to their errors, and devote their minds to the pure worship of God; and the Prophet expressly mentions the outward profession of true godliness, by which they will openly proclaim that they have renounced idolatry. For, since statues and images are instruments of idolatry and superstition, they who are truly converted to God detest and abhor them, and, as far as lies in their power, profane them as we read that Jehu did, who profaned the altars of Baal, and turned his temple into a common sewer. (2 Kings 10:27.) The example given by him and by others of the same class ought to be followed by godly princes and magistrates, if they wish to give a genuine proof of their repentance; for, although repentance is seated in the heart, and has God for a witness, it is shewn by its fruits. Isaiah has mentioned one class of them instead of the whole; for in general he shews that the proof of true repentance is, when men make it appear that they hold in abhorrence everything that is opposed to the worship of God. When he says that the idols are profaned, he does not mean that they were formerly sacred; for how could anything be sacred that dishonors God, and defiles men by its pollution? But, as men falsely imagine that they possess some sacredness, that is the reason why he says that they are "profaned," and that they ought to be despised and rejected as things of no value and altogether unclean.

The covering [571] *of the graven images of thy silver.* When he speaks of the "silver" and "gold" of the graven images, he means that no loss or damage prevents believers from abhorring the worship of idols. Such considerations restrain many from casting away idols altogether, because they see that "gold" or "silver" or something else is lost, and they choose rather to keep their idols than to sustain the smallest loss. Covetousness holds them in its net, so that they are more willing to sin of their own accord, and to pollute themselves with these abominations, than to lose this or that. But we ought to prefer the worship of God to everything else, to set little value on gold, to cast away pearls, and to loathe everything that is accounted precious, rather than defile ourselves with such crimes. In short, nothing can be so valuable that it ought not to be despised and reckoned worthless by us, when it comes into competition with overturning the kingdom of Satan and restoring the worship of God. In this manner we actually shew whether the love of God and of religion dwells in our hearts, when a sincere abhorrence of our wicked ignorance drives us to throw away all that is polluted.

23. *Then will he give rain to thy seed.* From the fruit he again shews how

[571] "The ephods of your molten images, — short cassocks, without sleeves, with which the heathens adorned their idols." — Stock. Cicero tells a story about Dionysius, who found in the temple of Jupiter Olympius a golden cloak of great weight, with which the statue of Jupiter had been ornamented by Gelo out of the spoils of the Carthaginians, and, after making the witty observation that it was too heavy for summer and too cold for winter, carried it off, and threw around the statue a woolen mantle, which, he said, was adapted to every season of the year. (Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. iii.) — Ed

desirable it is to be converted to God; for the fruit of repentance is, that he receives converted persons into favor, and bestows his blessing on them, so that they are in want of nothing, but, on the contrary, are loaded with every kind of blessings. As troubles and distresses proceed from the wrath of God, whom we provoke by our crimes, so, when he is pacified, everything goes on prosperously with us, and we obtain every sort of kindness, as the Law more fully testifies. (Leviticus 26:3-13; Deuteronomy 28:3-14.) A little before, he had spoken of "rain," from which they were led to expect an abundant supply of food; but because he had not observed order in beginning with earthly and fading blessings, he therefore now adds to doctrine, which is spiritual nourishment, those things which belong to the use of this corruptible life; for, although godliness has the promise of the present life as well as "of that which is to come," (1 Timothy 4:8,) yet first of all it aims at heaven. (Matthew 6:33.)

Hence also let us learn that it is in vain for men to toil in cultivating their fields, if the Lord do not send rain from heaven. Our labors must be watered by him, and he must "give the increase;" otherwise they will be of no service. Yet we must not expect rain but from the blessing of God; and if we receive abundant produce, we ought to give to him the glory. Hence learn also that we shall be in want of nothing, and shall obtain very abundant fruits of our labors, if we are converted to God, and that it is our own fault that we often suffer poverty and want, because by our wickedness we drive away from us the blessing of God. Let us not therefore ascribe barrenness and famine to any other causes than to our own fault; for it is impossible that there should be so great a multitude of men as to be incapable of deriving support and nourishment from the earth; but by our iniquities and transgressions we shut the bosom of the earth, which would otherwise be laid open to us, and would abundantly yield fruits of every description, that we might lead a prosperous and happy life.

And thy cattle shall feed. What he now adds about the "cattle" tends greatly to magnify the grace of God; for if his kindness overflows even on the dumb cattle, (Psalm 36:6,) how much more on men whom "he created after his image." (Genesis 1:27.) But we need not wonder if brute beasts, which were created for the use of men, suffer hunger along with their masters, and that they have a share in the bestowal of favor when God is reconciled to men.

24. *Thine oxen also.* When he promises that the oxen and the asses shall eat abundant and clean provender, this is a repetition and confirmation of what was stated in the preceding verse. This passage is taken from the Law, (Deuteronomy 28:11,) and is gladly and frequently quoted by the prophets, in order that we may learn to discern in the sickness and death of cattle the indignation of God, and to desire more earnestly to be reconciled to him, that our houses may be filled with his goodness.

25. *And it shall come to pass.* When the prophets describe the kingdom

of Christ, they commonly draw metaphors from the ordinary life of men; for the true happiness of the children of God cannot be described in any other way than by holding out an image of those things which fall under our bodily senses, and from which men form their ideas of a happy and prosperous condition. It amounts therefore to this, that they who obey God, and submit to Christ as their king, shall be blessed. Now, we must not judge of this happiness from abundance and plenty of outward blessings, of which believers often endure scarcity, and yet do not on that account cease to be blessed. But those expressions are allegorical, and are accommodated by the Prophet to our ignorance, that we may know, by means of those things which are perceived by our senses, those blessings which have so great and surpassing excellence that our minds cannot comprehend them.

And on every high hill there shall be streams. When he says that "on the mountains" there shall be "streams and rivulets," he gives a still more striking view of that plenty and abundance with which the Lord will enrich his people. Water is not plentiful on the peaks of the mountains, which are exceedingly dry; the valleys are indeed well moistened, and abound in water; but it is very uncommon for water to flow abundantly on the tops of the mountains. Yet the Lord promises that it shall be so, though it appear to be impossible; but by this mode of expression he foretells that, under the reign of Christ, we shall be happy in every respect, and that there will be no place in which there shall not be an abundant supply of blessings of every description; that nothing will be so barren as not to be rendered fruitful by his kindness, so that everywhere we may be happy. This is what we should actually experience, if we were fully under the authority of Christ. We should plainly see his blessing on all sides, if we sincerely and honestly obeyed him; everything would go on to our wish; and the whole world and everything in it would contribute to our comfort; but, because we are very far from yielding that obedience, we have only a slight taste of those blessings, and enjoy them so far as we have advanced in newness of life.

By the day of slaughter, is denoted another mark of the divine favor, that God will keep his people safe and sound against the violence of enemies; and in this way the Prophet gives credibility to the former prediction; for otherwise it would have been difficult to believe that captives and exiles would enjoy such prosperity. Here he speaks therefore of the slaughter of the wicked; as if he had said, "The Lord will not only do you good, but will also drive out your enemies." It is generally thought that the Prophet now speaks of the defeat which befell the wicked king Sennacherib when he besieged Jerusalem. (2 Kings 19:35; Isaiah 37:36.) But when I examine it more closely, I am more disposed to view this passage as referring to the destruction of Babylon; for although a vast multitude of persons was slain, when Sennacherib was shamefully put to flight, yet still the people were not delivered. This reminds us that we ought not to despair, even though our enemies be very numerous, and have abundance of garrisons, troops,

and fortifications; for the Lord can easily put them to flight and defend his Church. Let us not be terrified at their power or rage, or be discouraged because we are few in number; for neither their troops, nor their bulwarks, nor their rage and insolence, will hinder them from falling into the hands of God.

26. *And the light of the moon shall be.* The Prophet was not satisfied with describing an ordinary state of prosperity, without adding something extraordinary; for he says that the Lord will go beyond the course of nature in this kindness and liberality. It never happened that the brightness of "the sun" was increased, unless when "the sun" stood still in the days of Joshua, in order to give time for pursuing the enemies, (Joshua 10:12,13,) and when, for the sake of Hezekiah, the dial went backward. (2 Kings 20:11; Isaiah 38:8.) But on this occasion nothing is said about those miracles. [572] Besides, the Prophet does not speak about prolonging the course of "the sun" above our horizon, but about increasing its brightness *sevenfold.* He shews what will be the condition of the godly under the reign of Christ; for in other respects the Lord

"maketh his sun to shine on the bad as well as on the good." (Matthew 5:45.)

But here he speaks of happiness in which ungodly men can have no share. There is one kind of liberality which is bestowed indiscriminately on all, and another kind which is peculiar to believers alone; as it is said, "Great is the abundance of thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee." (Psalm 31:19.) Isaiah speaks of this special favor, [573] and, in order to describe it, borrows metaphors from well-known objects. Accordingly, he declares that God will enlighten believers with so great brightness that, if "seven" suns were brought together, their brightness would be far inferior to this.

When the Lord shall have bound up the breach of his people. That the weight of afflictions, by which the people were soon afterwards overwhelmed, might not hinder them from believing this statement, he likewise adds another promise, that the Lord will be like a physician to heal their wounds. Hence it follows, that the people must be chastened, and, in some measure, prepared for repentance by wounds, and must even be crushed and bruised in such a manner as to be reduced almost to nothing.

And healed the stroke of their wound. What he now adds about a "stroke," is intended to shew that this bruising will not be slight; for it resembles a body beaten and wounded by many strokes. If therefore we shall be ready at any time to think that the Lord deals harshly with us, let us call to remembrance those predictions, that the Lord will "bind up our wounds," which otherwise might appear to be mortal. And if any one ask why the Lord chastises his people so severely, I reply, that it produces no good effect

[572] "De his." "De ces miracles-là."

[573] "Isaie parle de ceste faveur speciale."

on us when he treats us mildly; our vices are deeply rooted, and adhere to our very marrow, and cannot be separated but by a razor which has a sharp and keen edge.

27. *Behold the name of the Lord cometh.* He threatens the destruction of the Assyrians, who were at that time the chief enemies of the Church. From almost all their neighbors, indeed, the Jews received annoyance; but as the Assyrians were greatly superior to others in wealth and power, so the prophets, when they speak of enemies, mention them almost exclusively, and afterwards the Babylonians, who obtained the monarchy; though, as we have already seen, they frequently, by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, include the Chaldeans under the name of Assyrians. By "the name of God" he unquestionably means God himself; but he makes use of this circumlocution, because the Assyrians and other nations worshipped gods made of gold and silver, and held up the Jews to ridicule, because they did not worship him under any image, or statue, or resemblance; as one who wrote against them says that "they worship the bright clouds and the deity of the sky." [574] Thus wicked and ungodly men always judge of God according to outward appearances; while the prophets, on the other hand, remind believers of "the name of God." "That God who revealed himself to you by his name, whom you do not feel, whom you do not see, will take vengeance on your insults."

From afar. He adds this as if he granted what was said by them; for ungodly men, when they do not perceive the hand of God, think that he is at a great distance, and mock at the confidence of believers as groundless. Accordingly, the Prophet, adapting his language to the views of unbelievers, shews that God, whom they thought to be at a great distance, will come, or rather, has already come, and is at hand. This is what he means by the particle הנה, (*hĭnnĕh*,) *behold*, which he contrasts with the word ממרהק, (*mĭmmĕrhŏk*,) "from afar," directing believers, in this manner, to rise above all obstructions, that by their hope they may arrive at that assistance which he promised.

His face burneth. In order to shew that the celebration of the name of God in Judea is not vain or groundless, the Prophet describes the power of God, that is, the power which he will employ in driving out the enemies of the Church, as dreadful. When he addresses those who believe in him, in order to encourage them to the exercise of faith, he shews himself to be kind, gentle, patient, slow to anger, and merciful; but to the ungodly he holds out nothing but fear and terror. (Exodus 34:6.) And as the ungodly are terrified when God is mentioned, so believers, drawn by a conviction of his goodness, rely on him, and are not distressed by such fears. This shews us that we ought continually to persevere in the fear of God, that we may not find God to be what he is here described by the Prophet.

[574] "Qui puras nubes, et cœli numen adorant."

His burden is heavy. [575] That is, the Lord will bring with him dreadful calamities, which the ungodly will not be able to endure; for by "burdens" he means the punishments which are inflicted on the ungodly. He expresses the same thing by the words *lips* and *tongue.* But why did he speak of them rather than of the hands? It is, because ungodly men mock at all the threatenings which are uttered by the word of God, and treat as fabulous all that is declared by the prophets. To their own cost, therefore, they shall learn that the sound which proceedeth from the sacred name of God is not without meaning, and is not idle thunder intended merely to strike the ears, but shall at length know by experience what is the power of that word which they despised.

28. *And his Spirit.* [576] He proceeds with that threatening which he had begun to utter, namely, that the Church will indeed be chastised, but yet that the Assyrians shall utterly perish; for he says that they will be plunged into the deep by the "Spirit" of God, or rather, that the "Spirit" himself is like a deep torrent which shall swallow them up. Others translate רוח, [577] *(rūăch,)* by "blowing," and think that the allusion is to a storm or violent wind.

And with a useless sieve. The next metaphor employed is that of a "sieve," which is very frequent in Scripture (Matthew 3:12.) He says that he will shake the Assyrians with a sieve, in order to thrash and scatter them; and therefore he calls it "the sieve of vanity," that is, a useless sieve, [578] intended not to preserve, but to destroy; for, in another sense, the Lord is wont to "sift" his own people also, so as to gather them like good grain into the barn.

And a bridle causing to err. [579] The third metaphor is that of a "bridle," by which the Lord continually restrains the pride and rebelliousness of wicked men, and, in a word, shews that he is their Judge. True, indeed, the Lord commonly restrains and subdues his own people by a "bridle," but it is in order to bring them to obedience; while, on the other hand, he restrains wicked men in such a manner as to cast them down headlong to destruction. This is what he means by the phrase "causing to err." As furious horses are driven about in all directions by their riders, and, the more they kick are more violently struck and beaten; so the ungodly, when they are kept back, rush eagerly in the opposite direction, as it is beautifully described by David. (Psalm 32:9.)

The object of these metaphors is to shew that we must not sport with

[575] "And the burden thereof (or, And the grievousness of flame) shall be heavy." — Eng. Ver. "And heavy the column of flame." — Stock. "And the burning is heavy: for so ought we to translate משאה, (măssāāh,) in the same sense as in Judges 20:40, and in other passages, from נשא, (nāsā,) `to lift up,' because flame and smoke naturally ascend." --- Rosenmüller

[576] "And his breath." — Eng. Ver.

[577] "Grotius renders רוח (rūăch) anger, Luther and the English version breath; but there is no sufficient reason for excluding an allusion to the Holy Spirit as a personal agent." --- Alexander

[578] "The sieve of emptiness. A sieve full of holes, that suffers both corn and chaff to pass together to the ground. So shall Jehovah make no distinction among the enemies of Israel." — Stock

[579] "And a misleading bridle." — Alexander

the Lord; for, although he appear for a time to act differently, we shall at length know by experience the truth of what the Prophet says, that his "breath" alone will be like a torrent to cast down the wicked, that they may be suddenly overwhelmed. Next, when he gives warning that the nations shall be winnowed with "a useless sieve," we ought to fear lest the Lord, if he find in us nothing but chaff, throw us on the dunghill. Lastly, we must observe the difference that exists between the children of God and the reprobate; for the Lord chastises both, but in different ways — the children of God, that they may be purified and preserved — and the reprobate, that they may be cast down headlong and destroyed.

29. *And you shall have a song as in the night.* Here he declares that all the punishments which he threatened against the Assyrians shall tend to the advantage of the Church, because the Lord punishes the outrages committed against his people not less severely than if they had been committed against himself. In this way he testifies his infinite love and kindness towards his own people, when he deigns to take up arms on their behalf. Hence we ought to conclude, that all the threatenings which are found in any part of Scripture tend to the consolation of believers.

When a festival is kept. He says that this "song" will be sacred, and compares it to a "holy solemnity," in order to excite believers to thankfulness, and to shew that their joy should be directed to God; for it is not enough to rejoice, unless our joy look straight towards God, and unless we keep him alone always in our view; otherwise our joy will be fruitless and irreligious, and will not promote our salvation, or be acceptable to God. He calls it "a song *of the night*," because the Jews began the day at sunset, and, as soon as the evening came, celebrated the festival.

To the mountain. He explains more fully of what nature this joy shall be. They shall not dance, as irreligious men do, but shall raise and fix their eyes on God, whom they acknowledge to be the author of every blessing. By "the mountain" he means the temple which was built "on the mountain." He calls God *The Mighty One of Israel*, because it was by his assistance that they had been redeemed and preserved; and hence he reminds them that in future they will not be safe in any other way than by placing their hope in God alone. And indeed, when we cherish any conviction of our own strength, we rob God of this title, which is truly and sincerely bestowed on him by none but the lowly and humble, who have laid aside all confidence in their own strength.

30. *And Jehovah shall cause to be heard.* He confirms what he formerly said about the judgment of God on the Assyrians, and he describes it figuratively, as is very customary both with himself and with the other prophets. When God delays, and does not immediately punish the wicked, we think that he is either asleep or not powerful, and are distracted by doubt and uncertainty. And if we behold some of his judgments, yet such is our natural stupidity, or rather our ingratitude, that we keep before us those masks

which hinder us from perceiving the glory of God; for we ascribe it to fortune, or to the plans and contrivances and strength of men, and never, unless when we are compelled, acknowledge that we owe anything to God.

The power of his voice. [580] For the reasons now stated, the Prophet was not satisfied with having once foretold the vengeance of God against the Assyrians; but he likewise describes it in a lively manner, and repeats it with great earnestness. He declares that the destruction shall be such that men will be constrained to hear "the voice of God;" that is, to acknowledge his judgment, and to confess that this calamity hath proceeded from him, as if he had spoken openly. The matter, therefore, may be thus summed up. The event will be so manifest, that there shall be no one who does not understand that this calamity proceeded from "the mouth," that is, from the decree of God.

And the descent of his arm shall he cause to be seen. He begins with "the voice of God," that we may know that he directs by his authority everything that is done on the earth. Yet at the same time he applauds the power of his doctrine, on which it was necessary that his people should rely, in order that the effect might be openly displayed at the proper time. But as the work quickly follows the decree and "voice of God," he adds "the descent of his arm." These two things ought always to be joined together; for we ought not to imagine that God is like men, or that he suddenly undertakes anything, and then leaves it defective or incomplete. Whatever he has decreed he likewise executes, and his hand can never be separated from his mouth. On the other hand, he executes nothing at random, but all must have been previously decreed, so that all the punishments which he inflicts are so many displays of righteous judgment.

With deluge and hailstone. That vengeance is illustrated, in the conclusion of the verse, by figures, in order that its terrific character may lead the Jews more cheerfully to raise their faith on high; for it was highly consolatory to them to know that, though they were heavily afflicted, a far more dreadful judgment would soon fall on their enemies. And yet we must not dream, as the Rabbins do, that the Assyrians were struck by a thunderbolt, for their conjecture is excessively frivolous. On the contrary, the Prophet follows the ordinary custom, and, by means of these comparisons, describes the judgment of God, which our prodigious dulness makes us excessively slow to comprehend. Conflagrations, thunderbolts, inundations, and deluges, are somewhat unusual and monstrous events, and thus produce a stronger impression on our own minds. For this reason, the prophets draw a comparison from them, that men may perceive the dreadful and avenging hand of God against the wicked.

31. *Surely by the voice of Jehovah.* He added this for two reasons; first, to shew why the Assyrian must be bruised; for, since he was cruel and savage

[580] "His glorious voice. (Heb. The glory of his voice.)" — Eng. Ver. "The majesty of his voice." — Stock

to others, it is proper that

"the same measure which he meted should be measured to him again." (Matthew 7:2.)

This is the ordinary judgment of God against tyrants, as the Prophet says in a subsequent passage of this book,

"Woe to thee that spoilest, for thou shalt be spoiled." (Isaiah 33:1.)

The second reason is, because the power of the Assyrian king appeared to be so great that he could not fall. Although, therefore, he was fortified on every hand, not only to defend himself, but also to attack others, yet the Prophet says, that "by the voice of God" alone he shall be bruised. Hence we learn how groundless is the confidence of wicked men, who rely on their garrisons and arms, and presumptuously despise God, as if they had not been liable to his judgment. But in order to destroy them, the Lord will have no need of any other arms than his own "voice;" for by the slightest expression of his will he will lay them low. Nor can it be doubted that the Prophet intends to withdraw the minds of believers from earthly means, that they may not inquire how it shall be done, but may be satisfied with the bare promise of God, who is fully able to execute his word as soon as it has gone forth from him.

32. *And there shall be in every passage.* He means that the Assyrians will in vain try every method of escaping from the hand of God; for wherever they go, whether they attempt to go forward or to turn back, the hand of God shall pursue them. As to the phrase, *fastened staff*, [581] I readily adopt the opinion of those who think that the metaphor is taken from those on whom have been inflicted strokes so heavy, that the marks of the instrument of punishment remain, as if a rod or staff were "fastened" in the wound. It will perhaps be thought preferable to interpret it to mean, that the wound is "fastened" [582] on the Assyrian, as a foundation is fixed in the earth; for what is not "fastened" may be moved out of its place and carried away. But he shews that that wound is so deeply fixed that it cannot be shaken off or removed. In like manner, the weight of God's wrath lies on the reprobate, and holds them weighed down to the end. To shew that there is no hope of being able to derive advantage from a change of place, he says *everywhere*, thus declaring that there shall be no retreat. The clause ought to be thus arranged, "wherever the staff shall pass, there it will stick firmly."

With tabrets and harps. He means that the issue of the battle will not be

[581] Calvin's phrase, baculus fundatas, is followed by almost all the Latin interpreters, including Vitringa, and appears to have suggested the rendering, grounded staff, which is given in our common version, and has been followed by other translators. Almost all the commentators treat מוסדה (mūsādāh) as the participle Hophal of יסד (yāsād); but there are strong reasons for viewing it as an abstract noun, for Rosenmüller has justly remarked that מטה (măttēh,) with Tzere instead of Segol, is in the construct state. Availing himself, as it would seem, of this suggestion, Professor Alexander very felicitously renders it ``the rod of doom.'' ``The common version, grounded staff,'' says he, ``is almost unintelligible. It is now very generally agreed that מוסדה (mūsādāh) denotes the divine determination or decree, and that the whole phrase means the rod appointed by him, or, to put it in a form at once exact and poetical, the rod of destiny or doom.'' Diodati's Italian version gives ``Ed ogni passagio della verga ferma,'' ``and every passage of the firm staff.'' --- Ed

[582] "Que la playe a esté attachee au dos de l'Assyrien;" — "That the wound has been fastened to the back of the Assyrian."

doubtful, as when the combatants meet on equal terms; for he says that the victory will be certain; because, as soon as God determines to go forth to fight, he already holds the victory in his hand. "Tabrets and harps," hands spread out and lifted up, are expressive of the joy of conquerors, when they shout aloud and chant the song of victory.

Shall fight against her. The feminine pronoun בה (*bāhh*) is viewed by some commentators as referring to the army; but the Prophet undoubtedly intended to express something higher, namely, the head of the army, that is, Babylon, as contrasted with Jerusalem, which also he formerly denoted by a similar pronoun.

From these statements we ought to infer, that the wicked shall at length be destroyed, though they appear to have many means of escape; for wherever they turn, whatever road they take, the "staff" of the Lord shall pursue them, and shall ever remain "fastened" to their back; they shall never escape his hand or get quit of their wounds. We, too, are chastened by the hand of God, but the wounds do not always last; our pains are soothed and abated, and "our grief is turned into joy." (John 16:20.) Besides, God carries on war against the reprobate in such a manner that they cannot resist him, or gain anything by their attempts. He joins battle with them, indeed, but it is as a conqueror; he even allows them to obtain some advantages, but represses their insolence whenever he thinks proper. If, therefore, we fight under his banner, let us entertain no doubt of obtaining the victory; for, when we have him as our leader, we shall be safe from all danger, and shall undoubtedly come off conquerors.

33. *For Tophet is ordained.* The Prophet goes on to threaten the vengeance of God, and says that not only a temporary calamity, but also everlasting destruction awaits the wicked; for hell is prepared for them, and not merely for persons of ordinary rank, but likewise for the king himself and the nobles. By "Tophet" he unquestionably means Hell; not that we must fancy to ourselves some place in which the wicked are shut up, as in a prison, after their death, in order to endure the torments which they deserve; but it denotes their miserable condition and excruciating torments. In the book of Kings, it denotes that place where the Jews sacrificed their children to the idol Moloch. (2 Kings 23:10.) It is also mentioned by Jeremiah, (Jeremiah 19:6;) and that place was destroyed and profaned by Josiah on account of the detestable superstition committed in it. (2 Kings 23:10.) The prophets, I have no doubt, intended to give the name of this place to the punishments and torments of the wicked, in order that the bare mention of it might excite horror in godly persons, and that idolatry might be universally regarded with greater abhorrence. The word "Gehenna" [583] has the same etymology; for "the Valley of Hinnom" was a name given to Hell (Gehenna) on account of the abominable sacrilege practiced in it.

[583] גיא הנום, (gēhīnnōm,) ``the Valley of Hinnom.''

Since yesterday. [584] When we see that all goes well with the wicked, and that they have everything to their wish, we think that they will pass unpunished. For this reason the Prophet, on the contrary, exclaims: "Since yesterday, that is, of old since the beginning of the world, the Lord hath determined what punishments he shall inflict on them." Though this decree is still hidden from us, yet it must be certain, and cannot fail. Let us not, therefore, judge of the lot of the wicked according to outward appearances; let us wait for the Lord, who in due time will execute his righteous judgment. Yet let us not be rash, or think that God hath forgotten to take vengeance; for he had determined what he should do before it could enter into our mind; nor can we so speedily desire the destruction of the wicked as not to have our thoughts and desires anticipated long before by the Lord, for from the beginning he determined to inflict on them punishments and torments. Some think that it is a parallel passage to that of the Apostle, "Christ yesterday, to-day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8.) But I consider "yesterday" to be here used simply as contrasted with our thoughts, that we may not think that we possess so much wisdom as to be capable of anticipating God: for there is nothing sudden in his purposes, but all were long ago settled and determined by him. He speaks of the punishments of the life to come, as I have already said, that is, of the punishments which the wicked shall endure, in addition to the distresses which they suffer in this life. On this subject it is strange that the Sadducees (Matthew 22:23; Acts 23:8) were so dull and stupid as to confine rewards and punishments within the limits of this life, as if the judgment of God did not extend beyond this world; for the modes of expression which immediately follow would not apply to temporal punishments, and the very name "Tophet," taken metaphorically, could denote nothing else than God's highest curse.

Yea, for the king it is prepared. He shews that not even "kings," who are supposed to be entitled, on account of their majesty and power, to enjoy some peculiar privilege, are exempted from this punishment. Their greatness dazzles the eyes of men, but will yield them no defense, so as to prevent the Lord from punishing them as they deserve.

He says that the slaughter of them will be *in a deep place,* that we may know that they cannot escape or be rescued from it; and he calls hell *broad*, that we may know that however numerous they may be, though they all conspire together, they shall likewise perish; for the Lord will not be exhausted by punishing, and he will have a place so large as to contain all his enemies.

The pile of it is fire. He speaks metaphorically concerning the destruction of the reprobate, which otherwise we cannot sufficiently comprehend, in the same manner as we do not understand the blessed and immortal life, unless it be shadowed out by some figures adapted to our capacity. Hence it is evident how foolish and absurd the sophists are, who enter into subtle arguments about the nature and quality of that fire, and torture themselves by giving

[584] "Of old." — Eng. Ver.

various explanations of it. Such gross imaginations must be banished, since we know that the Prophet speaks figuratively; and in another passage (Isaiah 66:24) we shall see that “fire” and the “worm” are joined together.

Chapter 31

CHAPTER 31

Isaiah 31:1-9

1. Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong: but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!

1. Væ descendentibus in Ægyptum ad auxilium, et qui equis innituntur; et qui curribus confidunt, quia multi sunt; et equitibus, quia prævalidi; et non respexerunt ad Sanctum Israel, nec Iehovam inquisierunt.

2. Yet he is also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of evil-doers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.

2. Atqui ipse quoque sapiens est. Itaque adducet malum, nec verba sua faciet irrita; insurgent, inquam, contra domum malignorum, et contra auxilium opificum vanitatis.

3. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they shall fail together.

3. Et certe Ægyptius homo est, non Deus; et equi eorum caro, et non spiritus. Itaque simulac extenderit Iehova manum suam, ruet auxiliator, et cadet adjutus, omnesque simul deficient.

4. For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

4. Quoniam sic dixit Iehova ad me: Ut leo rugit et catulus leonis ad

prædam suam, contra quem si convocetur cœtus pastorum, a clamore eorum non commovebitur, neque ob eorum tumultum humiliabitur; sic descendet Iehova exercituum ad præliandum pro monte Sion, et pro colle ejus.

5. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it

5. Sicut aves quæ volant, ita proteget Iehova exercituum Ierusalem; protegens liberabit, transiliens servabit.

6. Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.

6. Revertimini ut profundam fecistis defectionem, filii Israel.

7. For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.

7. Quoniam in die illa abjicit homo idola argenti sui, et idola auri sui, quæ fecerunt vobis manus vestræ peccatum.

8. Then shall the Assyrians fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.

8. Tum cadet Assur per gladium, non viri; et gladius non hominis devorabit eum; et fuga sibi consulet a facie gladii, et juvens ejus in liquefactionem erunt.

9. And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

9. In arcem suam præ formidine transibit, et pavebunt Principes ejus a vexillo, dicit Iehova, cui ignis est (vel, qui ignis illi est) in Sion, et cui fornax in Ierusalem.

1. *Woe to them that go down to Egypt.* He again returns to the subject which he had handled at the beginning of the former chapter; for he still cries loudly against the Jews, whose ordinary custom it was, in seasons of danger, to resort, not to the Lord, but to the Egyptians. We have formerly explained why this was so highly displeasing to God. To state the matter briefly, there are two reasons why the Prophet reproves this crime so severely. The first is, because it is impossible for us to place confidence for our salvation in creatures, and at the same time in God; for our eyes must be withdrawn from him as soon as they are directed to them. The second reason is, God had expressly forbidden them to enter into alliance with the Egyptians. (Deuteronomy 17:16.) To sinful confidence was added rebelliousness, as if they had resolved to provide for their safety by despising God, and by disobeying his will.

We must therefore look at the source of this evil, if we wish to understand fully the Prophet's meaning. There was also a peculiar reason, as we have formerly remarked, why the Lord wished the Jews to have no intercourse with the Egyptians. It was, lest that wicked alliance should obliterate the remembrance of the redemption from Egypt, and lest they should be cor-

rupted by the superstitions and sinful idolatry of the Egyptians. Yet these arguments were regarded by them as of no weight; and, though God had forbidden it, this did not hinder them from continually applying to them for assistance, and imagining that their assistance was a shield which defended them against the arm of God. Consequently, there are good reasons why the Prophet exclaims so earnestly against such madness. Even on the ground that God had forbidden it, their "going down into Egypt" deserved to be severely blamed; but it was still more intolerably criminal, that by false confidence they bestowed on mortal men the glory which was due to God. In order to make it still more clear that in this manner they defraud God of his right, he not only accuses them of having relied on the Egyptians, but likewise brings a charge against them, on the other hand, that

They have not looked to the Holy One of Israel. Here appears more clearly the reason why that treachery of the Jews is so sharply reproved by Isaiah; for in other respects God does not disapprove of our using lawful remedies, just as we eat bread and other kinds of food which were intended for our use. Thus if any person, placed in danger, employ means which were not forbidden, but which are customary and lawful, provided that he do not at all deny the power of God, he certainly ought not to be blamed; but if we are so strongly attached to outward means, that we do not at the same time seek God, and if, through distrust of his promises, we resort to unlawful methods, this is worthy of condemnation and abhorrence.

The word *look* is frequently employed in Scripture to denote this confidence; for we commonly turn our eyes towards that quarter from which we expect assistance. In a word, we are here taught that we ought to place our trust for salvation in none other than in God alone, that, relying on his promises, we may boldly ask from him whatever is desirable. He undoubtedly permits us to use all things which he intended for our use, but in such a manner that our minds must be entirely fixed on him.

When he calls God "the Holy One of Israel," he presents in a striking light the wickedness and ingratitude of the people, who, after having been taken under God's protection and guardianship, despised such a protector and guardian of their salvation, and ran eagerly after their own lusts. By immediately adding, *neither have they sought Jehovah,* he shews that neither the power, nor the goodness, nor the fatherly kindness of God, could keep them in the discharge of their duty. In the present day, since he invites us not less kindly to come to him, we offer a grievous insult to him if we look to any other, and do not resolve to trust in him alone; and everything that shall turn away and withdraw our minds from God will be to us like "Egypt."

2. *Yet he also is wise.* By calling God "wise," he does not merely bestow on him the honor of an attribute which always belongs to him, but censures the craftiness of those whom he saw to be too much delighted with their own wisdom. He said a little before, (Isaiah 29:15,) that they "dug caves for themselves," when they thought that, by hidden plans and secret con-

trivances, they avoided and deceived the eyes of God. He now pours witty ridicule on this madness, by affirming that, on the other hand, wisdom belongs also to God; indirectly bringing against them the charge of believing that they could shut God's mouth as not knowing their affairs. As if he had said, "What shall become of your wisdom?" Will the effect of it be that God shall cease to be "wise?" On the contrary, by reproving your vanity, he will give practical demonstration that "he taketh the wise in their own craftiness." (Job 5:13;1 Corinthians 3:19.)

We may draw from this a general doctrine, that they who shelter themselves under craftiness and secret contrivances, gain nothing but to provoke still more the wrath of God. A bad conscience always flees from the judgment of God, and seeks lurking-places to conceal itself. Wicked men contrive various methods of guarding and fortifying themselves against God, and think that they are wise and circumspect, even though they be covered only with empty masks; while others, blinded by their elevated rank, despise God and his threatenings. Thus, by declaring that "God is also wise," the Prophet wounds them painfully and sharply, that they may not lay claim to so great craftiness as to be capable of imposing on God by their delusions.

He will arise against the house of the evil-doers. As they did not deserve that he should reason with them, he threatens that they shall feel that God has his arguments at his command, for ensnaring transgressors. First, they did not think that God has sufficient foresight, because he did not, according to the ordinary practice of the world, provide for their safety amidst so great dangers, and because they considered all threatenings to be empty bugbears, as if they had it in their power by some means to guard against them. Hence arises their eagerness to make every exertion, and their hardihood to plot contrivances. He therefore threatens that God will take revenge on so gross an insult, and that he has at his command the means of executing what he has promised; and that no schemes, inventions, or craftiness can overthrow the word of God.

Of the workers of vanity. [585] He gives them this appellation, because they wished to fortify themselves against the hand of God by a useless defense; that is, by the unlawful aid of the Egyptians. Formerly, it might be thought that he silently admitted their claim to the appellation of "wise men," by contrasting them with the wisdom of God; but now he scatters the smoke, and openly displays their shame and disgrace. This teaches us that there is nothing better than to renounce our own judgment, and to submit entirely to God; because all that earnest caution by which wicked men torture themselves has no solidity, but, on the contrary, as if on purpose, provokes the wrath of God by the deceitful contrivances of the flesh.

3. *And surely the Egyptian is a man, and not God.* It may be thought that Isaiah here brings forward nothing but what is common and beyond all doubt; for who ever imagined that the Egyptians were not "men," and

[585] "Of them that work iniquity." — Eng. Ver.

must be put in the place of "God?" There is indeed no debate on this point, and it is openly acknowledged; but when it is found necessary to reduce it to practice, men are altogether dull of apprehension, or remain uncertain about that which they formerly appeared to know and firmly to believe. They exalt themselves as highly, and claim as much for themselves, as if they did not believe that they are men, and did not think that they ought to obey God. This is the reason why Scripture so frequently warns

"not to trust in men, than whom nothing can be more vain." (Psalm 146:3.)

"Cursed is he who trusteth in man, and relieth on an arm of flesh." (Jeremiah 17:5.)

Yet we see both princes and men of ordinary rank contrive and resolve in such a manner as if they could establish for a hundred years all that they contrived, and could subject heaven, sea, and earth, and could regulate and dispose everything according to their will. When we perceive in men such pride and arrogance, we need not wonder that the Prophet exclaims that "the Egyptians are men, and not God;" for the Jews ascribed to them what ought to be ascribed to God, the defense and preservation of the Church, which God claims for himself alone, and does not allow to be given to another. Isaiah therefore indirectly censures that contempt of God and wicked confidence by which they are swelled with pride.

Here we see how great a difference there is between God and men; for men have no power in themselves but what God has granted to them. If we were reasoning about the nature and excellence of man, we might bring forward the singular gifts which he has received from God; but when he is contrasted with God, he must be reduced to nothing; for nothing can be ascribed to man without taking it from God. And this is the reason why we cannot agree with the Papists, when we argue about the cause of salvation, freewill, the value of works, and merits; for since on this subject God is contrasted with man, we must take from God whatever is attributed to man. But they make a division between man and God, so as to assign one part to God, and another part to man; while we say, that the whole and undivided cause of salvation must be ascribed to God, and that no part of it can be attributed to another without detestable sacrilege. In a word, let us learn that in such a contrast nothing worthy of praise can be left for man.

And their horses are flesh and not spirit. By the word flesh he means weakness and frailty; for what is there in "flesh" but corruption? He speaks of "horses," but to the Egyptians also belongs a weakness of the same or of a kindred nature; as if he had said that they, and all their forces, have nothing that is solid or permanent. Although the Egyptians had a soul as well as a body, yet, so far as they were creatures, and dwelt in a frail tabernacle, they must hold an inferior rank; as if he had said, that they do not possess heavenly or spiritual power; as it is said also in the Psalm,

"Do not trust in princes; for their breath shall go out, and they shall

return to their earth."
(Psalm 146:3.)

So far as relates to "horses," the word "flesh" applies to them with greater propriety; but it is not wonderful that men are sent to learn from rottenness how frail they are.

As soon as Jehovah shall stretch out his arm. From this threatening we may draw a universal doctrine, that this wickedness shall not pass unpunished; for the Lord will not suffer men with impunity to give to creatures the honor due to him, or to rely on the assistance of men with that confidence which ought to be placed on him alone. He therefore threatens those who shall yield assistance and give occasion to false confidence, as well as those who shall make use of their assistance and rely on it for their safety. And if the Lord cannot endure this wicked confidence, where nothing more than temporal safety is concerned, how much less will he endure those who, in order to obtain eternal salvation, contrive various aids according to their own fancy, and thus elevate the power of men, so as to ascribe to it the place and authority of God.

4. *For thus hath Jehovah said to me.* The Prophet adds this verse, that it may not be thought that the Lord leaves us destitute of necessary means; for if, while he forbids us to place our confidence in creatures, he did not promise us any assistance, we might complain that he gave ground for despair, and not for consolation; as we saw, a little before, that men are more careful and attentive than they ought to be, because they think that they will be deficient in thoughtfulness, if they rest satisfied with God alone, and abstain from forbidden means. He therefore takes away every excuse, when he promises that he will be a faithful guardian to us; for what pretense can be left, if we despise the salvation which he offers to us of his own accord? It is therefore as if he had said, "The Lord assists, and will assist; he forbids you to ask assistance from the Egyptians." By comparing himself to *a lion*, a very powerful animal and keenly bent on prey, he employs a very appropriate comparison, to shew that he is in the highest degree both able and willing to defend us.

In the second part of the comparison, the Prophet dwells largely on the great eagerness with which the Lord takes hold of his people, keeps them near himself, preserves them from being carried off, and defends them against all dangers; while he also points out that strength and power which no arms and no forces can resist. Now, it is impossible that comparisons should hold on every point, nor is it necessary, but they ought to be suitable to the subject which is handled. Since therefore we know that the Lord loves us so much and takes such care of us, must we not be worse than mad if we despise him, and seek other aids, which will not only be useless but destructive to us?

5. *As birds that fly.* This is the second comparison, by which the Prophet shews how great care the Lord takes of us, and how earnestly he is bent on making us happy. It is taken from *birds*, which are prompted by astonish-

ing eagerness to preserve their young; for they almost kill themselves with hunger, and shrink from no danger, that they may defend and preserve their young. Moses makes use of the same comparison when, reproaching the people for their ingratitude, he compares the Lord to an eagle

"laying her nest, spreading her wings, and fluttering over her young." (Deuteronomy 32:11.)

Christ also remonstrates with Jerusalem,

"How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not!"
(Matthew 23:37.)

The sum of this passage is, that the Lord will be sufficiently powerful to defend his people, for whom he has a special love and a peculiar care. What Moses relates that God did, Isaiah promises that he will always do; for he will never forsake those whom he has once received into his favor. Lest any one therefore should imagine that this statement related only to the men of a single age, he expressly declares that God will spread his wings to defend Jerusalem. Nor is it unnecessarily that he mentions not only *Mount Zion* but *its hill*; for on that "hill" was built the temple in which God desired that men should call upon him. Wherever therefore the worship of God is pure, let us know that salvation will be certain; for men cannot call upon him in vain.

"Let us be his people, and, on the other hand, he will be our God." (Leviticus 26:12.)

6. *Return.* This verse is explained in various ways; for the Hebrew commentators explain it thus, "Return to the Lord, for you have multiplied revolts." But, in my opinion, the meaning is more simple: "Return according as you have made a deep revolt; [586] for לאשר (*lăăshĕr*) is, I think, employed in the same sense as כאשר (*kăăshĕr*), "according as." [587] He means that the aggravated nature of their wickedness does not shut the door against them from returning to God, if they repent; that, although they have been sunk into the deepest wickedness, still God will pardon them. Yet, at the same time, he makes use of this spur to stimulate them to earnest grief and hatred of their sins, that they may not carelessly and lightly, as frequently happens, aim at a half repentance. He therefore bids them consider attentively with what fearful destruction they have cast themselves down to hell, that they

[586] "Return to him against whom you have entertained deep thoughts; in the same manner as you revolted, and have still revolted, from him, return now to him." — Jarchi. Among the commentators who belonged to the Hebrew nation, or wrote in the Hebrew language, Jarchi was probably held, on the ground of the first part of his paraphrase, to support that view which our Author condemns; but the second part of it, beginning with "in the same manner as" approaches very closely to the Reformer's own words. — Ed

[587] Piscator and others construe לאשר (lăăshĕr) as equivalent to אליו, ממנו אשר (ēlāiv ăshĕr mĭmmĕnnū,) ``to him from whom.'' Vitringa does not reject this exposition, which he acknowledges to be supported by an analogous use of ,מאשר (mēăshĕr,) in Ruth 2:9; but he pronounces the rendering, ``according as.'' to be more elegant and probably more correct. Modern critics, however, approve of the meaning given in our common version. ``The syntax may be solved either by supposing `to him' to be understood, and giving לאשר (lăăshĕr) the sense of `with respect to whom,' or by assuming that, as both these ideas could be expressed by this one phrase, it was put but once in order to avoid the tautology.'' --- Alexander. The other mode of resolving the syntax, by bringing out the sense, ``to him from whom,'' appears to adhere more closely to the usage of the Hebrew language. --- Ed

may abhor themselves on account of their aggravated transgressions.

It ought first to be observed, that the Prophet does not lessen the guilt of the people. They who need to be brought back to the Lord must first be made to have a deep and painful conviction of their guilt; for they who flatter themselves in their iniquities are very far from obtaining pardon, and therefore there is nothing better than to lay open the alarming nature of the disease, when a remedy must be applied. Yet, that their hearts may not be led to despair, they must be encouraged and comforted by holding out to them the mercy of God; for Satan aims at nothing else than to cut us off from all hope of pardon. Accordingly, Isaiah declares that, although by their wickedness they have sunk down to hell, God is ready to forgive; for not in vain does the Lord invite us to repentance, but he likewise offers pardon. Hence also, to such exhortations the Scripture always adds promises of grace, that, whenever we are called to repentance, we may know that the hope of pardon is also held out to us.

As you have made a deep revolt. Instead of this rendering, the word עמק, (*gnāmăk*,) which signifies to be deep, is explained by some as meaning to multiply and the metaphor is supposed to be borrowed from heaps, "As you have heaped up your sins, so return now." But I prefer the former exposition. סרה (*sārāh*) signifies "revolt." Others explain it to mean here "depravity," but the word "revolt" is more appropriate. The Prophet therefore invites them to return to the Lord. [588]

O children of Israel. In calling them by this name, he does not intend to shew them respect, but reproaches them for their ingratitude; for they were degenerate sons [589] who had revolted from the faith and obedience of their fathers, and therefore this title contains an indirect reproach. Yet he means that the Lord had not forgotten the covenant which he made with their fathers, though they had departed widely from him by their treachery; for he declares, that he will acknowledge them to be "the children of Israel," and will fulfill all that he promised to Abraham and the other patriarchs, if they return to him with all their heart.

7. *For in that day.* He continues the subject which he began in the former verse. Yet there is this difference, that in the former verse he exhorted to repentance, but now he points out the fruits of repentance, which, we know, is the customary way of teaching in Scripture; for, since repentance is concealed within us, and has its root in the heart, it must be made known by the practical result, and by works, as "a tree shews by its fruits" (Matthew 7:17) its inherent goodness; and therefore he points out repentance by works which are the fruit of it. [590]

Shall cast away the idols. When he speaks of "idols" only, it is by a

[588] העמיקו סרה (hĕgnĕmīkūsārāh) literally signifies, ``they have deepened revolt;'' and Professor Alexander justly remarks that the substitution of the second person for the third, in the ancient versions, and in Barnes, (ye have revolted), is wholly arbitrary. --- Ed

[589] "Enfans rebelles;" — "Rebellious children."

[590] "Et pourtant il marque la repentance par les fruits;" — "And therefore he points out repentance by the fruits."

figure of speech frequently employed in Scripture, in which a part is taken for the whole; for the Prophet undoubtedly intended to speak of the whole of man's conversion, but, as it would have been tedious to enumerate all the kinds, under one of them he includes all the rest. Now, the beginning of repentance is the change of the heart; and next we must come to outward fruits, that is, to works. Above all, we must observe the object which the Prophet had in view in discoursing about repentance. It was because the Lord had promised salvation near at hand; and, that they might be capable of it, he exhorts them to repentance. Hence it ought to be observed that, when we persevere in being wicked, we resist God by our wickedness, and thus restrain his grace from assisting us; and, therefore, that the way may be open for God's assistance, he demands that we shall repent.

He calls them *The idols of his silver and the idols of his gold*, because, as we have formerly seen, [591] they who sincerely repent are affected by deep grief for their sin, so that the traces of their superstitions, which are stamped with the highest dishonor of God, cannot be beheld by them without the greatest horror. On this account they abhor them, and do not dread the loss of "gold or silver," to testify their conversion and their faith; for he who has sincerely renounced superstitions does not spare any expense in order to possess the pure worship of God. This is what the Prophet intended to express by calling them "gold and silver" rather than wood and stone. However excellent anything may be, the loss of it is a happy event when we are cleansed from such base and abominable pollutions. Those who retain them, though they profess to be Christians, shew that they are still involved in the remains of superstition; and hence it is evident that their hearts are not truly or completely reformed. In this matter we must listen to none of the excuses which we frequently hear from the lips of hypocrites, who cannot absolutely renounce idolatry, "What could I do? How could I live? I am aware that this revenue, this 'gold,' is detestable in the sight of God, because it arises from idolatry; but in some way or other my life must be supported." Away with such fooleries! say I; for where the conversion of the heart is real, that which cannot be retained without insulting or dishonoring God is instantly thrown away.

Which your own hands have made. The Prophet urges them to make a more full acknowledgment of their sin; for, when men are accused, they generally throw the blame on some other person, and do not willingly allow it to fall on themselves, or acknowledge that it is chargeable upon them; in like manner as the common people willingly accuse the priests, but no man is willing to acknowledge his own guilt. The Prophet therefore bids them look to "their own hands," that they may know that they have committed so great a crime. He reminds them, at the same time, how grossly they have been deceived by their unbelief in making gods to themselves; and hence we ought to conclude that God rejects everything that is of our contrivance,

[591] See Commentary on Isaiah, vol. 1 p. 118

and that he cannot accept as good that worship which has originated with ourselves.

I consider חאט, (*chēt*,) *sin*, to be a noun; [592] as if he had said, "Whenever you behold idols, behold your guilt; acknowledge the proofs of your treachery and revolt; and if you are truly converted to God, shew it practically, that is, by throwing away idols and bidding adieu to superstitions; for this is the true fruit of conversion."

8. *Then the Assyrian.* The copulative ו (*vau*) is better translated as an adverb of time: "*Then* the Assyrian shall fall down;" that is, "When you shall have turned to the Lord, and when your life shall testify a sincere repentance, *then* the enemy shall fall down;" for, as the Lord raised up the Assyrian to punish the Jews for their crimes, and especially for idolatry, so he promises that the Assyrians shall be brought down, when they shall have ceased to sin and worship idols. Hence he informs us, that our obstinacy is the reason why the Lord adds evil to evil, and doubles his strokes, and pursues us more and more; for we continually supply fresh materials to inflame his vengeance against us more and more. If therefore we wish that God's chastisements should be less severe, if we wish that the enemies should fall to the ground and perish, let us endeavor to be reconciled to him by repentance; for he will speedily put an end to the chastisement, and will take away from enemies strength and power to injure us.

By the sword not of a man. [593] The Prophet means that the deliverance of the Church is God's own work, that the Jews may know that, although no earthly power is visible, God's secret power is sufficient to deliver them. If therefore enemies are subdued, if their rage is restrained, let us know that it proceedeth from the Lord. By various methods, indeed, he represses the force and violence of wicked men, but by his own hand alone he delivers his Church; for, while the Lord makes use of human means, he preserves his own people miraculously and by extraordinary methods, which may be seen to have happened since the beginning of the world, and which we may even now behold, if we are not blind. And yet this does not hinder the Lord from employing his servants to deliver the Church; but he employs them in such a manner that his own hand is peculiarly and illustriously displayed in it.

We know that this prediction of Isaiah was fulfilled when the Assyrian army was destroyed, and Sennacherib was put to flight; for "not by the arm of man" was he destroyed, but the Lord displayed his power, that it might be known that he alone is the deliverer of his Church. (2 Kings 19:35; Isaiah 37:36.) By delivering Jerusalem at that time from the siege, God thus exhibited, as in a picture, spiritual redemption. He alone, therefore,

[592] That is, he does not follow the ancient versions, by viewing it as an adjective, qualifying the word "hands," — "your sinful hands." — Ed

[593] איש לא (lōīsh,) not of a man, that is, of one who is totally different from a man. The word לא (lō) often unites with a substantive, so as to form one word, which shall bear a quite different and even opposite meaning; as דרך לא תהו (tōhūlōdĕrĕch `desolation not-a-way,' that is, `an impassable way.' Psalm 107:40; and לו, שם לא (lōshēm lō,) `he shall have not-a-name,' that is, `he shall have public disgrace.' (Job 18:17.)" --- Rosenmüller. ``An Hebrew idiom; of one far different from a man, viz., an angel.'' --- Stock

will destroy our spiritual enemies. In vain shall we resort to other aids or remedies, or rely on our own strength, which is nothing; but let us have the direction and assistance of God, and we shall come off victorious.

And his young men shall melt away. [594] He means that the power of the Lord displayed against the Assyrians will be so great that the hearts of young men, who in other circumstances are wont to be fierce, shall be altogether softened and melt like wax; for young men, having less experience than old men, are on that account more fierce and impetuous. God will easily restrain such fierceness, when he shall determine to deliver his people from the hands of their enemies. For this reason Isaiah has especially mentioned "young men;" as if he had said, "the very flower or strength."

9. *He shall pass to his stronghold for fear.* [595] He now speaks of Sennacherib himself, who, trembling, shall betake himself in base and shameful flight to his "stronghold" or fortress, Nineveh, as to his nest. (2 Kings 19:36.) The Prophet adds that "his princes," or military officers, whose duty it is to encourage the rest of the soldiers, will be so timid that they shall not venture to join the ranks or await the battle, but shall "flee away from the standard."

Saith Jehovah, who hath a fire in Zion. At length he declares that he is God's herald in making this proclamation, that the Jews may not, as they are accustomed to do, dispute or hesitate as to the accomplishment of it, or afterwards forget so great a blessing, and ascribe it to fortune. If we read, as some do, Whose fire is in Zion, the meaning will be, that God has abundance of fiery power to consume his enemies. But I think that the relative אשר (ă*shĕr*) is redundant, or that it should be rendered in the nominative case, "*Who* shall be to him a fire;" for God is justly called "a fire," in reference to the Assyrians, whom he will consume.

When the Prophet calls him "a fire," some consider it to refer to sacrifices; but such an interpretation appears to me to be feeble and unnatural. I have no doubt that he says either that "the Lord has a fire" to consume the Assyrian, or that "God himself is a fire," and that he thus makes an implied comparison of the Assyrian to straw or chaff. He says that this "fire" is kindled and kept alive "in Zion and Jerusalem," that is, in the midst of his people, in order to intimate that the persecution of the Church of God by wicked men shall not pass unpunished; for they shall one day feel that he is their Judge, and shall know by experience that he assists his people, who thought that they had been left without all assistance.

In a word, against wicked men, who have maintained unceasing hostility against the Church, vengeance is prepared; and the Lord will not only avenge himself, but will also avenge his people. Let us therefore enjoy this consolation; and though it may appear as if we were defenceless and exposed to every danger, yet let us be fully convinced that the Lord will be "a fire"

[594] "And his young men shall be discomfited. (Heb. for melting or tribute.)" — Eng. Ver.

[595] "And he shall pass over to his stronghold (or, his strength) for fear, (Heb. his rock shall pass away for fear." — Eng. Ver.

to our adversaries.

Chapter 32

CHAPTER 32

Isaiah 32:1-20

1. Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgement.

1. Ecce in justitia regnabit rex, et principes in judicio præerunt.

2. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

2. Et erit ille vir velut latibulum a vento, receptus ab imbre, rivi aquarum in terra arida, umbra magnæ rupis in terra laboriosa.

3. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.

3. Tunc non oblinentur oculi videntium, et aures audientium auscultabunt.

4. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.

4. Et cor stultorum intentum erit ad scientiam, et lingua balborum expedita erit ad loquendum diserte.

5. The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful.

5. Non vocabitur amplius sordidus liberalis, neque parcus dicetur largus.

6. For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry; and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

6. Quoniam sordidus loquetur sordes, et cor ejus machinabitur iniquitatem, ad designandam pravitatem, ut proferat subsannationem contra Iehovam, exinaniat animam famelicam, et potum sitienti subtrahat.

7. The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.

7. Avari arma sunt mala (vel, mensuræ sunt malæ) ipse pravitates excogitat, ut circumveniat simplices verbis mendacibus, et loquatur contra pauperem in judicio.

8. But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.

8. At liberalis liberalia agitabit, et liberaliter agendo progredietur.

9. Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.

9. Mulieres quitæ, surgite; audite vocem meam, filiæ confidentes; auscultate sermonem meum.

10. Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.

10. Dies super annum expavescetis, confidentes; quia deficiet vindemia, et collectio non veniet.

11. Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones; strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins.

11. Contremiscite, quietæ; trepidate, confidentes; spoliate, nudate, accingite lumbos.

12. They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.

12. Super ubera plangentes, super agros desideratos, super vitem frugiferam.

13. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:

13. Super terram populi mei ascendet spina et vepris; etiam super omnes domos lætitæ in urbe exultationis.

14. Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

14. Quoniam palatium desertum, strepitus urbis relictus, turris et propugnaculum redigentur in speluncas in perpetuum, ubi gaudeant onagri, et pascantur greges.

15. Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

15. Donec super nos effundatur Spiritus ex alto, et ponatur desertum in agrum cultum, et ager cultus instar sylvæ reputetur.

16. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

16. Et habitabit in deserto judicium, et justitia in agro culto sedebit.

17. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.

17. Et erit opus justitæ pax; effectus, inquam, justitæ, securitas et quies

in perpetuum.

18. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet restingplaces.

18. Et sedebit populus meus in tabernaculo pacis, et in mansionibus securis, et in refrigeriis quieis.

19. When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place.

19. Et grando in sylvam descensu divertet, et in loco humili considet civitas.

20. Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.

20. Beati vos qui seritis super omnes aquas, qui immittitis pedem bovis et asini.

1. *Behold, a King shall reign.* He means that God will still be gracious to his Church, so as to restore her entirely; and the best method of restoring her is, when good government is maintained, and when the whole administration of it is conducted with propriety, and with good order. This prediction undoubtedly relates to Hezekiah and his reign, under which the Church was reformed and restored to its former splendor; for formerly it was in a wretched and ruinous condition. Ahaz, who was a wicked and disgraceful hypocrite, had corrupted everything according to his own wicked dispositions, and had overturned the whole condition of civil government and of religion. (2 Kings 16:2, 3.) He therefore promises another king, namely, Hezekiah, whose power and righteousness shall restore the state of affairs which is thus wretched and desperate. In a word, he presents to us in this passage a lively picture of the prosperous condition of the Church; and as this cannot be attained without Christ, this description undoubtedly refers to Christ, of whom Hezekiah was a type, and whose kingdom he foreshadowed.

In righteousness and judgment. Here he follows the ordinary usage of Scripture, which employs those expressions to denote good government; for by righteousness is meant equity and good government, and by judgment is meant that part of equity which upholds good men, and defends them from the assaults of the wicked. It is undoubtedly true that the duty of a good prince embraces a wider extent than "righteousness and judgment;" for his great aim ought to be to defend the honor of God and religion. But the ordinary usage of Scripture is, to describe the whole observation of the law by the works of the second table; for, if we refrain from acts of injustice, if we aid, as far as lies in our power, those who are oppressed by others, and, in a word, if we maintain brotherly kindness, we give evidence of the fear of God, from which such fruits spring and grow. From a part, therefore, the Prophet has described the whole.

And princes shall rule. It is not without good reason that he likewise

mentions nobles; [596] for it would not be enough to be a good prince, if he were not supported by upright ministers and counselors. Frequently has the condition of the people, under good princes, been very bad; as we read of Nerva, [597] under whose reign every kind of conduct was tolerated, so that many persons were far less favourably situated under his reign than under Nero; for the carelessness and indolence of a single individual gave freedom of action to many wicked men. It is therefore necessary that a king shall have good governors, who shall supply the place of eyes and hands, and aid him in the righteous exercise of his authority. If this be not the case, a good king cannot advance a step without being more or less retarded by other men; and unless rulers move with a harmony resembling that which we find in musical instruments, the government of a state cannot be carried on with advantage.

On this subject, men ought to listen to the advice of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, to unite with him

"able men fearing God, men of truth, and hating covetousness, and to appoint such men to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." (Exodus 18:21.)

But at the present day, those who aid, or pander to their lusts, and who favor and flatter them, are promoted by kings to honors and high rank, which are bestowed on them as the just reward of their flattery or base servility. Nor ought we to wonder if we see, almost throughout the whole world, states thrown into confusion, ranks overturned, and all good government despised and set aside; for this is the just punishment of our iniquities, and we deserve to have such governors, since we do not allow God to rule over us. How shall this extraordinary kindness of God be enjoyed by men who are openly rebellious and profane, or by wicked hypocrites who cast God behind them, and cannot bear the yoke of Christ, through whom this prosperity and restoration of a declining Church is promised?

2. *And that man shall be.* How great is the importance of well-regulated government the Prophet shews plainly by these words, when he calls that king *a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the rain*; for mankind can never be so happy as when every one voluntarily abstains from every kind of violence and injustice, and when they conduct themselves peaceably and without restraint. Since, therefore, most men are urged and driven by their furious passions to acts of injustice, men would be embroiled in incessant

[596] In our Author's version, from which the heading of this paragraph is taken, he makes use of the word principes, which commonly means "rulers," but sometimes also (as in the phrases, "facile princeps, femina princeps,") denotes persons of high rank, or those who in any respect are highly distinguished. But here he employs the word proceres, "nobles;" and he does so evidently for the purpose of removing ambiguity, and of stating clearly that view which is contained in the conclusion of this sentence. — Ed.

[597] The singular mildness of the Roman Emperor Nerva, which made him personally beloved, was carried to such an excess as to impair the efficiency of his government, and compelled him to resign the throne to the able and excellent Trajan. On the other hand, Nero, whose name cannot be mentioned without awakening the remberance of his monstrous cruelty, held the reins with a firmer hand, and prevented the repetition of many disorders which had been committed under the reign of his amiable predecessor Nerva. — Ed

quarreling if a remedy were not provided in the laws and courts of justice; but as many rulers, by a tyrannical exercise of power, raise more troubles than they allay, it is not without good reason that the good king is honored by this peculiar commendation. If this was said with truth concerning Hezekiah, much more may it be said concerning Christ, in whom we have our best, or rather, our only refuge in those storms by which we must be tossed about as long as we dwell in this world. Whenever, therefore, we are scorched by oppressive heat, let us learn to retire under his shadow; whenever we are tossed about by tempests, and think that we are overwhelmed by the violence of the waves, let us learn to betake ourselves to him as our safest harbour; he will speedily bring every storm to a calm, and will completely restore what was ruined and decayed.

3. and **4.** *Then the eyes of them that see.* Hence we see more clearly that, while the Prophet describes the reign of Hezekiah, he intends to lead us farther; for here he discourses concerning the restoration of the Church, which indeed was shadowed out by Hezekiah, but has been actually fulfilled in Christ. We know that the Church is never in a healthy condition, unless she be internally ruled by righteous and wise governors. Now, this cannot be, unless Christ reign; and here, therefore, Christ and his reign are specially recommended to us. This promise is contrasted with the dreadful threatening which he had uttered in a former chapter, (Isaiah 29:10,) that he would blind the Jews; for here, on the other hand, he promises the true light, that they who were formerly blind may be enlightened, that "the deaf may begin to hear, that fools may understand, and that stammerers may speak."

He calls them *seeing* and *hearing* who ought to have seen and heard when the word of God was exhibited to them; but they chose to be blind and deaf, and turned away their thoughts and hearts from doctrine. The Lord promises that he will restore to these persons eyes, ears, a tongue, and understanding. Now, it is certain that nothing is here promised which does not proceed from the grace of God; for he does not merely declare what men will do, but what God himself will do in men. These are extraordinary gifts of God; as, on the contrary, when he blinds, when he takes away understanding and the right use of speech, when he suffers ignorance and barbarism to prevail, these are dreadful punishments by which he takes vengeance on men for their ingratitude and for their contempt of the word. He promises that, at length, in compassion towards his people, the Lord will restore what he had justly taken away from them; and it must have been through the kindness of Christ that a tongue to speak, a mind to understand, and ears to hear, are restored to us; for formerly we were dull of apprehension, and were struck with frightful stupidity.

Let us therefore know that out of Christ there is no spiritual life in the world, because here they are declared to be destitute of sight, hearing, sound understanding, and the proper use of speech,

"till they be united in one body, of which he is the head." [598] (Ephesians 4:15, 16.)

Hence it follows that, when the kingdom of Christ is overthrown, these blessings are also taken away. It ought also to be observed, that the blessings which are here recommended are above all others excellent and desirable; for riches, and possessions, and everything else in which men commonly judge the happiness of life to consist, ought to be reckoned of no value in comparison of these blessings. Amidst the abundance of all things we shall be miserable, unless the Lord restore those spiritual blessings of which the Prophet speaks in this passage; and therefore, when they are taken away, let us know that Christ also is at a distance from us, and that we are strangers to him, seeing that it is from him alone, as Paul informs us, that all spiritual blessings flow. (Ephesians 1:3.) When we see that those blessings which had been taken away for a long period are now restored to us, let us be ashamed of our ingratitude in not rendering to Christ that glory which was due to him, and in not employing the understanding which he gave to us in spreading his kingdom and promoting his worship; for we plainly shew that he has no dominion over us.

And the heart of fools. [599] As fools are commonly hasty and rash, so the Hebrew writers take the word *haste* [600] as denoting *folly*; for wise men are usually cautious.

5. *No longer shall the base person be called.* The Prophet means that everything will be restored to good order, so that vices will not, as formerly, be reckoned virtues; for, when the public government is wicked, covetous persons are in power, and are honored and esteemed, because men judge of virtue by wealth and power; a poor man is everywhere despised, though he be truly upright and bountiful to the full extent of his ability; and, in a word, in such a state of things there is nothing but disorder and confusion. But good government quickly detects such pretences and masks; for, where virtue is esteemed, vices are immediately exposed. Good men also have greater freedom allowed them in restraining the wantonness of those who formerly trod under their feet all that is just and lawful.

When the Prophet speaks here about the condition and reformation of the Church, which is a spiritual government, we ought to raise our minds somewhat higher, so as to view all this as relating to Christ, to whom it specially and peculiarly belongs to expose hidden vices, and to remove those vails and coverings by which the appearance of vices is changed, so that they are praised as if they were virtues. He does this by means of the gospel, by which he drags into light the disgraceful actions which were formerly concealed, and openly shews what they really are, so that no man, unless

[598] "Duquel il soit le chef."

[599] "The heart also of the rash. (Heb. hasty.)" — Eng.Ver. "The heart also of the hasty." — Stock

[600] This observation is founded on the Hebrew word נמהרים, (nimharim,) which our Author translates Fools, and which literally means Hasty. --- Ed

he choose it, can be deceived by their outward appearance. And this is the reason why the gospel is so much hated by the world; for no man can patiently endure to have his "hidden thoughts" and concealed baseness "revealed." (Luke 2:35.) Philosophers indeed reason admirably about covetousness and liberality, and in some degree explain what is the difference between them; but they never penetrate into the hearts, so as to search them and actually distinguish between the covetous man and the bountiful. This can only be done by Christ's light, when he shines by means of the gospel, and, by exploring the deepest corners of the human heart, brings us to spiritual and inward obedience. In this passage, therefore, we are brought to the judgment-seat of Christ, who alone, by exposing hypocrisy, reveals whether we are covetous or bountiful.

6. *For the vile person will speak vileness.* We might also render it, "The wicked man will speak wickedly;" for נבלה (*nĕbālāh*) denotes "baseness" or any wickedness, such as is meant by the French word *lascheté*, or by the English words, "lewdness" or "baseness." It might also be rendered, "The fool will speak wickedly;" and thus there would be an allusion to the words נבל (*nābāl*) and נבלה, (*nĕbālāh*,) [601] though the meaning would be considerably different; but, since he employed this word in the former verse, when speaking of "vile" persons, I willingly adopt that interpretation.

And his heart will contrive iniquity. I consider און (ā*vĕn*) to denote "wickedness;" for he speaks of giving themselves up continually to sin and do wickedly, as is plainly shewn by what follows; for his earnest remonstrances are directed against wicked men, who abandon themselves to all that is vile, and are not moved by any feeling of conscience, who laugh at all warnings, and ridicule God and his servants. Christ also drags them into the light, and exposes what lay concealed under coverings; for to him, as we have said, it peculiarly belongs to

"pierce, by the sword of the gospel, the hidden feelings of the heart, that they may answer to the judgment of God." (Hebrews 4:12.)

Isaiah therefore continues the same subject which he had formerly begun to explain.

Others explain it differently, but, as I think, in an unsuitable manner; for they think that it is a kind of proverbial saying, and render it in the present tense, "The vile person speaketh vileness." But I think that the Prophet means something higher, namely, that Christ is the Judge of the world, and therefore, when he shall ascend the judgment-seat, he will shew what is the disposition of every person; for, so long as he does not exercise the office of a judge, everything remains in confusion, the wicked are applauded, because they have the appearance of piety, and the most excellent men are despised. But Christ will openly display the life of every person, so that what formerly, under some pretense, bore a fair reputation, will be manifested to

[601] The allusion would be better brought out by rendering it, "The fool will speak folly." — Ed

be wickedness; and on this account he is said to

"have in his hand a sieve for separating the wheat from the chaff." (Matthew 3:12.)

Now, this sieve is the gospel, by which, as a Judge, he brings malefactors to trial, and draws forth, in spite of their efforts, the exposure of their transgressions and crimes.

We have the experience of this more and more every day, when an exposure is made of that wickedness which had been concealed under the mask of Popery and the strange folds of superstitions. Who would ever have thought, amidst that darkness, that there were concealed in the hearts of men such dreadful monsters as are brought forward at the present day? To such a height has the contempt of God arisen, that many discover themselves to be more like beasts than men. Yet the Papists slander us, as if by our doctrine we gave loose reins to men, and exhorted them to despise God and follow wickedness without fear or shame. But let them listen to Isaiah, who replies that, when the truth of God shall be made known, vile persons will speak vileness, and wicked persons will speak baseness and wickedness; and, indeed, Christ would not be a spiritual judge if he did not

"reveal the secret thoughts of the heart, and bring every hidden thing to light." (Luke 2:35.)

To make empty the hungry soul. In addition to those mockeries which the reprobate cast against God, cruelty is next mentioned. The Prophet thus gives an exact enumeration of those actions which are contrary to the second table. Wicked men begin with despising God, then rush to outward crimes, and practice cruelty of every sort against their neighbors. Now, the worst and most flagrant of all cruelty is, to "snatch food from the hungry soul and drink from the thirsty;" for mere natural feeling prompts us to mercy and (συμπάθειαν) [602] compassion. When men are so brutalized that they are not affected by the misery of others, and lay aside every feeling of humanity, they must be worse than the beasts themselves, who have some sort of pity for the wants of their own kind.

7. *The instruments of the covetous man are evil.* We must always keep by the future tense; for he does not inquire what wicked men are, but declares that they shall be revealed under the reign of Christ, that they may no longer deceive or impose upon any one. He speaks of the heavenly light which would arise, as we have already said, to expose hidden wickedness. Christ therefore shews what covetous men are, and how destructive are the means which they employ. If it be thought better that כלי (*kĕlē*) should be translated "measures," I have no objection; but the word "instrument" is more appropriate and extensive, for it includes "instruments" of every description. It means therefore every kind of means, tricks, and cunning devices, by which "covetous men" put simple persons off their guard, and

[602] Σ , a more extensive term than the English word "sympathy," literally denotes "fellow-feeling," and is frequently employed by our Author to express that kind of feeling which every man ought to cherish towards his fellow-men. — Ed

draw them into their nets.

To deceive the simple by lying words. He now assigns the reason. It is, because they do not cease to contrive some injury. [603] It is certain that this is a description of the practices of bad men, who think of nothing but their own convenience and gain, and are always bent on cheating and "deceiving." Christ brings to light those persons, and their tricks and contrivances.

To speak against the poor in judgment. [604] Various circumstances are brought forward, to present in a more striking light the shamefulness of this wickedness. First, "to deceive the simple," who cannot take care of themselves, is more shameful and flagrant than to deceive sharpers and veterans in crime. It is shameful, secondly, to make use of deceitful blandishments under the pretense of friendship; thirdly, to deceive "the poor," whose poverty we ought rather to have relieved; fourthly, to lay snares in the very court of justice. This is more highly criminal than if a man were attacked by open violence; for the court of justice ought to be a refuge for the poor, and what shall become of them, if it be a den of robbers or thieves? If the roads are beset by robbers, and if snares are laid, there may be some way of avoiding them; but there is no possibility of guarding against the frauds committed in courts of justice. These circumstances, therefore, ought to be carefully remarked.

8. *But the liberal shall devise liberal things.* We have already said that these statements of the Prophet have a deeper meaning than is commonly supposed; for he does not speak in the ordinary sense of the words, but treats of the reformation of the Church. This relates therefore to the regenerate, over whom Christ reigns; for, although all are called by the voice of the gospel, yet there are few who suffer themselves to be placed under his yoke. The Lord makes them truly kind and bountiful, so that they no longer seek their own convenience, but are ready to give assistance to the poor, and not only do this once or oftener, but every day advance more and more in kindness and generosity.

In acting liberally he shall make progress. This passage is commonly explained in a different manner, namely, that the liberal advance themselves, and become great by doing good; because God rewards them, and bestows on them greater blessings. This view pleases at first sight; but the Prophet, on the contrary, shews that the liberal will never cease to perform acts of generosity, for they will daily make greater progress, and will pursue the same designs and adhere firmly to their intention, as it is said by the Psalmist,

"He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever." (Psalm 112:9; 2 Corinthians 9:9.)

This is added, because it is easy to counterfeit liberality for a time; many even think that they are sincerely bountiful because they have performed an act of beneficence, but quickly cease and change their purpose. But true

[603] "Quelque trahison;" — "Some treachery."

[604] "Even when the needy speaketh right;" or, "when he speaketh against the poor in judgment." — Eng. Ver.

liberality is not momentary or of short duration. They who possess that virtue persevere steadily, and do not exhaust themselves in a sudden and feeble flame, of which they quickly afterwards repent.

This is what the Prophet intended to express by the word קום, (*kūm*,) which signifies to "arise" and "grow." There are indeed many occurrences which retard the progress of our liberality. We find in men strange ingratitude, so that what we give appears to be ill bestowed. Many are too greedy, and, like horse-leeches, suck the blood of others. But let us remember this saying, and listen to Paul's exhortation "not to be weary in well-doing;" for the Lord exhorts us not to momentary liberality, but to that which shall endure during the whole course of our life. (Galatians 6:9.)

9. *Ye women at ease, arise.* These words appear not to be connected with what goes before; for formerly he spoke about restoring the Church, but now he threatens that the judgment of God is ready to strike a people carelessly reposing amidst riches and pleasures; and therefore it is probable that here Isaiah begins a new and distinct subject. Yet there will be no absurdity in connecting this with the former prediction, for the Prophets commonly observe this order. After having promised the grace of God to believers, they next direct their discourse to hypocrites, to declare that the mercy which the Lord promises to believers will be of no avail to hypocrites, and that notwithstanding they shall be punished for their sins.

As to *women* being chiefly addressed, the Hebrew commentators, agreeably to the frequent usage of their language, suppose "cities" [605] to be meant; but I think that the language here is not figurative, and I rather adhere to the simple meaning of the words. He addresses "women" rather than men, in order to shew the extent of that calamity; for in ordinary circumstances women and children are spared, because they are unfit for war, and have no power to defend themselves. He says that the destruction will be so cruel that none shall be spared.

He expressly addresses them also as "women *at ease*," who are usually more delicate than others, and, enjoying the advantages of wealth, have some means of providing for their safety and of rescuing themselves from calamities, even when persons of ordinary rank are suffering grievous hardships. But to them especially Isaiah makes the intimation, that they must "arise" and "tremble;" and he contrasts this trembling with the ease and luxury which they peacefully enjoyed. He bids them *arise*, that they may know that this is not the time for repose, and that the Lord will arouse them from their ease and indifference.

Hear my voice, ye careless daughters. [606] In the same manner as before, the word daughters is interpreted by the rabbins to mean "villages" or "smaller cities;" but I think, as I have already said, that it ought to be taken in its literal meaning. He shews them whence shall arise this terror, whence

[605] "Ye provinces that dwell at ease." — Jarchi

[606] "Ye cities that dwell carelessly." — Jarchi. In this, as well as in the former case, he refers to Jonathan's Targum. — Ed

shall arise that violence which shall compel them to "arise" and "tremble." It is from the judgment of God. But he mentions "a voice," that they may know that this prophecy shall not fail of its accomplishment; because he proclaims war against them by the command of God. "How efficacious this speech shall be, and what power it shall have to arouse you, one day you shall actually feel." So frequently does he reproach them for indolence, carelessness, and luxury, not only because it is harder for those who live at ease to be harshly aroused, but because the corruption and depravity of human nature make it scarcely possible for the world to enjoy ease and prosperity without becoming indolent. Next, falling gradually into slothfulness, it will deceive itself by a false imagination, and drive far away from it all fear, and, relying on this confidence, will insolently rise up against God.

10. *Days above a year.* [607] By these words he declares that the calamity will be of long duration; for it is no slight consolation in adversity, when the distresses which must otherwise have been endured by us with grief and sorrow pass quickly away. But when no end and no mitigation of sorrows, no comfort or hope of deliverance is held out to us, what can be left but despair? He therefore threatens not only that they shall endure them for one year, but that afterwards they must look for new afflictions.

You shall tremble. By this word he indirectly stings their slothfulness, by declaring that they who grudged to listen to calm instruction shall be dragged forth with trembling and alarm. As the Jews were excessively anxious about earthly blessings and perishing food, he addresses their senses by threatening a scarcity of wine and wheat. If they had been more thoroughly purified from grovelling desires, he would rather have threatened what Jeremiah deplores in his Lamentations, that

"the sacrifices and festivals had ceased, and that the holy assemblies were discontinued." (Lamentations 1:7.)

But, because they were sunk in their pleasures, and had not made such proficiency as to know the value of spiritual blessings, the Prophet accommodates himself to their ignorance, and addresses their bellies rather than their understandings. He speaks of the desolation of the fields, which would be the necessary consequence of that calamity; for abundance and plenty commonly give rise to ease and indifference. "The Lord will therefore," says he, "deprive you of all food, and shake off your slothfulness, and take away all ground of confidence." Accordingly, we are here reminded that we ought not to sleep in the midst of prosperity, nor imagine that we are safe, as if we could expect uninterrupted prosperity in the world. But we ought to use with moderation the gifts of God, if we do not wish to be suddenly aroused, and to be overwhelmed when we are off our guard, and to feel the heavier distress because we did not look for a change of our affairs.

11. *Tremble.* This repetition is not unnecessary, but states more fully

[607] "Many days and years; (Heb. days above a year.)" — Eng. Ver. "In a year and more." — Alexander. "Shortly after a year; Heb. days upon a year: that is, the time will soon come after the expiration of one year, when ye shall be troubled with a dearth." — Stock

what he formerly said; for when men are asleep, they are not easily aroused by the voice of the prophets, and therefore it is needful to cry aloud and reprove them continually. And thus, by adding one threatening to another, or by repeating the same threatenings, he shews how great is the stupidity of men, when they have once been blinded by prosperity; for they can scarcely endure any longer to hear the warnings which God addresses to them. Men are undoubtedly more in danger from prosperity than from adversity; for when matters go smoothly with them, they flatter themselves, and are intoxicated by their success; and therefore it was necessary to deal more sharply with the Jews, in order to shake off that slothfulness. This exhortation of the Prophet ought to be explained in the future tense; as if he had said, "You shall at length tremble, for the rest which you now enjoy will not be perpetual."

By bidding them *make themselves bare, and gird sackcloth on their loins,* he describes the manner and dress of mourners. Whenever they were visited by deep adversity, they put on sackcloth, made bare the other parts of their body, and by dress, and attitude, and every method, manifested their grief. He desires women to put on sackcloth and other expressions of mourning, instead of the luxuries and pleasures in which they eagerly indulged.

12. *Mourning over the breasts.* This verse is explained in various ways. Some understand it to mean simply, that there will be so great a scarcity of provisions, that women will lose their milk, and thus the children will "mourn over dry breasts;" which we see sometimes happen, when a very great scarcity of provisions occasions leanness. But the more generally received and more appropriate interpretation is, to view the word "breasts" as figuratively denoting fields and vineyards, as the Prophet himself declares; for they are justly compared to the breasts of mothers, because, by deriving nourishment from them, we suck the milk or blood of the earth. He therefore means that there will be a want of food and nourishment, because the Lord will curse the earth, so that it shall yield no fruits. Thus shall men sigh over that scarcity, as if over their mother's "breasts," from which they formerly received delicious nourishment. This appears to me to be a more natural meaning, and to agree best with the context; for it serves to explain what afterwards follows, about "rich fields and the fruitful vine." [608]

13. *There shall grow up the brier and the thorn.* He confirms the former verse, and explains the cause of barrenness and famine, which is, that the fields, which formerly used to be fat and fertile, will be uncultivated, desolate, and barren. This was a frightful change of affairs; for we know that that country yielded corn and fruits more plentifully than other countries, not so much by nature as by the blessing of God; for he had said, "I will give you a land flowing with milk and honey." (Exodus 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3.) This was

[608] "It may be better translated, striking your breasts, because of the pleasant fields and fruitful vines, which should be destroyed by the Assyrians. It was a common gesture used on all mournful occasions, to strike the breasts; though others think teats may be taken metaphorically for the pleasant fields and fruitful vine by which they subsisted, as infants by the mother's paps." — Samuel White

the cause of the abundance and fertility.

On the land of my people. By giving it this name, he meets an objection which they might otherwise have brought, that there was no reason to fear that the land which God had chosen would not produce fruits every year; because, although the kindness of God extends to all mankind, yet he was in a peculiar manner the Father and supporter of that nation. It was therefore incredible that this land, which had been set apart for the children of God, would be covered with "briers and thorns;" and thus the Prophet reproves the Jews more sharply, because they not only made void the blessing of God by their wickedness, but drew down his wrath, so as to spoil and deface the beauty of the land.

Even on all the houses of joy. The particle כי (*ki*) signifies *even*, though some think that it means "for" or "because," "Because there is joy in their houses." [609] But that interpretation cannot be admitted, because בתי (*bāttē*,) "houses of," is in the construct state. This appears to me therefore to be an enlargement of what he had now said, and to mean that this desolation will be, not only in the utmost corners of the land, but "*even* in the houses of joy," that is, in the splendid and magnificent houses, which formerly were the abodes of the most refined luxury. When the Prophet said this, he was undoubtedly ridiculed by the men of that age; men certainly did not listen to him amidst those luxuries by which they were blinded. Besides, they grew insolent on account of the promises of God, and thought that they would never be in want of anything. Yet all that Isaiah foretold came to pass. From this example let us learn to be moderate in our use of prosperity, and to depend on the blessing of God, so as to obey his word with a good conscience.

14. *For the palace shall be forsaken.* Here also he describes more fully the desolation of the country; for, having mentioned in the former verse magnificent houses, he now likewise adds palaces and cities, so as to shew that there is nothing, however splendid and illustrious, that is exempted from that calamity. We see that men are dazzled by their own splendor, till they lift up their eyes to heaven; and the consequence is, that they are soothed to sleep in the midst of their wealth, and dread nothing. He therefore declares that all that was splendid, magnificent, and lofty, in Judea, cities, palaces, bulwarks, fortresses, all will be brought to nothing. When he says *for ever*, he again gives warning, as he formerly did, that this calamity will not last only for a single day, but that, as they had been long hardened in their vices, so it will be of long duration; for, if they had been punished only for a short time, being obstinate and intractable, they would quickly have relapsed into their natural disposition.

15. *Till the Spirit be poured out upon you.* Because the Prophet speaks of the Jews among whom God had determined to plant his Church, it was therefore necessary to leave to them some hope of salvation, that they might

[609] "For all that desolation shall be on all joyful houses." — Jarchi

not faint amidst so great afflictions; for, while the Lord is severe towards wicked men who falsely shelter themselves under his name, yet in some manner he preserves his Church. The Prophet therefore adds this promise, that they might know that, whatever be the severity with which he punishes his people, still he is always mindful of his covenant; for he never threatens in such a manner as not to leave some ground for consolation, so as to cheer and comfort the hearts of believers, even when their affairs are utterly desperate. Besides, in order that they may fully enjoy the comfort which is offered to them, he raises their eyes to the very Author of life; and indeed we see that, when a favorable change takes place, the greater part of men fill themselves to excess with bread and wine, and, when they are pressed by famine, they neglect God and solicit the earth.

With good reason, therefore, does Isaiah say that "the Spirit" will come *from on high* to refresh and fertilize the earth; and he alludes, I have no doubt, to that saying of David,

"Send forth thy Spirit, and they shall be created, and thou wilt renew the face of the earth."
(Psalm 104:30.)

Holding out this as an evidence that God is reconciled, he at the same time declares that the restoration of the Church proceeds solely from the grace of God, who can remove its barrenness as soon as he has imparted strength from heaven; for he who created all things out of nothing, as if they had formerly existed, is able to renew it in a moment.

And the wilderness become a Carmel. [610] In explaining this comparison of "the wilderness" to "Carmel," commentators are sadly at a loss; but, as I remarked on a former passage, (Isaiah 29:17,) where a similar phrase occurred, [611] the Prophet merely, in my opinion, points out the happy effect of that restoration, namely, that the abundance and plenty of all things will prove that God is actually reconciled to his people. He says that places which formerly were "wildernesses" shall be like "Carmel," which was a rich and fertile spot, and on that account receives its name; and that "Carmel" shall be like "a wilderness," that is, it shall be so fertile, that if we compare what it now is with what it shall afterwards be, it may seem like "a wilderness." It is an enlarged representation of that unwonted fertility. "Fields now barren and uncultivated shall be fertile, and cultivated and fertile fields shall yield such abundant fruit that their present fertility is poverty and barrenness, in comparison of the large produce which they shall afterwards yield;" just as if we should compare the fields of Savoy with those of Sicily and Calabria, and pronounce them to be a "wilderness." In a word, he describes unparalleled fertility, which believers shall enjoy, when they have been reconciled to God, in order that they may know his favor by his acts of kindness.

While Isaiah thus prophesies concerning the reign of Hezekiah, all this is

[610] "And the wilderness become a fruitful field." Such is the Author's own translation of the clause, which corresponds to our authorized version. — Ed

[611] See our Author's Commentary on that passage. — Ed

declared by him to relate to the kingdom of Christ as its end and accomplishment; and therefore, when we come to Christ, we must explain all this spiritually, so as to understand that we are renewed as soon as the Lord has sent down the Spirit from heaven, that we who were "wildernesses" may become cultivated and fertile fields. Ere the Spirit of God has breathed into us, we are justly compared to wildernesses or a dry soil; for we produce nothing but "thorns and briers," and are by nature unfit for yielding fruits. Accordingly, they who were barren and unfruitful, when they have been renewed by the Spirit of God, begin to yield plentiful fruits; and they whose natural dispositions had some appearance of goodness, being renewed by the same Spirit, will afterwards be so fruitful, that they will appear as if they had formerly been a "wilderness;" for all that men possess is but a wild forest, till they have been renewed by Christ. Whenever, therefore, the Church is afflicted, and when her condition appears to be desperate, let us raise our eyes to heaven, and depend fully on these promises.

16. *And judgment shall dwell in the wilderness.* The Prophet shews what is the actual condition of the Church, that is, when justice and judgment prevail; for men ought not to be like cattle, which seek nothing but plenty of food and abundance of outward things. And hence it is plain enough that the Jews were not confined to transitory enjoyments, so as to have their hope fixed exclusively on earthly blessings, as some fanatics imagine. They were enjoined to attend to that which was of the greatest importance, that justice and judgment should prevail; and undoubtedly they knew that true happiness consists in it. It is therefore our duty to look chiefly to this, that we should not, like hogs in a sty, judge of the happiness of life by abundance of bread and wine; for this is the end of all the blessings which the Lord bestows upon us, this is the object of our deliverance, "that we should serve him," as Zacharias says, "in holiness and righteousness." (Luke 1:74, 75.)

Under the terms "justice" and "judgment," as we have already seen, he includes all that belongs to uprightness; for although these two words relate strictly to that equity which ought to be mutually cultivated among us, yet, since it is customary to describe the observation of the whole law by the duties of the second table, here the Prophet, by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, embraces also piety and the worship of God. The Prophets are accustomed to notice the chief duties of brotherly kindness, and those which belong to the second table, because by these, more than by any others, we manifest the real state of our feelings towards God.

When he declares that justice and judgment have their abode in the wilderness, as well as in the cultivated fields, this shews more clearly that the abundance of blessings promised a little before was so great that, when men saw it, they would consider that those fields which they formerly looked upon as very excellent had been comparatively barren.

17. *And the work of righteousness shall be peace.* A little before, he censured severely that peace which made the Jews drowsy and slothful; he

now promises a different kind of repose, which will be a striking proof of the love of God, who has received them into favor, and will faithfully guard them. We ought therefore to observe the implied contrast between that brutal repose which the reprobate think that they obtain by their presumption in committing every kind of wickedness, and in which they also fall asleep, and that different kind of repose, on the other hand, which the children of God obtain by a religious and holy life, and which Isaiah exhorts us to desire, shewing that we ought fearlessly to believe that a blessed and joyful peace awaits us when we have been reconciled to God.

In this way he recommends to them to follow uprightness, that they may obtain assured peace; for, as Peter declares, there is no better way of procuring favor, that no man may do us injury, than to abstain from all evil-doing. (1 Peter 3:13.) But the Prophet leads them higher, to aim at a religious and holy life by the grace of God; for nothing is more unreasonable than that wicked men should desire to have peace, while they are continually fighting against God. That wish is indeed common; for hardly one person in a hundred shall be found who does not loudly extol peace, while at the same time every man raises up enemies to himself in the earth, and all in vast crowds disturb heaven and earth by their crimes. Now, the latter repose, being perpetual, is compared by him to the former, which is slight and momentary.

The effect of righteousness. When peace receives this designation, let us learn that, as wars proceed from the wrath of God, which we provoke by our wickedness, so peace springs from his blessing. When, therefore, we see enemies enraged to battle, and rising furiously against us, let us seek no other remedy than repentance; for the Lord will easily allay commotions when we have returned to him. He it is, as the Psalmist says, who

"maketh wars to cease to the ends of the earth, who breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in pieces, and burneth the chariots in the fire." (Psalm 46:9.)

We have already said that these things do not relate exclusively to Hezekiah, but must be referred to Christ.

18. *And my people shall dwell.* As we have said that spiritual righteousness is that which has its seat in the hearts of men, we must say the same thing about peace, which is the fruit of it. Accordingly, when *quiet habitations* and *resting-places* are here mentioned, let us remember the saying of Paul, "justified by faith, we have peace with God." (Romans 5:1.) When Christ says that he "leaves" this peace to the disciples, (John 14:27,) he affirms that "it cannot be given by the world;" and we ought not to wonder at this, for, as the same Apostle Paul informs us in another passage, "this peace surpasses all understanding." (Philippians 4:7.) Having obtained this righteousness, we are no longer restless or alarmed within, as when we feel in the gnawings of conscience the wrath of God. A bad conscience is always alarmed, and harassed by wretched uneasiness.

Wicked men must therefore be uneasy, and distressed by a variety of terrors; for where righteousness is banished that peace cannot be found; and where Christ reigns, there alone do we find true peace. Assured peace, therefore, is enjoyed by none but believers, who appeal to the heavenly tribunal, not only by their piety, but by their reliance on the mercy of God. Hence we infer that Christ does not yet reign where consciences are uneasy, and tossed by the various waves of doubts, as must be the case with Papists and all others who are not built on the sacrifice of Christ and the atonement obtained through him.

19. *And the hail.* We have already said that the prophets are accustomed frequently to describe under figures the reign of Christ; for they borrow their metaphors from an earthly kingdom, because our ignorance would make it almost impossible for us to comprehend, in any other way, the unspeakable treasure of blessings. The meaning is, "The Lord will remove from his people distresses and annoyances, and will make them fall on others;" because here we are liable to various storms and tempests, and must endure rain, hail, showers, winds, and tempests. He says that God, by his wonderful providence, will prevent all distresses from doing any injury to believers, because he will drive their violence in another direction.

By *forests* he means unfrequented and desert places, where there are no crowds of men. Hence we learn that, when we are under the guardianship of Christ, we are protected from inconveniences and dangers, but that, at the same time, various storms and tempests are ready to burst on our heads. But the Lord is our deliverer, who turns away in another direction the evils that are approaching, or rescues us when we are in danger.

And the city shall be situated to a low place. [612] In order to confirm what he had said about peace, he says, that "cities," which shall be situated on level ground, will be out of danger; for at that time it was customary to build on high and elevated places, that the access to them might be more difficult. "Such," says he, "will be God's protection of his people, that they will not need the ordinary fortifications, because the city may be safely set down in valleys; and even although it be liable to the attacks of enemies, it will sustain no inconvenience, for the hand of the Lord will protect it." We must not therefore seek safety by relying on our defences, lest we be immediately driven from our nest; but since our heavenly Father deigns to provide for our safety, let us be satisfied with having him for our protector and guardian. [613]

20. *Blessed are ye.* He shews how great will be the change, when Christ

[612] "And the city shall be low in a low place;" or, "And the city shall be utterly abased." — Eng. Ver.

[613] "Some by the Forest understand Nineveh, some Babylon, some Jerusalem, and some the Assyrian army; but Gataker, and Vatablus before him, think the words may be rendered, he shall hail with hail on the forest, and cities shall be built in low places; as if he had said, God shall preserve the fruits of the earth from the injuries of unseasonable weather, and, when he sends a storm of hail, cause it to fall on the woods and deserts; and he shall give them so great security, that for the future they shall build their cities in low grounds, to shew that they are under no apprehension of being overrun any more by an enemy." — White

shall begin to reign; for he had formerly said that so great would be the desolation, that "thorns and briers" would overspread the holy land, costly houses would be thrown down, and cities and palaces would be levelled with the earth. This would happen, when the incessant attacks of enemies should lay that country desolate. But now he says that they shall be *blessed*, because God will give them abundant produce of all fruits. That fertility which might have been described in simple language, he illustrates by figures, that they shall "sow in marshes," and shall "send forth their cattle" into the fields without dread of losing them.

By *waters* some understand a rich and fertile soil; but the universal particle כל, (*chōl*,) *all*, leads me to take a different view; as if he had said, "Places which were overrun with waters shall be fit for sowing, and there will be no reason to fear that the water shall spoil our fields." We are accustomed also to drive away oxen, and asses, and other animals, from fields, and especially from sown fields, that they may not eat the corn. But here he says that the corn will grow so thick and plentifully, that it shall be necessary to send oxen and asses to crop the early blade, as is commonly done when the corn is luxuriant. [614]

He calls them *blessed*, in accordance with the usage of the Hebrew language, because their labor will never be unprofitable. If it be objected that, under the reign of Christ, such fertility has never been seen, I acknowledge that, even when God has shewn the highest kindness to his people, still there have always been visible marks of the curse, which was entailed on mankind by the fall and revolt of Adam. (Genesis 3:17.) But since Christ has restored to believers the inheritance of the world, with good reason do the prophets assert that he would renew the earth, so as to remove its filthiness and restore that beauty which it had lost. They who complain that it is not yet fulfilled, ought to consider whether or not they themselves are purified from every stain of sin. And if they are still at a great distance from spiritual righteousness, let them be satisfied with enjoying the blessing of God according to the measure of regeneration, the full enjoyment of which we must not expect to obtain, till, freed from the pollution of the flesh, we shall bear the perfect image of God.

[614] "Happy ye who shall enjoy as great fertility as if all your lands lay on the side of a running stream. Your corn shall grow so thick and fast that ye shall be forced to let your cattle crop the luxuriant ears; a practice still in use among our husbandmen." — White

Historical Translation of Isaiah

Translation: Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

1 The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2 Hear, O heavens,
And hearken, O earth,
For thus the Lord speaketh:
I have nourished and brought up children;
Yet they have acted wickedly towards me. [615]

3 The ox knoweth his owner,
And the ass his masters crib;
Israel doth not know;
My people doth not understand.

4 O sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,
Seed of evil-doers, degenerate children!
They have forsaken Jehovah,
They have despised [616] the Holy One of Israel,
They are estranged backwards.

5 Why should I strike you any more?
Ye will add faithlessness.
The whole head is sickness,
And the whole heart is faintness.

6 From the sole of the foot even to the head
There is no soundness in it;
A wound, a swelling, And a purifying sore;

[615] Or, Have rebelled against me; or, Have revolted against me.
[616] Or, Have provoked to anger.

And they have not been plastered, nor bound up,
Nor softened with ointment.
7 Your country is desolation;
Your cities are burnt with fire;
Your land do strangers devour in your presence,
It is reduced to solitude, like the destruction of foreigners.
8 And the daughter of Zion shall be left,
As a cottage in a vineyard,
As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,
As a city laid waste.
9 Unless the Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant,
We should have been as Sodom,
And like Gomorrah.
10 Hear the word of the Lord, ye princes of Sodom!
Give ear to the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah!
Of what value to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
Saith the Lord.
11 I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams,
And of the fat of fed beasts;
And in the blood of oxen, or of sheep, or of he-goats,
I delight not.
12 When you come that you may appear before my face,
Who hath required this at your hand?
Even to tread my courts.
13 Do not continue to bring an offering of vanity.
Incense is an abomination to me.
The new-moon, And the sabbath, And the yearly assemblies,
I cannot endure,
(It is a vain thing,)
Nor the assembly.
14 Your new-moons And your yearly festivals
My soul hateth;
They have been a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.
15 When ye spread forth your hands,
I will hide mine eyes from you.
Even though you multiply prayer,
I will not hear.
Your hands are full of blood.
16 Wash you, make you clean;
Take away the wickedness of your practices from before mine eyes;
Cease to do evil;
17 Learn to do well:

Seek judgment, restore [617] the oppressed;
Plead for the orphan, defend the widow.
18 Come now, and let us reason together,
Hath the Lord said:
If your sins be as scarlet,
They shall be white as snow;
If they be red like purple,
They shall be as wool.
19 If ye shall be willing and shall hearken,
Ye shall eat the good of the land.
20 But if ye shall refuse and rebel,
Ye shall be consumed by the sword;
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.
21 How is the faithful city become a harlot!
She was full of judgment,
And righteousness lodged by night [618] in her;
But now murderers.
22 Thy silver is become dross,
And thy wine is mixed with water.
23 Thy princes are rebellious,
And are companions of thieves;
Every one loveth a gift,
And seeketh eagerly for rewards.
They judge not the cause of the fatherless,
Nor doth the cause of the widow come to them.
24 Therefore saith the Lord, [619] Jehovah of hosts,
The mighty One of Israel;
Alas! I will take consolation on mine adversaries,
I will be avenged of mine enemies.
25 I will turn my hand upon thee;
I will purely purge away thy dross,
And I will take away all thy tin.
26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first,
And thy counsellors as at the beginning.
Then shall it be said of thee,
The city of righteousness,
The faithful city.
27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment,
And they who shall be brought back to her with righteousness.
28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together,

[617] Or, Guide.
[618] Or, Dwelt.
[619] Or, The Governor.

And they who have revolted from the Lord shall be consumed.

29 Yea, they shall be ashamed
Of the trees which ye have desired,
And they shall be covered with disgrace
By the groves which ye have chosen.

30 Ye shall surely be as a tree whose leaf fadeth,
And as a grove that hath no water.

31 And your strong man [620] shall be as tow,
And the maker of it as a spark;
And they shall both be burnt,
And there shall be none to quench them.

[620] Otherwise, Your god.

Translation: Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

1 The word which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah And Jerusalem.

2 And it shall come to pass in the last of the days,
That the mountain of the house of Jehovah
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.

3 And many peoples shall come, and shall say,
Come, and we shall go up
To the mountain of Jehovah,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
And he will teach us in his ways,
And we shall walk in his paths;
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 And he will judge among the nations,
And will rebuke many peoples:
And they shall beat their swords into spades,
And their spears into pruning-hooks;
And nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they practise war any more.

5 O house of Jacob, come ye,
And we shall walk in the light of the Lord.

6 Verily thou hast forsaken thy people, the house of Jacob;

Because they are filled with the east [621]
And with soothsayers, like the Philistines;
And they have delighted in the children of foreigners.
7 Their land is full of silver and gold,
And there is no end to their treasures.
Their land is also full of horses,
And there is no end to their chariots.
8 Their land is also full of idols,
And they have bowed down
Before the work of their own hands,
Before that which their fingers have made.
9 And the man of low degree boweth down,
And the man of rank humbleth himself;
Therefore do not thou forgive them. [622]
10 Enter into the rock,
Hide thee in the dust,
From before the fear of the Lord
And the glory of his majesty.
11 The loftiness of the eyes of men shall be humbled,
And the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down;
And Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.
12 For the day of Jehovah of hosts shall be
On every one that is proud and lofty,
And on all that is lifted up,
And it shall be brought low.
13 Even on all the cedars of Lebanon high and lifted up,
On all the oaks of Bashan,
14 And on all the lofty mountains,
And on all the high hills,
15 And on every lofty tower,
And on every fortified wall;
16 On all the ships of Tarshish,
And on delightful pictures.
17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down,
And the haughtiness of men shall be humbled;
And Jehovah alone shall be exalted on that day.
18 And he will utterly abolish the idols.
19 And they shall enter into caverns of the rocks,
And into clefts of the earth,
From the presence of the terror of Jehovah,
And from the glory of his majesty,
When he shall arise to shake the earth.

[621] Or, With antiquity.
[622] Or, Thou wilt not forgive them.

20 In that day shall a man cast away
His idols of silver,
And his idols of gold,
Which they made for him to worship,
Into the cavern of the moles and of the bats;
21 And they shall enter into the clefts of the rocks,
And into the tops of the ragged rocks,
From before the fear of the Lord,
And from the glory of his majesty,
When he shall arise to shake the earth.
22 Cease then from man,
Whose breath is in his nostrils;
For in what respect [623] is he valued?

[623] Or, To what? or, How much?

Translation: Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

1 For, behold, the Governor, Jehovah of hosts,
Will take away from Jerusalem and Judah
The stay and the strength;
The whole stay of bread;
The whole stay of water;

2 The strong man and the man of war,
The judge and the prophet,
And the diviner and the elder;

3 The captain of fifty, and the man of rank,
The senator, and the skilful artificer, and the eloquent. [624]

4 And I will appoint boys to be their rulers,
And babes shall rule over them.

5 The people shall violently oppress each other,
A man his neighbour;
The youth shall behave insolently towards the old man,
The despicable towards the honourable.

6 When every man shall take hold of his brother
Of the family of his father, saying,
Thou hast raiment;
Be thou our ruler;
Let this ruin be under thy hand;

7 He shall swear in that day, saying,
I will not be a healer;
For in my house is neither bread nor raiment;

[624] Or, Skilled in mysterious style.

Therefore make me not a ruler of the people.
8 Verily Jerusalem is ruined,
And Judah is fallen;
Because their tongue And their practices are against Jehovah,
To provoke the eyes of his glory.
9 The proof of their countenance answereth in them; [625]
They have declared their sin, as Sodom,
And have not hid it.
Wo to their soul!
For they have brought evil on them.
10 Say ye to the righteous man,
It shall be well;
For they shall eat the fruit of their hands.
11 Wo to the wicked man!
It shall be ill;
For according to the works of his hands
Shall it be rewarded to him.
12 Of my people children are oppressors,
And women rule over them.
O my people!
They who govern thee lead thee astray,
And pervert the way of thy paths.
13 Jehovah standeth to plead,
And standeth up to judge the people.
14 Jehovah will enter into judgment
With the elders of his people,
And with their rulers;
And ye have destroyed the vineyard,
And the spoil of the poor is in your houses.
15 What mean ye that ye crush my people,
And grind the faces of the poor?
Saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts.
16 Jehovah also saith,
Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
And walk with stretched-forth neck,
And with wandering eyes,
And walk and mince as they go,
And make a tinkling with their feet.
17 Therefore will the Lord make bald
The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion,
And the Lord will expose their shame.
18 In that day will the Lord take away
Ornaments that tinkled, or were made of net-work, or like a half-moon,

[625] Or, Against them.

19 Perfumes, bracelets, and head-hands;
20 Bonnets, ornaments of the legs,
Chaplets, neck-amulets, and ear-rings;
21 Rings and nose-jewels,
22 Changeable dresses, mantles,
Upper garments, and hair-ties,
23 Mirrors and fine linens,
Hoods and veils.
24 And instead of a sweet odour there shall be rottenness,
And instead of a girdle, a rent,
And instead of curled locks, baldness;
Instead of a belt, a girdle of sackcloth,
Instead of beauty, burning.
25 Thy men shall fall by the sword,
And thy might in the battle.
26 Her gates shall lament and mourn,
And she, desolate, shall sit on the ground.

Translation: Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

1 In that day, therefore, shall seven women
Take hold of one man, saying,
We will eat our own bread,
We will wear our own raiment;
Only let thy name be called on us, [626]
And take thou away our reproach.

2 In that day shall the branch of Jehovah
Be for beauty and glory,
And the fruit of the earth
Be for excellence and comeliness,
To the escaped of Israel.

3 And it shall come to pass
That he who shall be left in Zion,
And shall remain in Jerusalem,
Shall be called holy,
And all shall be enrolled
Among the living [627] at Jerusalem.

4 When the Lord shall have washed away
The filth of the daughter of Zion,
And shall have cleansed the blood of Jerusalem
From the midst of her,
Both by the Spirit of judgment,
And by the Spirit of burning.

5 And Jehovah will create

[626] Or, Let us be called by thy name.
[627] Or, To life.

On every dwelling-place of Mount Zion,
And on all her assemblies,
A cloud and darkness by day,
And the brightness of a flaming fire by night;
For on all the glory shall be a defence.
6 And a covering shall be by day
For a shadow from the heat, and for refuge,
And for a covert from storm and from rain.

Translation: Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

1 Come, I will sing for my beloved
A song of my beloved to his vineyard.
My beloved had a vineyard
On a hill, the son of oil.

2 He fenced it, and gathered out the stones,
And planted it as a choice vine;
He reared a tower in the midst of it,
And built a wine-press in it:
He therefore hoped that it would yield grapes,
And it yieldeth wild grapes.

3 Now then, O inhabitant of Jerusalem,
And man of Judah,
Judge ye between me and my vineyard.

4 What more ought to have been done to my vineyard,
Which I have not done to it?
How did I look that it should yield grapes,
And yet it hath yielded wild grapes?

5 And now come, I will shew to you
What I will do to my vineyard.
I will take away its hedge, that it may become pasture;
I will break down its wall, that it may be trodden down.

6 I will lay it waste;
It shall not be pruned nor digged;
And the brier and thorn shall grow up.
Yea, I will command the clouds
That they do not rain on it.

7 Verily the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah his pleasant plant.
Hence he looked for judgment, and behold oppression;
For righteousness, and behold a cry.
8 Wo to them that join house to house,
And add field to field,
Till there be no place;
That you may be placed alone
In the midst of the earth.
9 This is in the ears of Jehovah of hosts,
If many houses be not laid desolate,
Great and fair, without inhabitant.
10 Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall produce one bath,
And the seed of a homer shall yield an ephah.
11 Wo to them that rise early
To follow drunkenness,
And who prolong the time till night,
While wine inflameth them.
12 And the harp, the lyre, the tabret, and the pipe, and wine
Are in their entertainments;
But they do not regard the work of Jehovah,
Nor consider the operation of his hands.
13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity,
Because they have no knowledge;
And their glory are men famished,
And their multitude are dried up with thirst.
14 Therefore hell hath enlarged his soul,
And opened his mouth without measure;
And his glory and his multitude hath descended,
And his wealth, and he that rejoiced in her.
15 And the man of low degree shall be bowed down,
And the man of rank shall be humbled;
Yea, the eyes of the haughty shall be humbled.
16 And Jehovah of hosts shall be exalted in judgment,
And God, who is holy, shall be sanctified in righteousness.
17 And the lambs shall feed after their manner,
And the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.
18 Wo to them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity,
And sin as with cart-ropes.
19 Who say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work,
That we may see it;
Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come,
That we may know it.
20 Wo to them that call evil good,

And good evil;
That put darkness for light,
And light for darkness;
That turn bitter into sweet,
And sweet into bitter.
21 Wo to them that are wise in their own eyes,
And are prudent in their own sight.
22 Wo to them that are powerful to drink wine,
And powerful men to mingle strong drink;
23 Who justify the wicked for reward,
And take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.
24 Therefore, as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble,
And the chaff is consumed by the flame;
So their root shall be as rottenness,
And their blossom shall pass away as dust;
Because they have cast away the law of Jehovah of hosts,
And have loathed the word of the Holy One of Israel.
25 Therefore the anger of Jehovah
Hath been kindled against his people,
And, stretching forth his hand against them,
He hath smitten them;
And the mountains trembled,
And their torn carcass was thrown into the midst of the streets;
And for all these things his anger hath not been turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.
26 And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from afar;
He will hiss to the nation from the end of the earth;
And lo, it will come speedy and swift.
27 None shall be weary nor stumble among them;
None shall slumber nor sleep;
None shall have the girdle of their loins loosed,
Nor shall the latchet of their shoes be broken.
28 Their arrows will be sharp,
And all their bows bent.
The hoofs of their horses shall be counted as flint,
And their wheels as a whirlwind.
29 Their roaring shall be like that of a lion;
They shall roar like young lions;
They shall gnash and seize the prey;
They shall carry away the spoils,
And none shall deliver.
30 He shall roar against them in that day, as the roaring of the sea;
Then shall he look to the earth,
And behold! the darkness of tribulation;

And the light shall be darkened in the heavens.

Translation: Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and his remotest parts filled the temple.

2 And seraphim stood above it;
Each had six wings;
With two they covered their face,
With two they covered their feet,
And with two did they fly.

3 And one cried to another, saying,
Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts;
The whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the doors were moved by the voice of him that cried,
And the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then I said,
Wo to me, for I am undone; [628]
Because I am a man of polluted lips,
And I dwell amidst a people having polluted lips;
And yet mine eyes have seen the king, Jehovah of hosts.

6 And one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal, snatched with a fork from the altar.

7 And laying it on my mouth, he said,
Lo, this hath touched thy lips,
And thy sin shall be expiated.

8 Afterwards I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? And who shall go for us? Then I said, Here am I, send me.

[628] Or, Reduced to silence.

9 Then he said,
Go and tell this people:
Hearing hear, and do not understand;
Seeing see, and do not know.
10 Harden the heart of this people,
And make heavy their ears,
And close up their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And their heart understand,
And when they have been converted, they be healed.
11 And I said, how long, O Lord. And he said,
Till the houses be laid waste without inhabitant,
And the houses be emptied of men,
And the land be reduced to solitude;
12 Till God have removed men far away,
And till there be great desolation in the midst of the land:
13 Till a tenth shall return,
And be destroyed like a teil and an oak,
Whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves;
So in it shall the substance be the holy seed.

Translation: Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7

1 It came to pass, in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up against Jerusalem, to besiege it, but could not overcome it.

2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is allied with Ephraim; and his heart was moved, as when the trees of the forest are moved by the wind.

3 Then said Jehovah to Isaiah, Go out to meet Ahaz, thou and Shear-jashub, thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, at the road of the fullers field.

4 And thou shalt say to him:
Take heed, and be quiet;
Fear not, and let not thy heart be soft,
For the two tails of those smoking firebrands,
For the fierceness of the anger of Rezin the Syrian,
And of the son of Remaliah.

5 Because the Syrian hath taken wicked counsel against thee
With Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, saying:

6 Let us go up against Judah, and harass it,
And let us open it for us;
And let us appoint a king in the midst of it,
The son of Tabeal.

7 Thus hath the Lord Jehovah said,
It shall not stand, and shall not be,

8 For the head of Syria is Damascus,
And the head of Damascus is Rezin;

And within sixty-five years shall be broken
Ephraim, that it be not a people.
9 Yet the head of Ephraim is Samaria,
And the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.
If ye do not believe,
Surely ye shall not stand.
10 And Jehovah added to speak to Ahaz, saying:
11 Ask thee a sign from Jehovah thy God,
By asking in the deep,
Or in the height above.
12 And Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord.
13 And he said,
Hear now, O house of David!
Is it a small thing for you to weary men,
If ye do not also weary my God?
14 Therefore will the Lord himself give you a sign:
Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
And shall call his name Immanuel.
15 Butter and honey shall he eat,
Till he know to refuse the evil,
And to choose the good.
16 And before the child shall know
To refuse the evil and choose the good,
Forsaken shall be the land which thou hatest
By both her kings.
17 Jehovah will bring upon thee,
And on thy people, and on thy fathers house,
Days which have not come
Since the day of the revolt of Ephraim from Judah,
The king of Assyria.
18 It shall be in that day, Jehovah shall hiss
For the fly, which is in the extremity of the rivers of Egypt,
And for the bee which is in the land of Assyria.
19 And they shall all of them come and rest
In the desolate valleys, and in the caverns of the rocks,
And on all thorns, and on all bushes.
20 In that day shall Jehovah shave with a hired razor,
By those who are beyond the river, by the king of Assyria,
The head and the hair of the feet;
And shall also take away the beard.
21 And it shall be in that day, that a man shall nourish
A young cow and two sheep.
22 And it shall come to pass,
That, on account of the abundance of milk which they shall yield,

He shall eat butter.
Yea, butter and honey shall every one eat
That shall be left in the midst of the land.
23 It shall also be in that day,
That, wherever there are a thousand vines,
They shall be sold for a thousand pieces of silver,
On account of thorns and briers.
24 With arrows and bow shall they come thither,
Because thorns and briers shall be throughout all the land.
25 And on all the mountains which are dug with the hoe
Thither shall not come the dread of thorns and briers;
But they shall be laid out for pasture to the cattle,
And shall be trodden by the flocks.

Translation: Chapter 8

CHAPTER 8

1 And Jehovah said to me: Take thee a large roll, and write in it with an ordinary pen: [629] Make speed to spoil, hasten to the prey.

2 And I took unto me faithful witnesses, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

3 And I approached the prophetess, who conceived and bare a son. And Jehovah spake to me:
Call his name,
Make speed to spoil,
Hasten to the prey.

4 Verily before the child shall know
To cry, My father and my mother,
The riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria
Shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

5 Moreover, Jehovah spoke unto me, saying again:

6 Because this people hath refused
The waters of Shiloah, which flow softly,
And hath rejoiced in Rezin and the son of Remaliah:

7 Therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth upon them
The waters of the river, rapid and strong,
The king of Assyria and all his force;
And he shall come up over all his channels,
And shall pass over all his banks.

8 And, crossing over into Judah,
He shall overflow and pass over;

[629] Or, With the pen of a man.

He shall reach even to the neck;
And the stretching out of his wings shall fill
The breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.
9 Associate yourselves, ye peoples,
And ye shall be broken in pieces;
Give ear, all ye that are from a distant land.
Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces;
Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.
10 Take counsel together, and it shall be disannulled;
Decree a decree, and it shall not stand;
For God is with us. [630]
11 For thus did Jehovah speak to me, as if seizing [631] my hand,
And taught me not to go in the way of this people, saying,
12 Say ye not, A confederacy,
In all things in which this people saith, A confederacy;
And fear not their fear,
Nor be ye afraid.
13 Sanctify Jehovah of hosts himself;
And let him be your fear,
And let him be your dread.
14 Then shall he be for a sanctuary;
A stone of stumbling and rock of destruction
To the two houses of Israel;
A net and a snare
To the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall,
And shall be bruised, snared, and taken.
16 Bind up the testimony;
Seal the law among my disciples.
17 Therefore will I wait for Jehovah,
Who hideth his face from the house of Jacob,
And I will look for him.
18 Behold I, and the children whom Jehovah hath given me,
Are for signs and wonders in Israel,
From Jehovah of hosts,
Who dwelleth in Mount Zion.
19 And if they shall say to you,
Inquire at soothsayers and diviners,
Who whisper and mutter;
Should not a people ask counsel of their God?
From the living to the dead?
20 To the law and to the testimony:

[630] (Hebrew,) Immanuel.
[631] Or, Strengthening.

If they have not spoken according to this word,
It is because there is no light in them.
21 Then shall they pass through this land distressed and hungry,
And it shall happen that, when they are hungry, they shall fret,
And shall curse their king and their God, looking upward.
22 And when they shall look to the earth,
Lo, trouble and darkness, dimness and distress,
And they shall be driven to gloominess.

Translation: Chapter 9

CHAPTER 9

1 Yet the darkness shall not be,
According to the affliction which happened to her,
When they first lightly afflicted
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali;
Nor when they afterwards did more grievously afflict
By the way of the sea beyond Jordan,
In Galilee of the nations.

2 The people walking in darkness
Hath seen a great light.
They who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Light hath shined on them.

3 By multiplying the nation thou hast not increased the joy;
They have rejoiced before thee according to the joy of harvest,
As men shout in dividing the spoils.

4 For his burdensome yoke,
And the staff of his shoulder,
The sceptre of his oppressor
Hast thou broken, as in the day of Midian.

5 Although every battle of the warrior is made
With noise and rolling of the vesture in blood,
This shall be for burning,
For fuel of fire.

6 For to us a child is born;
To us a son is given;
And the government hath been laid upon his shoulder;
And his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor,

The mighty God, The Father of the age, The Prince of Peace.
7 To the increase of the government and to peace,
There shall be no end;
On the throne of David and on his kingdom,
To order and establish it
In judgment and justice,
Henceforth, even for ever.
The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will do this.
8 The Lord sent a word against Jacob,
And it hath fallen on Israel.
9 And all the people shall know,
Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria,
Who say in the pride and haughtiness of their heart,
10 The bricks are fallen down, and we will build with hewn stones;
The sycamores are cut down, and we will substitute cedars.
11 But Jehovah will strengthen the enemies of Rezin against him,
And will aid his adversaries.
12 Syria before, and the Philistines behind;
And they shall devour Israel with open mouth.
And for all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.
13 But the people have not turned to him that smote them,
And have not sought Jehovah of hosts.
14 Therefore will Jehovah cut off from Israel
The head and the tail,
The branch and the reed,
In one day.
15 The elder and the honourable, he is the head;
And the prophet who teacheth falsehood, he is the tail.
16 For the governors of this people are seducers,
And they who are guided by them are destroyed.
17 Therefore the Lord will not rejoice over their young men,
And will not have compassion on the orphans and widows;
For all are hypocrites and evil-doers,
And every mouth speaketh villany.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.
18 For wickedness burneth as the fire;
It shall devour the briers and thorns;
Afterwards it shall kindle into the thickets of the forest,
And the smoke of that which ascendeth shall go up.
19 Through the wrath of Jehovah of hosts
Shall the land be darkened,
And the people shall be as the fuel of fire:

No man shall spare his brother.
20 Every one shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry;
He shall eat on the left hand, and shall not be satisfied;
Every one shall devour the flesh of his own arm:
21 Manasseh, Ephraim;
And Ephraim, Manasseh;
They together shall be against Judah.
And yet for all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

Translation: Chapter 10

CHAPTER 10

1 Wo to them that decree unrighteous decrees,
And who prescribing prescribe injustice:
2 To keep back the poor from judgment,
And to take away the right from the poor of my people,
To defraud the widows,
And to plunder the orphans.
3 And what will ye do in the day of visitation?
And when the desolation shall come from afar,
To whom will ye flee for aid?
And where will ye deposit [632] your glory?
4 Unless [633] they shall stumble among the vanquished,
And shall fall down among the slain.
For all this his anger shall not be turned away,
And his hand is stretched out still.
5 O Assyrian! the rod of mine anger!
And the very staff in their hand is my wrath.
6 Against a hypocritical nation will I send him,
And against the people of my indignation will I command him,
To seize the prey,
To carry off the spoils,
And to tread him down as the mire of the streets.
7 Yet will he not so intend,
Nor will his heart think so;
For it will be in his heart to destroy,

[632] Or, Secure.
[633] Or, Without me they shall stumble.

And to cut off nations not a few.
8 For he saith, Are not my princes also kings?
9 Is not Calno as Carchemish?
Is not Hamath as Arpad?
Is not Samaria as Damascus?
10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols,
For their graven images excelled Jerusalem and Samaria.
11 As I have done to Samaria and her idols,
Shall I not do so to Jerusalem and her idols?
12 But it shall come to pass,
When the Lord shall have performed his whole work
In mount Zion and Jerusalem,
I will punish the fruit of the haughtiness of the heart of the king of Assyria,
And the glory of the loftiness of his eyes.
13 For he saith, By the strength of my hand have I done it;
And by my wisdom; for I am sagacious;
And therefore have I removed the boundaries of the peoples,
And have plundered their treasures,
And have brought down the inhabitants, like a mighty man.
14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the peoples;
And as eggs which have been left are gathered,
So have also I gathered the whole earth;
And there was none that moved the wing,
Or opened the mouth, or chirped.
15 Shall the axe boast against him that heweth with it?
Shall the saw magnify itself against him that moveth it?
Like the rising up of a rod against him that raiseth it,
Like the risings up of a staff, as if it were not wood.
16 Therefore will the Governor, Jehovah of hosts, send
Against his fat ones leanness,
And under his glory will kindle
A burning, like the burning of a fire.
17 And the light of Israel shall become a fire,
And his Holy One shall become a flame;
And it shall burn and devour
His briers and thorns in one day.
18 The glory of his forest and of his fruitful field,
From the soul even to the flesh, will he consume;
And it shall be as the fainting of a standard-bearer.
19 And the remains of the wood of his forest
Shall become a number,
Such that a child may count them.
20 It shall be in that day,
The remnant of Israel,

And they that are left of the house of Jacob,
Shall not add to rely on him that smote them;
For they shall rely on Jehovah,
The Holy One of Israel, in truth.
21 The remnant shall return, the remnant of Jacob,
To the mighty God.
22 For if thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea,
A remnant of it shall return.
The consumption decreed overfloweth righteousness. [634]
23 For a consumption and consummation
Doth the Lord Jehovah of hosts make
In the midst of all the land.
24 Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts:
O my people, the inhabitants of Zion,
Fear not the Assyrian.
He will smite thee with a rod,
And will lift up his staff against thee,
After the pattern of Egypt.
25 But yet a little while,
And my rage and indignation
Shall be discharged in their destruction.
26 And Jehovah of hosts will stir up a scourge against him,
According to the slaughter of Midian on the rock Oreb;
And his rod shall be on the sea,
And he will lift it up after the pattern of Egypt.
27 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That his burden shall be removed from thy shoulder,
And his yoke from thy neck;
And the yoke shall be destroyed
From the face of the anointing.
28 He is come to Aiath; he hath passed to Migron;
At Michmash he will lay up thy baggage.
29 They have crossed the ford; they have lodged by night at Geba;
Ramah is terrified; Gibeah of Saul hath fled.
30 Neigh with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim!
Cause it to be heard at Laish, O poor Anathoth.
31 Madmenah is removed;
The inhabitants of Gebim have gathered themselves.
32 Yet a day, when he shall remain at Nob,
He will lift up his hand
Against the mount of the daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem.
33 Behold! The Lord Jehovah of hosts

[634] Or, With righteousness.

Will cut off the branch with terror; [635]
And the lofty of stature shall be cut down,
And the haughty shall be brought low.

34 And he will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron,
And Lebanon shall fall violently.

[635] Or, Powerfully.

Translation: Chapter 11

CHAPTER 11

1 But a branch shall spring from the stock of Jesse,
And a sprout from his roots shall yield fruit.
2 And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and strength,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah;
3 And will make him sagacious in the fear of Jehovah;
Not according to the sight of his eyes shall he judge,
Nor according to the hearing of his ears shall he reprove.
4 For in righteousness he shall judge the poor,
And in equity shall he reprove for the meek of the earth;
And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
5 And righteousness shall be the belt of his loins,
And faithfulness the belt of his reins.
6 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
The calf, and the lion, and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall feed;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 And the child shall play on the hole of the asp,
And on the dell of the basilisk shall the weaned child lay his hand.
9 They shall not hurt, nor do injury,
In all the mountain of my holiness;

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah,
As with waters that cover the sea.
10 And it shall be in that day, The root of Jesse,
Which shall stand for an ensign of the peoples,
Shall be sought by the nations;
And his rest shall be glory.
11 And it shall be in that day,
The Lord will again apply his hand,
To recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left,
From Assyria, and from Egypt, from Parthia,
From Arabia, from Ethiopia, from Persia,
From Chaldea, from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.
12 And he shall lift up an ensign to the nations,
And shall gather the outcasts of Israel,
And shall gather the dispersed of Judah,
From the four corners of the earth.
13 And the envy of Ephraim shall depart,
And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off.
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
And Judah shall not vex Ephraim.
14 But they shall fly on the shoulders of the Philistines to the west;
They shall plunder together the children of the east;
Edom and Moab shall be the stretching out of their hands,
And the children of Ammon shall be their obedience.
15 And Jehovah shall utterly destroy
The tongue of the Egyptian sea;
And he shall lift up his hand on the river
By the might of his wind;
And he shall smite it in the seven streams,
And shall make them to be shod with shoes.
16 And there shall be a path for the remnant of his people,
Which shall be left from Assyria,
As there was to Israel,
In the day when he came up out of the land of Egypt.

Translation: Chapter 12

CHAPTER 12

1 And in that day thou shalt say:
I will sing to thee, O Jehovah;
Though thou wast angry with me,
Thine anger is turned away, and thou hast comforted me.

2 Behold! God is my salvation;
I will trust, and not be afraid;
For God Jehovah is my strength and song;
And he hath become [636] my salvation.

3 Ye shall draw waters with joy
From the fountains of the Saviour. [637]

4 And in that day shall ye say:
Sing to Jehovah; call upon his name;
Make known his works among the peoples;
Proclaim that his name is exalted.

5 Sing to Jehovah;
For he hath done glorious things;
And this hath been made known throughout all the earth.

6 Shout and sing,
O inhabitress of Zion!
For great in the midst of thee,
Is the Holy One of Israel.

[636] Or, Will be.
[637] Or, Of salvation.

Translation: Chapter 13

CHAPTER 13

1 The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw.

2 On a lofty mountain lift up a banner;
Raise the voice to them; shake the hand;
That they may enter into the gates of the nobles.

3 I have commanded my sanctified ones;
And for mine anger have I also called my mighty ones,
Who rejoice in my glory.

4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains,
As of a great people;
The noise of the sound of kingdoms,
Of nations gathered together;
Jehovah of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.

5 Coming from a distant land,
From the end of heaven,
Jehovah and the vessels of his anger,
To destroy the whole land.

6 Howl ye, for the day of Jehovah is at hand;
As destruction from the Strong One [638] shall it come.

7 Therefore shall all hands be weakened,
And every heart of man shall melt.

8 And they shall be afraid;
Pangs And sorrows shall take hold of them;
They shall be in pain like a woman in labour;
Every one shall be amazed at his neighbour;

[638] Or, From a strong destroyer.

Their faces shall be faces of flames.
9 Behold! the day of Jehovah shall come cruel;
Even indignation and the burning of anger,
To lay the land desolate,
And to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
10 Therefore the stars of heaven, and the constellations,
Shall not give their light;
The sun shall be darkened in his going forth,
And the moon shall not give forth her brightness.
11 And I will visit upon the world wickedness,
And upon the wicked their iniquity;
And I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease,
And I will lay low the loftiness of tyrants.
12 I will make a mortal more precious than fine gold,
And a man than the weight of the gold of Ophir.
13 Therefore I will shake the heavens,
And the earth shall be moved out of its place,
In the indignation of Jehovah of hosts,
And in the day of the fierceness of his anger.
14 And it shall be as a chased roe,
And a sheep which no man taketh up;
Every one shall look to his own people,
And every one shall flee to his own land.
15 Every one that is found shall be pierced through,
And every one that is joined to them shall fall by the sword.
16 Their infants shall be dashed in pieces before their eyes;
Their houses shall be plundered,
And their wives shall be ravished.
17 Behold! I raise up against you the Medes,
Who shall not think of silver,
And shall not desire even gold.
18 And with their bows shall they dash in pieces the children;
They shall not pity the fruit of the womb,
Nor shall their eye spare children.
19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
And the ornament of the brightness of the Chaldeans,
Shall be like God's overthrowing of Sodom And Gomorrah.
20 Never shall it be inhabited any more,
Nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation;
Nor shall the Arabian pitch his tent there,
Nor shall the shepherds make their flocks to lie down there.
21 But the Ziim shall lie down there;
And their houses shall be full of Ohim;
There shall the daughters of the ostrich dwell,

And there shall the satyrs dance.

22 And Iim shall cry in their splendid houses,
And dragons in their delightful palaces;
And her time is near at hand,
And her days shall not be prolonged.

Translation: Chapter 14

CHAPTER 14

1 Jehovah will now pity Jacob,
And will yet choose Israel,
And will cause them to rest in their own land;
And the stranger shall be joined to them;
They shall be allied to the house of Jacob.

2 And the peoples shall take them,
And shall bring them to their own place,
And in the land of Jehovah shall the house of Israel
Possess them for servants and for handmaids;
And they shall take them whose captives they were,
And shall rule over their oppressors.

3 And it shall be in the day,
When Jehovah shall have given thee rest
From thy labour,
And from thy trembling,
And from the hard bondage which had been laid on thee.

4 Then against the king of Babylon
Shalt thou take up this proverb, and shalt say,
How hath the oppressor ceased!
How hath the city covetous of gold ceased!

5 Jehovah hath broken the staff of the wicked,
The sceptre of the rulers,

6 Which smote the nations in anger,
With an incurable wound;
Which ruled over the nations with anger;
If any one suffered persecution,

He did not hinder it.
7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet;
They have sung praise.
8 Yea, the fir-trees rejoice over thee,
And the cedars of Lebanon:
Since thou art laid down,
No feller hath come up against us.
9 Hell from beneath is moved on account of thee;
To meet thy coming
He hath stirred up the dead for thee,
And hath made to rise from their thrones
All the leaders of the earth,
All the kings of the nations.
10 All shall speak, and say to thee:
Art thou also become weak as we?
And art thou become like to us?
11 In the grave is laid thy splendour,
And the noise of thine instruments of music;
The worm is spread under thee,
And reptiles cover thee.
12 How art thou fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the dawn!
How art thou thrown down to the earth,
That didst cast the lot upon the nations! [639]
13 But thou saidst in thy heart,
I will ascend to heaven;
In high places near the stars of God
Will I place my throne,
And will sit on the mountain of the testimony,
On the sides of the north.
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
And will be like the Most High.
15 But thou art brought down to the grave,
To the sides of the pit.
16 They that see thee shall bend forward,
And shall view thee attentively.
Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?
That shook the kingdoms?
17 That made the world as a wilderness;
That destroyed its cities?
That opened not the house to his prisoners?
18 All the kings of the nations, all of them,
Lie in glory, each in his own house.

[639] Or, That didst weaken the nations.

19 But thou art cast out of thy grave,
As an abominable branch,
As the garments of the slain
Who were killed with the sword,
Who go down to the pit;
As a carcase trodden under foot.
20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial;
Because thou hast laid waste thy land,
Thou hast slain thy people;
The seed of wicked men shall not be continually remembered.
21 Prepare slaughter for his children,
For the iniquity of their fathers;
That they may not rise, and possess the land,
And fill the face of the world with cities.
22 For I will rise up against them, saith Jehovah of hosts,
And the name and the remnant,
The son and the grandson,
Will I cut off, saith Jehovah.
23 And I will make it to be a possession of the hedgehog,
And pools of water;
And I will sweep it with a besom, emptying it,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.
24 Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying,
If it hath not been as I thought,
And if it shall not stand as I purposed,
25 That in my land I will crush the Assyrian,
And on my mountains will tread him under foot;
And that his yoke shall depart from them,
And his burden be removed from their shoulder.
26 This is the purpose which is purposed on the whole earth;
And this hand is stretched out on all the nations.
27 For Jehovah of hosts hath decreed, and who shall disannul it?
His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?
28 In the year in which Ahaz the king died, was this burden.
29 Rejoice not, thou whole Palestina,
Because the rod of him that smote thee is broken;
For from the root of the adder shall spring a cockatrice,
And his fruit shall be a fiery serpent.
30 And the first-born of the poor shall feed,
And the needy shall lie down in safety;
And I will cause thy root to die with famine,
And he shall slay thy remnant.
31 Howl, O gate! cry, O city!
Thou whole Palestina art dissolved;

For smoke cometh from the north;
And no one shall be alone in his appointed day.

32 And what shall be answered to the messengers of the nations?
That Jehovah hath founded Zion,
And the poor of his people shall have confidence in her.

Translation: Chapter 15

CHAPTER 15

1 The burden of Moab.
Because in the night Ar of Moab
Is laid waste, and brought to silence;
Surely in the night Kir of Moab
Is laid waste, and brought to silence.

2 He shall go up into the house, and to the high places of Dibon, to weep;
Over Nebo, and over Medeba, shall Moab howl.
On all his heads shall be baldness,
And every beard shall be shaved.

3 In his cross-roads shall they be girded with sackcloth;
On his roofs, and in his streets,
Shall every one howl, and go down to weep.

4 Heshbon and Elealeh shall cry aloud;
As far as Jahaz shall their voice be heard;
Therefore shall the armed men of Moab howl;
The soul of each man shall howl to itself.

5 My heart shall cry aloud for Moab;
Her fugitives to Zoar, a heifer of three years old;
By the going up of Luhith shall they go up with weeping,
By the way of Horonaim shall they raise the cry of sorrow.

6 The waters of Nimrim are cut off;
The grass is withered,
The herbage hath failed,
No verdure is left.

7 Therefore what every one hath left, and his riches,

They shall carry to the brook of the willows. [640]

8 The cry hath gone round the borders of Moab;
Even to Eglaim is his howling.
And even to Beer-Elim is his howling.

9 Because the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood;
For I will lay additions upon Dimon,
Lions to them that are escaped of Moab,
And to the remnant of the land.

[640] Or, To the Arabians.

Translation: Chapter 16

CHAPTER 16

1 Send ye the lamb to the governor of the land,
From the rock of the desert
To the mountain of the daughter of Zion.

2 And it shall be as a bird let loose, wandering from its nest,
So shall the daughters of Moab be at the fords of Arnon.

3 Assemble a council; execute judgment;
Make thy shadow as the night in the midst of noon-day;
Hide the banished;
Betray not the fugitive.

4 Let mine outcasts dwell with thee.
Moab, be thou a place of concealment
From the face of the destroyer;
For the extortioner hath ceased;
The destroyer hath failed;
He that trod us under foot hath been consumed out of the land.

5 And in mercy shall the throne be prepared;
And he shall sit upon it in steadfastness,
To judge in the tabernacle of David,
And to seek judgment,
And to hasten righteousness.

6 We have heard of the pride of Ahab, (he is very proud,)
His pride, his haughtiness, and his insolence; [641]
But his lies shall not be successful.

7 Therefore shall Moab howl to Moab, all shall howl,

[641] Or, His indignation.

On account of the foundations of Kirhareseth;
You will groan, being only smitten.

8 For the vines of Heshbon are cut down,
The vine of Sibmah.
The lords of the nations have trodden down her choicest roots, [642]
Which reached even to Jazer,
Which wandered even to the wilderness;
Her noble plants have been thrown down,
Which crossed the sea.

9 Therefore will I bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah;
I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh!
Because on thy summer fruits, and on thy harvest,
A shouting shall break forth. [643]

10 Joy and rejoicing have been taken away from the fruitful field;
In the vineyards shall there be no rejoicing nor shouting.
The treader shall not tread wine in the presses;
I have made the shouting to cease.

11 Therefore my bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab,
And my inward parts for Kirharesh.

12 And it shall be, when it shall be seen
That Moab hath been wearied on the high places,
Then shall he come to the sanctuary to pray,
And shall not profit by it.

13 This is the word which Jehovah uttered concerning Moab since that time.

14 Now, I say, Jehovah hath spoken, saying —
Three years, as the years of a hireling;
And the glory of Moab,
With all her multitude, however great,
Shall be turned into disgrace;
And her remnant shall be few, small, and feeble.

CHAPTERS 17—32

[642] Or, Her choicest branches.
[643] Or, Shall fall.

Translation: Chapter 17

CHAPTER 17

1 The burden of Damascus.
Behold, Damascus is taken away, that it be not a city;
For it shall be a heap of ruins.
2 The cities of Aroer are forsaken;
They shall be changed into sheepfolds;
They shall lie down,
And there shall be none to terrify them.
3 And the fortress shall cease from Ephraim,
And the kingdom from Damascus;
And the remnant of Syria shall be
As the glory of the children of Israel,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.
4 And it shall be in that day,
The glory of Jacob shall be diminished,
And the fatness of his flesh shall become lean.
5 And it shall be as he who gathereth the harvest of the corn,
Who reapeth the ears with his arm,
Like as one gleaneth grapes in the valley of Rephaim.
6 And in thee shall be left a gleaning, as the shaking of an olive-tree;
There two or three berries remain on the top of the highest branch,
Four or five on the spreading branches of its fruit,
Saith Jehovah, the God of Israel.
7 In that day shall a man look to his Maker,
And his eyes shall be fixed on the Holy One of Israel.
8 And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his own hands.
Nor view the things which his fingers have made,

Nor the groves,
Nor the graven images.
9 In that day the cities of his strength shall be
As the forsaking of a thicket and of a branch,
In like manner as they left before the children of Israel;
And there shall be desolation.
10 Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation,
And hast not been mindful of the God of thy strength;
Therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants,
And thou shalt ingraft a foreign shoot.
11 In the day of thy plantation shalt thou make it to grow,
And in the morning thou shalt make thy seed to sprout;
But in the day of enjoying shall the harvest fail,
And the grief shall be desperate.
12 Alas! the multitude of many peoples;
Like the sound of many peoples shall they sound,
And like the noise of nations;
Like the noise of mighty waters shall they rush.
13 Like the noise of mighty waters
Shall the peoples make a noise,
And he will rebuke them,
And will drive them far away;
They shall be chased
As the chaff of the mountains before the wind,
And as a rolling thing before the whirlwind.
14 In the evening time, behold! trouble:
Ere it be morning, it shall not at all be.
This is the portion of them that tread us down,
And the lot of them that plunder us.

Translation: Chapter 18

CHAPTER 18

1 Alas! the land shadowing with wings,
Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.

2 Sending ambassadors by the sea,
In ships of reeds on the waters.
Go, ye swift messengers,
To a nation scattered and plundered,
To a people terrible from that time and till now,
To a nation trodden down on every side,
Whose land the rivers have plundered.

3 All ye inhabitants of the world,
And dwellers on the earth,
When he shall set up a standard on the mountains, you shall see it;
When he shall sound a trumpet, you shall hear it.

4 Thus also hath Jehovah said to me,
I will rest, and will look in my tabernacle,
As the heat that drieth up the rain,
And as a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.

5 For when the harvest shall be at hand,
The bud shall be perfect,
And the ripening fruit shall go out of the flower;
Then will he prune the twigs with pruning-hooks,
And cut down and take away the branches.

6 They shall be left together to the fowls of the mountains,
And to the beasts of the earth.
The fowls shall spend the summer upon them,
And all the beasts of the earth shall spend the winter upon them.

7 At that time shall a present be brought to Jehovah of hosts,
A people torn and plundered,
And from a people terrible from the beginning hitherto;
From a nation trodden down on every side,
Whose land the rivers have plundered,
To the place of the name of Jehovah of hosts,
To Mount Zion.

Translation: Chapter 19

CHAPTER 19

1 The burden of Egypt.
Behold, Jehovah rideth on a swift cloud,
And will come into Egypt;
And the idols of Egypt shall be moved before his face,
And the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of her.
2 And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians;
Then shall they fight every one against his brother,
Every one against his neighbour;
City against city,
And kingdom against kingdom.
3 And the spoil of Egypt shall be emptied in the midst of her,
And I will destroy her counsel,
Even though they seek to the idols, to the magicians,
To the soothsayers, to the diviners.
4 And I will deliver the Egyptians, into the hand of a cruel master,
And a powerful king shall rule over them,
Saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.
5 Then shall the waters fail from the sea,
And the flood shall be wasted and dried up.
6 The rivers shall be turned aside;
The brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up;
The reed and the flag shall wither.
7 The herbs at the brook, and on the mouth of the brook,
And all the seed of the river,
Shall wither, and be driven away, that it may be no more.
8 And the fishers shall mourn,

And all who cast a hook into the brook shall lament;
They who spread a net on the face of the waters shall anguish.
9 They who work in the finest flax shall blush,
And they who weave perforated [644] meshes.
10 For their nets shall be broken,
And all that make a net shall be sad in their heart.
11 Surely the princes of Zoan are fools;
The counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is foolish.
How say ye to Pharaoh,
I am the son of the wise,
And the son of ancient kings?
12 Where are now thy wise men?
That they may declare to thee,
Or that they may even know,
What Jehovah of hosts hath decreed concerning Egypt.
13 The princes of Zoan are become infatuated,
The princes of Noph are deceived;
Egypt hath been led astray
By a corner of her tribes.
14 Jehovah hath mingled a spirit of perverseness in the midst of her;
And they have misled Egypt in all her work,
As a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.
15 Neither shall Egypt have any work to do,
The head or the tail,
The branch or the rush.
16 In that day shall Egypt be like women;
For it shall shudder and tremble,
From before the shaking of the hand of Jehovah of hosts,
Which he shall shake over it.
17 And to the Egyptians shall the land of Judah be a terror.
Every one that shall mention it
Shall tremble on account of her,
Because of the purpose of Jehovah of hosts,
Which he hath decreed concerning her.
18 In that day shall there be five cities in the land of Egypt,
Speaking with the lip of Canaan,
And swearing by Jehovah of hosts.
One shall be called, The city of desolation.
19 In that day shall there be
An altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt,
And a statue to Jehovah near its border.
20 And it shall be for a sign and for a witness
To Jehovah of hosts, in the land of Egypt;

[644] Or, Transparent.

For they shall cry to Jehovah because of the oppressors,
And he will send to them a saviour,
And a ruler, that he may deliver them.
21 And Jehovah shall be known by the Egyptians;
The Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day,
And shall make sacrifice and oblation,
And shall vow vows to Jehovah, and perform them.
22 Therefore will the Lord smite Egypt,
Smiting and healing;
For they shall be turned to Jehovah,
And he will be entreated by them,
And will heal them.
23 In that day shall there be a way from Egypt into Assyria;
The Assyrians shall go into Egypt,
And the Egyptians into Assyria;
And the Egyptians shall serve the Assyrians. [645]
24 In that day shall Israel be,
With Egypt and with Assyria,
The third blessing in the midst of the land.
25 For Jehovah of hosts will bless him, saying,
Blessed be the Egyptian, my people,
And the Assyrian, the work of my hands,
And Israel, my inheritance.

[645] Or, Shall serve with the Assyrians.

Translation: Chapter 20

CHAPTER 20

1 In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, (when Sargon, the king of Assyria, sent him,) and attacked Ashdod, and took it.

2 At that time Jehovah spoke by the hand of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saying,
Go and loose the sackcloth from thy loins,
And put off thy shoe from thy foot.

3 And he did so, walking naked and barefooted. And Jehovah said:
As my servant Isaiah for three years
Hath walked naked and barefooted,
A sign and a wonder
Concerning Egypt and concerning Ethiopia;

4 So will the king of Assyria lead away the captivity of Egypt,
And the removal of Ethiopia,
Of the young and of the old,
Naked and barefooted,
And with their hinder parts uncovered,
To the disgrace of Egypt.

5 And they shall be afraid and ashamed
Of Ethiopia their expectation,
And of Egypt their glory. [646]

6 And in that day shall the inhabitant of this island say,
Behold! what is become of our expectation,
To which we fled for aid,
That we might be delivered from the face of the king of Assyria;

[646] Or, Their beauty.

And how shall we escape?

Translation: Chapter 21

CHAPTER 21

1 The burden of the desert of the sea.
As storms that pass from a southerly direction,
It will come from the wilderness,
From a terrible land.

2 A harsh vision hath been declared to me,
The transgressor to the transgressor,
And the plunderer to the plunderer.
Go up, O Persian! Besiege, O Mede!
All his groaning have I made to cease.

3 Therefore are my loins filled with pain;
Pangs have seized me, as the pangs of a woman in labour;
I am bowed down at hearing,
And am dismayed at seeing.

4 My heart is shaken;
Terror hath overwhelmed me;
The night of my pleasures
He hath changed to terror.

5 Prepare the table;
Watch in the watch-tower;
Eat, drink;
Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.

6 For thus hath the Lord said to me:
Go, appoint a watchman,
That he may declare what he seeth.

7 And he saw a chariot of a couple of horsemen,
A chariot of an ass, and a chariot of a camel;

Next, he looked attentively,
And watched eagerly.
8 Then he cried, A lion.
On my watch-tower, my lord, I continually stand by day,
And in my ward am I stationed whole nights.
9 And behold, here cometh a chariot of a man,
A couple of horsemen.
And he spake, and said,
Babylon is fallen, is fallen!
And all the graven images of her gods
Hath he broken to the ground.
10 O my thrashing, and the corn of my floor!
I have related to you what I have heard
From Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel.
11 The burden of Dumah.
He calleth to me out of Seir:
Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?
12 The watchman said:
The morning cometh, afterwards the night.
If ye will inquire, inquire ye.
Return, come.
13 The burden in Arabia.
In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge,
In the ways of Dedanim.
14 To meet the thirsty bring waters,
O inhabitants of the land of Tema!
Relieve the fugitive with thy bread.
15 For they flee from the face of the swords,
From the face of the drawn sword,
From the face of the bent bow,
From the face of the grievousness of war.
16 For thus hath the Lord said to me:
Yet a year, according to the years of a hireling,
Then shall all the glory of Kedar fail;
17 And then shall be diminished the number of the archers,
Which shall be reckoned among the mighty sons of Kedar;
For Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath spoken it.

Translation: Chapter 22

CHAPTER 22

1 The burden of the valley of vision.
What hast thou here, [647]
That thou art entirely gone up upon the roofs?
2 Full of miseries,
Tumultuous city, joyful city;
Thy slain men are not slain by the sword,
And are not dead in battle.
3 All thy rulers have fled;
Together have they been made prisoners by the archers;
All that were found in thee have been made prisoners together,
Who have fled from afar.
4 Therefore I said, Let me alone;
I will be bitter in my weeping;
Labour not to comfort me
Because of the plundering of the daughters of my people.
5 For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity,
From the Lord Jehovah of hosts, in the valley of vision,
Demolishing the city,
And crying to the mountain.
6 Yet Elam beareth the quiver
In a chariot of men and horsemen,
And Kir uncovereth the shield.
7 And the choice of thy valleys was filled with chariots,
And horsemen set themselves in array at the gate.

[647] Or, What hast thou now?

8 And he took away the covering of Judah;
And thou didst look in that day
To the armory of the house of the forest.
9 And ye have seen the breaches of the city of David, which were many;
And ye collected the waters of the lower pool.
10 And the houses of Jerusalem have ye numbered,
And ye have thrown down houses to fortify the wall.
11 For the waters of the old pool
Have ye also made a ditch between the walls;
And ye have not looked to him that made it,
And have not seen him that formed it in ancient times. [648]
12 And in that day the Lord, Jehovah of hosts,
Called to weeping and to lamentation,
To baldness and girding with sackcloth;
13 And, behold! joy and gladness,
Slaying oxen, killing sheep,
Eating flesh, and drinking wine,
Eating and drinking;
For tomorrow we shall die!
14 It was revealed in my ears by Jehovah of hosts,
If this iniquity shall be forgiven you till ye die,
Saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts.
15 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts,
Go, approach to that abettor,
To Shebna, the ruler of the house.
16 What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here?
That thou hast hewed out here for thyself a sepulchre,
As he who heweth out his sepulchre on high,
Or who cutteth out a habitation for himself in the rock.
17 Behold, Jehovah will carry thee away with a remarkable carrying away,
And covering will cover thee.
18 Whirling he will turn thee with whirling,
As a ball with the hands, into a distant country;
There shalt thou die;
And there the chariot of thy glory
Shall be the disgrace of the house of thy lord.
19 And I will drive thee from thy post,
And from thy abode shall he east thee out.
20 And it shall be in that day, I will call my servant,
Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah.
21 And I will clothe him with thy raiment,
And will strengthen him with thy girdle,
And will deliver thy power into his hand;

[648] Or, From a distance.

And he shall be a father of the inhabitant of Jerusalem,
And of the house of Judah.
22 And I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder;
He will open, and none shall shut;
He will shut, and none shall open.
23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place,
And to the house of his father he shall become a throne of glory.
24 And all the glory of his fathers house,
Grandchildren and great-grandchildren,
All smaller vessels,
From vessels of cups to all vessels of musical instruments,
They shall hang upon him.
25 In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts,
The nail fixed in a sure place shall be removed,
And shall be cut down, and shall fall;
And the burden which was upon it shall be cut off;
For Jehovah hath spoken it.

Translation: Chapter 23

CHAPTER 23

1 The burden of Tyre.
Howl, ye ships of Tarshish;
For desolation has been made,
So that there is no house,
That there is no entering in from the land of Chittim.
This was revealed to them.

2 Be silent, ye inhabitants of the islands,
The merchant of Sidon; they that crossed the sea;
Who supplied thee.

3 By great waters was the seed of the Nile;
Her fruits were the harvest of the river;
And she was a mart of nations.

4 Be ashamed, O Sidon;
For the sea hath spoken,
The strength of the sea, saying,
I have not conceived nor brought forth,
And I have not brought up young men,
And have not reared virgins.

5 As soon as the report shall reach the Egyptians,
They shall be grieved according to the report of Tyre.

6 Pass ye over to Tarshish;
Howl, ye inhabitants of the islands.

7 Is this your exulting city?
From ancient days is her antiquity.
Her feet shall carry her,
To travel into a distant country.

8 Who hath consulted this concerning crowning Tyre,
Whose merchants are princes,
Whose traders are the nobles of the land?
9 Thus hath Jehovah of hosts decreed,
To profane the pride of all that are illustrious,
To bring into contempt all the renowned of the land.
10 Cross over from thy land, like a river,
To the daughter of Tarshish;
For there is no longer any girdle.
11 He laid his hand upon the sea,
He shook kingdoms.
Jehovah hath commanded concerning Canaan,
To weaken her strength.
12 And he saith, O virgin daughter of Sidon,
When thou shalt be oppressed,
Thou shalt not add any more to rejoice.
Arise, that thou mayest pass over into Chittim;
Yet even there thou shalt not have rest.
13 Behold, the land of the Chaldeans;
This was not a people;
Assyria founded it for the inhabitants of the wilderness;
They have reared its fortresses;
They have built its palaces;
He hath reduced it to desolation.
14 Howl, ye ships of Tarshish;
For your strength is laid waste.
15 It shall come to pass in that day,
That Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years,
According to the days of one king;
At the end of seventy years
Shall Tyre have a song like that of a harlot.
16 Take a harp, go about the city,
O harlot, devoted to forgetfulness!
Make sweet melody, multiply song,
That thou mayest be kept in remembrance.
17 It shall then be at the end of seventy years,
That Jehovah will visit Tyre;
And then shall she return to her hire,
And shall commit fornication
With all the kingdoms of the earth
Which are upon the earth.
18 Yet her merchandise and her hire
Shall be holy to Jehovah;
It shall not be treasured nor laid up;

But her merchandise shall be
For them that dwell before Jehovah,
That they may eat sufficiently,
And may have a thick covering.

Translation: Chapter 24

CHAPTER 24

1 Behold, Jehovah emptieth the earth,
Maketh it bare,
Overturneth its face,
And scattereth its inhabitants.

2 And it shall be, as the people, so the priest;
As the servant, so his master;
As the maid, so her mistress;
As the buyer, so the seller;
As the lender, so the borrower;
As the usurer, so he that giveth usury. [649]

3 By emptying shall the earth be emptied,
And by plundering shall it be plundered;
For Jehovah hath spoken this word.

4 The earth hath lamented, and hath fallen;
The world hath languished, and hath fallen;
They who were the lofty people of the earth have languished.

5 And the earth hath been deceitful under its inhabitants;
Because they have transgressed the laws,
They have changed the ordinance,
They have broken the covenant of eternity.

6 Therefore hath the curse consumed the earth,
And its inhabitants are made desolate;
Therefore are the inhabitants of the earth burned,
And few men have been left.

[649] Or, As the creditor, so the debtor.

7 The wine hath failed;
The vine hath languished;
All who were of joyful heart have groaned.
8 The joy of tabrets hath ceased,
The noise of them that exult is ended,
The mirth of the harp is silent.
9 They shall not drink wine with a song;
Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.
10 The city of vanity is broken down;
Every house is shut up, that none may enter.
11 There is a cry about wine in the streets;
All joy is darkened;
The mirth of the land hath departed.
12 Desolation is left in the city,
And the gate is smitten with desolation.
13 For in the midst of the land,
In the midst of the peoples,
Thus shall it be as the shaking of an olive-tree,
And as the shaking of the grapes, when the vintage is ended.
14 They shall lift up their voice;
They shall shout for the majesty of the Lord;
They shall cry aloud from the sea.
15 Therefore glorify ye Jehovah in the valleys,
The name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea.
16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs,
Glory to the Righteous One!
And I said, I have leanness! I have leanness! Wo to me!
The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously;
With treachery have the treacherous dealers dealt treacherously.
17 Fear, and the pit, and the snare,
Are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth!
18 And it shall come to pass,
That he who fleeth from the voice of fear,
Shall fall into the pit,
And he who goeth up out of the midst of the pit
Shall be taken in the snare;
For the windows from on high are opened,
And the foundations of the earth are shaken.
19 By bruising is the earth bruised;
By breaking down is the earth broken down;
By shaking is the earth shaken.
20 With reeling doth the earth reel, like a drunkard;
And it shall be removed, like a tabernacle;
And its transgression shall be heavy upon it;

And it shall fall, and shall not add to rise again.
21 And it shall be in that day,
Jehovah will visit
Upon the high army on high,
And upon the kings of the earth on the earth.
22 And with gathering together shall they be gathered together
Like prisoners in a dungeon;
And they shall be shut up in a prison;
Afterwards at the end of many days shall they be visited.
23 The moon shall be confounded,
And the sun shall be ashamed,
When Jehovah of hosts shall reign
In Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem;
And before his elders glory.

Translation: Chapter 25

CHAPTER 25

1 O Jehovah, thou art my God;
I will exalt thee;
I will praise thy name;
For thou hast done a wonderful thing;
Counsels which have been already decreed of old;
Firm truth.

2 For thou hast made of a city a heap;
A fortified city to be a ruin;
A palace of foreigners, that it may not be a city,
That it may never be built.

3 Therefore shall the mighty people glorify thee;
The city of the powerful nations shall fear thee.

4 For thou hast been strength to the poor;
Strength to the needy in his affliction;
A refuge from the flood,
A shadow from the heat;
For the breath of the strong [650] ones
Was as a storm [651] against the wall.

5 As the heat in a dry place,
Thou wilt lay low the noise of foreigners,
As the heat by the shadow of a cloud;
The shouting [652] of the strong ones wilt thou lay low.

6 And Jehovah of hosts will make

[650] Or, Of the violent ones.
[651] Or, As a flood.
[652] Or, The singing; or, The cutting off.

For all people in that mountain
A feast of fat things,
A feast of liquids purified,
Of fat things full of marrow,
Of liquids purified.
7 And he will destroy in that mountain
The face of the covering with which all nations were covered,
And the veil which was spread over all nations.
8 He hath destroyed death eternally.
And the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from all faces,
And will take away the disgrace of his people from all the earth;
For Jehovah hath spoken it.
9 And it shall he said in that day:
Lo, this is our God;
We have waited for him,
And he will save us;
This is Jehovah;
We have waited for him;
We will rejoice and be glad in his salvation.
10 For the hand of Jehovah shall rest on that mountain;
And Moab shall be trodden down under him,
As straw is trodden down on the dunghill.
11 And he will spread out his hand under the midst of them,
As a swimmer spreadeth forth his hands to swim;
And he will lay low their pride,
With the arms of their hands.
12 And the fortress of the loftiness of thy walls
He will bring down,
He will lay low,
And he will cast down to the ground,
To the dust.

Translation: Chapter 26

CHAPTER 26

1 In that day shall a song be sung in the land of Judah;
We have a city of strength;
He hath made salvation to be walls and a rampart.

2 Open ye the gates,
And the righteous nation shall enter,
Which keepeth the truth.

3 The thought is fixed;
Thou wilt keep peace, peace;
For they have trusted in thee.

4 Hope ye in Jehovah for ever;
For in Jah Jehovah is the strength of ages.

5 For he will bow down the inhabitants of loftiness;
He will lay low the elevated city;
He will lay it low to the ground;
He will bring it to the dust.

6 The foot shall tread it down;
The feet of the poor,
The steps of the needy.

7 Straightnesses are the path of the righteous man;
The straight way of the righteous man thou wilt weigh. [653]

8 Even in the way of thy judgments, O Jehovah,
We have waited for thee;
To thy name,
And to the remembrance of thee,

[653] Or, Thou, who art upright, wilt weigh (or, wilt direct) the path of the righteous man.

Is the desire of the soul.
9 My soul hath desired thee in the night;
Yea, with my spirit within me I will seek thee in the morning; [654]
For so soon as thy judgments shall be in the earth,
The inhabitants of the earth shall learn righteousness.
10 The wicked man will obtain favour,
And will not learn righteousness;
In the land of upright actions he will deal unjustly,
And will not behold the majesty of Jehovah.
11 Jehovah, though thy hand is lifted up,
They will not see;
They shall see, and be ashamed,
Through their envy of the people;
Yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.
12 O Jehovah, thou wilt ordain peace for us;
For thou also hast wrought all our works for us.
13 O Jehovah our God,
Lords besides thee have had dominion over us;
By thee only will we call thy name to remembrance.
14 The dead shall not live;
The slain shall not rise again;
Therefore thou hast visited and driven them away,
And hast destroyed all remembrance of them.
15 Thou hast added to the nation, O Jehovah!
Thou hast added to the nation;
Thou art glorified;
Thou hast enlarged all the boundaries of the earth.
16 O Jehovah, in trouble have they visited thee;
They poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them.
17 As a woman with child, who draweth near to her delivery,
Is in pain, and crieth out in her pains;
So have we been before thy face, O Jehovah.
18 We have been in labour,
We have had pain,
As if we had brought forth wind;
Salvation hath not been wrought for the earth,
And the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.
19 Thy dead men shall live;
My dead body, they shall arise;
Awake and sing, ye inhabitants of the dust;
For thy dew is the dew of herbs;
And the earth shall cast out the dead. [655]

[654] Or, Earnestly.
[655] Or, Thou wilt overthrow the land of the giants; or, The earth will cause the giants to fall.

20 Come, O my people;
Enter thou into thy chambers;
Shut the door behind thee;
Hide thyself a little for a moment,
Till the indignation pass over.
21 For, behold, Jehovah cometh out of his place,
To visit the iniquity of the inhabitant of the earth against him;
And the earth shall disclose her blood,
And shall no longer cover her slain.

Translation: Chapter 27

CHAPTER 27

1 In that day will Jehovah visit
With his hard, and great, and strong sword,
On leviathan the piercing serpent,
And on leviathan the crooked serpent;
And he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.

2 In that day sing ye to the vineyard of redness.

3 I Jehovah keep it;
Every moment will I water it;
That (the enemy) may not visit it,
I will keep it night and day.

4 Fury doth not dwell in me.
Who shall engage me in battle with the brier and thorn? [656]
I will pass through it in a hostile manner,
I will utterly burn it up.

5 Will she take hold of my strength,
That she may make peace with me?
Yea, that she may make peace with me?

6 Afterwards shall Jacob put forth roots;
Israel shall bud and blossom;
And the face of the world shall be filled with fruit.

7 Hath he smitten him according to the stroke of him that smote him?
Hath he been slain according to the slaughter of them that slew him?

8 In measure, in her shooting forth,
Thou wilt contend with her;

[656] Or, Who shall set the brier against the thorn? or, Who shall set me as a brier and thorn?

Even though he blow with his violent wind
In the day of the east wind.

9 Therefore in this manner shall the iniquity of Jacob be expiated;
And this is all the fruit,
The taking away of his sin;
When he shall make all the stones of the altar
As lime-stones broken in pieces,
That groves and images may not rise again.

10 Yet the fortified city shall be desolate;
The inhabited place shall be deserted,
And forsaken like a wilderness.
There the calf shall feed,
And there shall lie down,
And shall browse on its tops.

11 When its harvest shall wither, they shall break [657] it;
Women coming shall burn it;
For it is a people that doth not understand;
Therefore their Maker will not have compassion on them,
And he who formed them will not be gracious to them.

12 Yet in that day it shall come to pass
That Jehovah will thrash
From the channel of the river
To the river of Egypt;
And ye shall be gathered one by one,
O children of Israel.

13 It shall also come to pass in that day
That the great trumpet shall be blown;
And they shall come who were perishing in the land of Assyria,
And who had been scattered in the land of Egypt;
And they shall worship Jehovah
In the holy mountain, in Jerusalem.

[657] Or, Shall cut it down.

Translation: Chapter 28

CHAPTER 28

1 Wo to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim;
For the splendour of his glory shall be a fading flower,
Which is on the head of the valley of the fat ones,
Of them that are overcome by wine.

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one;
As a deluge of hail,
A desolating whirlwind;
As the violence of mighty waters overflowing,
Casting down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim
Shall be trodden under feet.

4 And the splendour of his glory shall be a fading flower,
Which is on the head of the valley of the fat ones;
Like the premature fig before the summer,
Which, while he looketh at it,
While it is yet in his hand,
He that seeth it devoureth.

5 In that day will Jehovah of hosts
Become a crown of glory
And a diadem of excellence
To the remnant of his people,

6 And a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth on the judgment-seat,
And strength to them that drive back the battle to the gate.

7 But they also have erred through wine;
Through strong drink they have gone astray.
The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink;

They have been swallowed up by wine;
They have gone astray through strong drink;
They have erred in vision,
They have stumbled in judgment.
8 For all tables are full of nauseous vomiting,
So that no place is unoccupied.
9 Whom shall he teach knowledge?
And whom shall he make to understand doctrine?
Them that are weaned from the milk?
Them that are withdrawn from the breasts?
10 For precept must be on precept, precept on precept;
Instruction on instruction, instruction on instruction;
Here a little, there a little.
11 For with stammering lips will he speak to this people,
And with a foreign tongue.
12 For he said to them, This is the rest;
Cause the weary to rest;
And this is the refreshing;
And they refused to hear.
13 The word of Jehovah shall therefore be to them
Rule upon rule, rule upon rule;
Instruction upon instruction, instruction upon instruction;
Here a little, there a little;
Therefore they shall go, and shall fall backward,
Shall be broken, and snared, and taken.
14 Therefore hear the word of Jehovah, ye scornful men,
Who govern this people, which is in Jerusalem.
15 Because ye have said,
We have struck a league with death,
And with hell have we made a compact;
When the overflowing scourge shall pass through,
It shall not come to us;
For we have made falsehood our refuge,
And under vanity have we hidden ourselves.
16 Wherefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah:
Behold, I will lay in Zion a stone, a stone of trial,
A precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.
He that believeth shall not make haste.
17 And I will lay judgment to the line,
And righteousness to the measure. [658]
The hail shall sweep away the reliance of falsehood,
And the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.
18 And your compact with death shall be disannulled;

[658] Or, Plummet.

Your agreement with hell shall not stand;
When the overflowing scourge shall pass through,
Then shall ye become a treading down to it.
19 From the time that it shall pass,
It shall seize you every morning,
And shall pass every day by day and by night;
And it shall be that terror [659] alone
Shall cause them to understand the report.
20 For the bed is short, so that it is not enough;
The covering shall be narrow for wrapping,
21 For as in Mount Perazim will Jehovah stand up,
And as in the valley of Gibeon will he be angry; [660]
To do his work, his strange work;
To perform his act, his strange act.
22 Now therefore be ye not mockers,
Lest your chains be more firmly fastened;
For I have heard from the Lord Jehovah of hosts a consumption,
And a completion on the whole earth.
23 Listen ye, and hear my voice;
Hearken, and hear my speech.
24 Doth the ploughman plough every day, that he may sow?
Doth he open and break the clods of his field?
25 When he hath leveled its surface,
Will he not then scatter fitches, and sow cummin,
And allot wheat in measure, and barley measured,
And spelt in its order?
26 His God instructeth him,
And teacheth him what is right.
27 Certainly vetches shall not be thrashed with a toothed instrument,
Nor shall the wheel of a cart be turned round on the cummin;
For vetches are beaten with a staff,
And cummin with a rod.
28 Though wheat be bruised,
He doth not bruise it continually,
Nor always cause the wheel of his cart to grind it,
Lest he crush it with its teeth.
29 This also hath proceeded from Jehovah of hosts,
Who is wonderful in counsel,
And majestic in procedure.

[659] Or, Agitation of mind.
[660] Or, He will make a noise.

Translation: Chapter 29

CHAPTER 29

1 Alas! Ariel, Ariel,
The city which David inhabited,
Add ye year to year,
That the lambs may be slain.

2 Yet I will bring Ariel into distress,
And there shall be grief and sorrow,
And it shall be to me as Ariel.

3 And I will encamp against thee round about,
And will attack thee with a military force,
And will erect ramparts against thee.

4 Then shalt thou be brought low,
Thou shalt speak out of the earth,
And thy speech shall come out of the dust,
And thy voice shall be like that of a sorcerer out of the earth,
And thy speech shall mutter out of the dust.

5 And the sound of thy foreigners shall be as the small dust,
And the multitude of thy mighty men as the passing chaff,
And it shall be in a moment suddenly.

6 Thou shalt be visited by Jehovah of hosts
With thunder, and earthquake, and great noise,
With whirlwind and tempest,
And with the flame of devouring fire.

7 And as a dream of a vision of the night shall be
The multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel,
Of every one that fighteth,
And that raiseth fortifications against her,

And that distresseth her.
8 It shall therefore be
As when a hungry man dreameth, and behold! he eateth,
But when he awaketh, his soul is empty;
And as when a thirsty man dreameth, And behold! He drinketh,
But when he awaketh, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite;
So shall be the multitude of all the nations
That fight against Mount Zion.
9 Tarry and wonder;
They are blinded and they blind;
They are drunken, but not with wine;
They stagger, and not with strong drink.
10 For Jehovah hath overpowered you with the spirit of slumber,
And hath closed your eyes;
Your prophets And principal seers
He hath struck with darkness.
11 Therefore every vision hath become to you
As the words of a sealed book;
Which if they deliver to one who knoweth letters,
And say, Read in it, I pray,
Then shall he say, I cannot,
For it is sealed:
12 And if the book be delivered to one who hath not learned letters,
And it be said, Read in it, I pray,
Then shall he say, I know not letters.
13 Therefore the Lord saith:
Because this people draw near to me with their mouth,
And honour me with their lips,
And have removed their heart far from me,
And their fear toward me hath been taught by the commandment of men;
14 Therefore, behold! I add to do
A wonderful work among this people,
A miracle and a prodigy;
For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,
And the prudence of their prudent men shall vanish away.
15 Wo to them that conceal themselves from Jehovah,
That they may hide counsel;
For their works are in the dark, and they say,
Who seeth us? and, Who knoweth us?
16 Is your turning reckoned like potters clay?
Doth a work say of its author, He did not make me?
And doth a thing framed say of its framer, He did not understand?
17 Is it not yet a little, a little,
And Lebanon shall be changed into Carmel,

And Carmel shall be reckoned a forest?
18 And in that day shall the deaf hear
The words of the book,
And the eyes of the blind shall see
Out of obscurity and out of darkness.
19 Then shall the humble again take joy in Jehovah,
And the poor of men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
20 For the violent man is brought to nought,
The mocker is despised;
And they who hastened early to iniquity are ruined.
21 Who make a man to offend in word,
Who have laid snares for him that reproveth in the gate,
And have turned aside the righteous man for nothing.
22 Therefore Jehovah, who redeemed Abraham,
Speaketh thus to the house of Jacob:
Jacob shall not now be confounded,
Nor shall his face now become pale.
23 For when he shall see in the midst of him
His children, the work of my hands,
They shall sanctify my name,
They shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
They shall fear the God of Israel.
24 Then they that erred in spirit shall learn understanding,
And the murmurers shall learn doctrine.

Translation: Chapter 30

CHAPTER 30

1 Wo to the rebellious [661] children, saith Jehovah,
That they may take counsel, and not from me;
That they may cover a secret, [662] and not from my Spirit;
That they may add sin to sin.

2 Who set out that they may go down into Egypt,
And have not inquired at my mouth;
Strengthening themselves with the strength of Pharaoh,
And trusting in the shadow of Egypt.

3 But the strength of Pharaoh
Shall become to you shame;
And reliance on the shadow of Egypt
Shall become disgrace.

4 For his princes were in Zoan,
And his ambassadors came to Hanes.

5 All shall be ashamed
Of a people that will not profit them,
And will not become a help,
And will not yield advantage,
But will become shame,
And even disgrace.

6 The burden of the beasts of the south.
In the land of trouble and anguish,
The lion and the stronger lion,
The viper and the flying serpent;

[661] Or, Perverse.
[662] Or, That they may pour out a pouring out.

While they shall carry their riches
On the shoulders of young asses,
And on the bunches of camels,
To a people that will not profit them.
7 Surely the Egyptians are vanity,
And shall help in vain.
Therefore have I cried to her,
Their strength is to sit still.
8 Now go, and write this vision on a tablet before them,
And engrave it in a book,
That it may be till the last day,
For ever and ever.
9 For this is a rebellious people,
Lying children,
Children who refuse to hear the law of Jehovah.
10 Who say to the seers, Do not see,
And to the foreseers, Do not foresee to us right things;
Speak ye to us flatteries,
See ye errors.
11 Go out of the way;
Turn aside from the path;
Cause the Holy One of Israel
To depart from our presence.
12 Therefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel:
Because ye have disdained this word,
And have trusted in violence and wickedness,
And have rested on it;
13 Therefore shall your iniquity be to you
Like a breach falling,
Like the bulging out in a lofty wall,
The fall of which comes suddenly and unexpectedly.
14 And the breaking of it shall be
As the breaking of a potter's vessel,
Which is broken without mercy;
And in its breaking there is not found a sherd
To carry fire from the hearth,
Or to draw water from a well.
15 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah,
The Holy One of Israel:
In rest and quietness shall you be safe;
In peace and confidence shall be your strength;
But ye would not.
16 And ye said, No, but we will flee on horses;
Therefore shall ye flee;

We will ride on the swift;
Therefore they that shall pursue you shall be more swift.
17 A thousand as one from the face of the rebuke of one,
From the face of the rebuke of five shall ye flee,
Until ye shall be left
As the mast of a ship on the top of a mountain,
And as a banner on a hill.
18 Therefore will Jehovah wait for you,
That he may have compassion on you;
And therefore will he be exalted,
That he may have compassion on you;
For Jehovah is a God of judgment:
Blessed are all they that wait for him.
19 Surely the people in Zion shall dwell in Jerusalem:
Weeping thou shalt not weep;
With compassion will he have compassion on thee;
At the voice of thy cry, as soon as he shall hear it,
He will answer thee.
20 When the Lord shall have given to you
Bread of anguish
And water of affliction,
Thy rain shall not be withheld,
And thine eyes shall see thy rain.
21 Then shall thine ears hear a word behind thee,
Saying, This is the way;
Walk ye in it;
Whether ye go to the right,
Or go to the left.
22 Then shall ye profane
The covering of the graven images of thy silver,
And the covering of thy molten gold;
And thou shalt put it away from thee as a menstruous cloth,
And shalt say to it, Depart. [663]
23 Then will he give rain to thy seed,
When thou shalt have sowed the ground,
And bread of the produce of the earth;
And it shall be plentiful and fat;
And in that day thy cattle
Shall feed in large pastures.
24 Thine oxen also,
And the young asses that labour the ground,
Shall eat clean provender,
Which shall be winnowed with the shovel

[663] Or, Begone!

And with the sieve.
25 And it shall come to pass,
That on every high mountain,
And on every lofty hill,
Shall be streams, streams of waters,
In the day of the great slaughter
When the towers shall have fallen.
26 And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun,
And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold,
As the light of seven days,
In the day when Jehovah
Shall have bound up the breach of his people,
And shall have healed the stroke of their wound.
27 Behold! the name of Jehovah cometh
From a distant place:
His face burneth,
And the burden is heavy;
His lips are full of indignation,
And his tongue as a devouring fire.
28 And his breath, as an overflowing torrent,
Shall divide even to the neck;
To sift the nations with a useless sieve;
And on the cheeks of the peoples
There shall be a bridle causing to err.
29 You shall have a song, as in the night
When a festival is kept,
And gladness of heart,
As of him that moveth to a pipe,
That he may come to the mountain of Jehovah,
To the Mighty One of Israel.
30 And Jehovah shall cause to be heard the power of his voice,
And shall cause to be seen the descent of his arm,
With rage of countenance,
And with the flame of devouring fire,
With scattering, with flood, and with hailstones.
31 Verily by the voice of Jehovah shall the Assyrian be crushed,
Who smote with a rod.
32 And in every passage shall be the fastened staff,
Which Jehovah shall lay upon him
With tabrets and harps,
And with battles of lifting up
Shall he fight against her.
33 For Tophet is ordained since yesterday;
Yea, for the king it is prepared:

He hath made it deep and large;
The pile of it is fire, and much wood;
The breath of Jehovah, like a torrent of brimstone,
Doth kindle it.

Translation: Chapter 31

CHAPTER 31

1 Wo to them that go down into Egypt for help,
And who rely on horses,
And who trust to chariots, because they are numerous,
And to horses, because they are very strong,
And have not looked to the Holy One of Israel,
Nor have sought Jehovah.

2 Yet he also is wise:
Therefore he will bring evil,
And will not make void his words;
He will rise up against the house of the evil-doers,
And against the aid of the workers of vanity.

3 And verily the Egyptian is a man, and not God;
And his horses are flesh, and not spirit.
Therefore, as soon as Jehovah shall stretch out his arm,
The helper shall fall,
And he who is helped shall fall down,
And all shall fail together.

4 For thus hath Jehovah said to me:
As the lion roareth,
And the young lion for his prey,
Against whom, if a multitude of shepherds be gathered together,
He shall not be alarmed by their cry,
And shall not humble himself on account of their noise;
Thus will Jehovah of hosts come down
To fight for Mount Zion,
And for its hill.

5 As birds which fly,
So will Jehovah of hosts defend Jerusalem;
Defending, he will deliver it,
And passing over, he will preserve it.
6 Return ye,
As ye have made a deep revolt,
O children of Israel!
7 For in that day shall a man cast away
The idols of his silver,
And the idols of his gold,
Which your hands have made for you, a sin.
8 Then shall the Assyrian fall by the sword, not of a mighty man;
And the sword, not of a man, shall devour him;
And by flight shall he seek safety from the face of the sword,
And his young men shall melt away.
9 He shall pass to his stronghold through fear,
And his princes shall tremble at the banner, saith Jehovah,
Who hath a fire [664] in Zion,
And who hath a furnace in Jerusalem.

[664] Or, Who is to him a fire.

Translation: Chapter 32

CHAPTER 32

1 Behold! a king shall reign in righteousness,
And princes shall rule in judgment.
2 And that man shall be
As a hiding-place from the wind,
As a covert from the rain,
As streams of waters on dry ground,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
3 Then the eyes of them that see shall not be closed up,
And the ears of them that hear shall hearken.
4 And the heart of fools shall be eagerly directed to knowledge,
And the tongue of stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.
5 No longer shall the base man be called liberal,
Nor shall the parsimonious man be called bountiful.
6 For the vile person will speak vileness,
And his heart will contrive iniquity,
To commit wickedness,
That he may utter mockery against Jehovah,
That he may make empty the hungry soul,
And that he may withhold drink from him that is thirsty.
7 The instruments of the covetous man are evil; [665]
He contriveth wickednesses,
That he may deceive the simple by lying words,
And that he may speak against the poor man in judgment.
8 But the liberal man shall devise liberal things,

[665] Or, The measures are evil.

And in acting liberally he shall make progress.
9 Ye women at ease, arise;
Hear my voice, ye careless daughters;
Hearken to my speech.
10 Days above a year shall ye tremble, ye careless women;
For the vintage shall fail,
And the gathering shall not come.
11 Tremble, ye women that are at ease;
Be troubled, ye careless women;
Strip you, make you bare, gird your limbs.
12 Mourning over the udders,
Over the pleasant fields,
Over the fruitful vine.
13 There shall come up the thorn and brier
On the land of my people,
Even on all the houses of gladness in the city of rejoicing.
14 For the palace shall be forsaken;
The noise of the city shall be left;
The tower and the fortress
Shall be reduced to dens for ever,
Where wild asses may delight themselves,
And where flocks may feed.
15 Till the Spirit be poured out upon you from on high,
And the wilderness become a cultivated field,
And the cultivated field be reckoned like a forest.
16 And judgment shall dwell in the wilderness,
And justice shall have its abode in the cultivated field.
17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace;
The effect of righteousness shall be
Safety and quietness for ever.
18 And my people shall dwell in a tabernacle of peace,
And in safe dwellings,
And in quiet resting-places.
19 And in coming down the hail shall turn aside on the forest,
And the city shall be situated in a low place.
20 Blessed are ye who sow on all waters,
Who send forth the feet of the ox and of the ass.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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Hebrew Words and Phrases

- גדלתי: 1
- גדלתי: 1: 1
- ובביתי: 1
- כי: 1 2
- לעולם: 1
- א: 1 2 3 4
- אדוני: 1
- אדם: 1 2 3
- אולמא: 1
- און: 1 2
- איי: 1
- איים: 1
- אילים: 1
- אים: 1
- איש: 1 2
- אך: 1 2
- אל: 1 2 3 4
- אלה: 1
- אלהיו: 1 2 3
- אלהים: 1 2 3
- אלילים: 1
- אלים: 1
- אמונה: 1
- אמן: 1
- אמת: 1
- אנוש: 1
- אנש: 1

- אעיד: 1
- ארץ: 1
- אשר: 1 2 3
- את: 1 2
- מפני: קץ אתה 1
- ב: 1 2 3 4
- בדים: 1
- בה: 1 2
- בורחים: 1
- בידם: 1
- בית: 1
- פה: בכל 1
- בלתי: 1
- בעד: 1 2
- בער: 1 2
- בקע: 1
- בריחה: 1
- חפצו: יהוה בתורת 1
- גבור: 1 2
- גזע: 1
- גנות: 1
- דבר: 1 2
- דודי: 1
- דמה: 1
- דרך: 1
- ה: 1 2
- האדון: 1
- הבביד: 1
- הבית: 1
- הגדלתי: 1
- הדבר: 1
- הוא: 1
- הוי: 1 2 3
- הולש: 1
- הזה: 1
- הידד: 1
- הכביד: 1 2
- הנה: 1 2 3
- הנער: 1 2
- הקל: 1 2 3
- הראה: 1
- הריחו: 1
- השמר: 1
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- ו: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
- מדרכיו: ויורנו 1
- משען: ומשענה 1
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- לו: ושקר 1
- זרים: 1 2
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- תיראו: לא 1
- לבער: 1
- ישראל: ולבני להודה 1

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- ליהוה: 1
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- לסרבה: 1
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- שמר: 1
- שנית: 1
- שפט: 1
- שפת: 1
- שקר: 1
- שרים: 1
- תאמינו: 1
- תאמנו: 1
- תורה: 1
- תקים: 1
- תשב: 1
- גדלתי: 1
- גדלתי: 1: 1
- ובביתי: 1
- כי: 1 2
- לעולם: 1
- א: 1 2 3 4
- אדוני: 1
- אדם: 1 2 3
- אולמא: 1
- און: 1 2
- איי: 1
- איים: 1

- אילים: 1
- אים: 1
- איש: 1 2
- אך: 1 2
- אל: 1 2 3 4
- אלה: 1
- אלהיו: 1 2 3
- אלהים: 1 2 3
- אלילים: 1
- אלים: 1
- אמונה: 1
- אמן: 1
- אמת: 1
- אנוש: 1
- אנש: 1
- אעיד: 1
- ארץ: 1
- אשר: 1 2 3
- את: 1 2
- מפני: קץ אתה 1
- ב: 1 2 3 4
- בדים: 1
- בה: 1 2
- בורחים: 1
- בידם: 1
- בית: 1
- פה: בכל 1
- בלתי: 1
- בעד: 1 2
- בער: 1 2
- בקע: 1
- בריחה: 1
- חפצו: יהוה בתורת 1
- גבור: 1 2
- גזע: 1
- גנות: 1
- דבר: 1 2
- דודי: 1
- דמה: 1
- דרך: 1
- ה: 1 2
- האדון: 1
- הבבוד: 1
- הבית: 1

- הגדלתי: 1
- הדבר: 1
- הוא: 1
- הוי: 1 2 3
- הולש: 1
- הזה: 1
- הידד: 1
- הכביד: 1 2
- הנה: 1 2 3
- הנער: 1 2
- הקל: 1 2 3
- הראה: 1
- הריחו: 1
- השמר: 1
- התקצף: 1
- ו: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
- מדרכיו: ויורנו 1
- משען: ומשענה 1
- ונוכחה: 1
- לו: ושקר 1
- זרים: 1 2
- זרם: 1 2 3
- חבש: 1 2
- חזה: 1
- חזון: 1 2
- חלפ: 1
- חנה: 1
- חנף: 1
- חסן: 1
- חקקים: 1
- טוב: 1 2
- יבא: 1
- יהוה: 1
- יועף: 1
- יועץ: 1
- יחיה: 1
- יכח: 1
- יעד: 1
- יעערו: 1
- יקרא: 1
- ישר: 1 2
- כ: 1
- כי: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
- טוב: כי 1 2

- אל: עמנו כי 1
- כלה: 1 2 3
- כלי: 1
- כן: 1 2
- כרמל: 1
- ל: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- לא: 1 2
- יוכל: לא 1
- כן: לא 1 2
- עז: לא 1
- עף: לא 1 2
- תהיה: לא 1
- תיראו: לא 1
- לבער: 1
- ישראל: ולבני להודה 1
- לחש: 1 2
- ליהוה: 1
- לכם: 1
- לכן: 1 2
- חכמה: ללא 1
- כח: ללא 1
- לסרבה: 1
- למד: 1
- לעולם: 1
- הארף: לערץ 1
- ם: 1 2
- מ: 1
- תיבה: באמצע סתומה מ 1
- מאשרים: 1
- מדהבה: 1 2
- מהר: 1
- בז: הש שלל מהר 1
- מועד: 1 2
- מועף: 1
- מישרים: 1
- מכתבים: 1
- מלכם: 1
- מעם: 1
- מפני: 1
- מקדם: 1
- מקדש: 1
- מראה: 1 2 3
- משחיתים: 1
- משל: 1

- ומשענה: משען 1
- משפח: 1
- משפט: 1
- משקרות: 1
- נא: 1
- נבלה: 1
- נבקיענה: 1
- נגש: 1
- נדיבים: 1
- נהרצה: 1
- נוח: 1
- נחה: 1 2
- נכאים: 1
- נפל: 1
- נצר: 1
- נקיצנה: 1
- נראה: 1
- סוררים: 1 2
- ספה: 1 2 3
- סקר: 1
- סרים: 1 2
- ע: 1 2
- עבר: 1 2
- עברה: 1
- עדים: 1
- עולם: 1
- עון: 1
- עור: 1
- עזב: 1
- על: 1 2 3 4
- כן: על 1
- על-כן: 1
- עלם: 1 2
- עלמה: 1 2
- עם: 1
- עמים: 1
- עמל: 1 2
- ער: 1
- מואב: ער 1
- עשיריה: 1 2 3
- עשירית: 1
- פושעים: 1
- פז: 1
- פליטת: 1

- פלשת: 1
- פקד: 1
- פשע: 1
- צדקה: 1
- צור: 1
- ציה: 1
- ציים: 1 2 3
- צירים: 1
- צעקה: 1
- קדם: 1
- קדש: 1 2
- קיר: 1
- קפד: 1
- רבים: 1
- רוח: 1 2 3 4
- רוע: 1
- ריח: 1
- רעה: 1 2 3 4 5
- רעו: 1 2
- אלל: רפאי 1
- ישוב: שאר 1
- שב: 1
- משדי: שד 1
- שדד: 1 2
- שדי: 1 2
- שול: 1
- מהרשות: שיוצאים 1
- של: 1
- שמן: 1 2
- שמר: 1
- שנית: 1
- שפט: 1
- שפת: 1
- שקר: 1
- שרים: 1
- תאמינו: 1
- תאמנו: 1
- תורה: 1
- תקים: 1
- תשב: 1
- רזי: 1
- שלח: 1
- אדום: 1
- או: 1 2 3

- אוי: 1 2
- און: 1
- אל: אור 1
- איר: 1
- אך: 1
- אל: 1
- אלה: 1 2
- אם: 1 2 3 4
- אמללו: 1
- אמר: 1
- אניה: 1
- אנשי: לצון 1
- אף: 1
- ארות: 1 2
- ארי: 1 2
- אל: ארי 1
- אריאל: 1 2
- ארמון: 1
- אשם: 1 2
- אשר: 1 2 3
- אליו: ממנו אשר 1
- את: 1 2
- אתם: 1
- ב: 1
- באים: 1
- בה: 1
- קציר: בהם 1
- בחן: 1
- ביד: 1
- קציר: ביום 1
- בלקה: 1
- במו: 1
- במי: 1
- במלחמה: 1
- בסאסאה: 1
- בריח: 1
- ברית: 1 2
- ברכה: 1
- בשלחה: 1
- בתי: 1
- גבה: 1
- גבר: 1 2
- הנום: גיא 1
- גלגל: 1

- דומה: 1
- ה: 1
- ההרס: 1
- הוי: 1
- הורי: 1 2
- הזה: 1
- החרס: 1
- הכרמל: 1
- הנה: 1 2 3
- העמיקו סרה: 1
- הפך: 1
- הפככם: 1
- הר: 1
- הרס: 1
- ו: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- והיח: 1
- זמיר: 1
- ח: 1
- חאט: 1
- חורש: 1
- חזה: 1 2
- חזות: 1
- חזים: 1
- חלה: 1
- חק: 1
- חרו: 1
- חרפה: 1
- חרש : 1
- יאור: 1
- לו: רב ידיו 1
- ימים: 1
- יסד: 1
- ובל: יפלו 1
- יצא: 1
- יצר: 1
- יקשון: 1
- ישב: 1
- ישר: 1
- כאשר: 1
- כדור: 1
- כחנים: 1
- כי: 1 2 3 4 5
- כל: 1 2
- כלה: 1

- כלי: 1
- כנען: 1 2
- כנעניה: 1
- כנף: 1
- ל: 1 2
- לא: 1
- איש: לא 1
- לו: שם לא 1
- אחד: לאחד 1
- לאשר: 1 2 3
- לוץ: 1
- צר: לחם 1
- לחש: 1
- מסכה: לנסך 1 2
- לצון: 1
- לצים: 1
- מ: 1
- מאשר: 1
- מדמנה: 1
- מוסדה: 1 2
- מוסרים: 1
- מורה: 1 2
- מורים: 1 2
- מזח: 1
- מטה: 1
- יתנני: מי 1
- מלמדה: 1
- ממרהק: 1
- מעם: 1
- מעמיקים: 1
- מפני: 1
- מצור: 1
- מרחוק: 1
- משאה: 1
- משפט: 1
- משקלת: 1
- מתים: 1
- נאמן: 1
- נביאים: 1
- נבל: 1
- נבלה: 1 2 3
- נבלים: 1
- נגילה: 1
- נגלה: 1 2

- נגש: 1
- נדור: 1
- נחלח: 1 2
- נכחות: 1
- נלוז: 1
- נמהרים: 1
- נמסן: 1 2
- נפל: 1
- נפש: 1 2 3
- נשא: 1
- נשמחה: 1
- סוררים: 1
- סכן: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- סעף: 1
- סרה: 1
- עור: 1
- עורר: 1
- עוררו: 1
- עזובת: 1
- עלי: 1
- עלי: אור 1
- עליו: 1
- עם: 1
- עמק: 1
- עקל: 1
- עקלתון: 1
- עריצים: 1 2
- ערר: 1
- עשק: 1
- פלא: 1
- פנה: 1
- פנות: 1
- פנת: 1
- צבי: 1
- צדיק: 1
- צור: 1 2
- קו: 1 2 3
- קו: קו 1
- קום: 1
- קטן: 1
- קציר: 1 2
- קרם: 1
- קשה: 1
- רב: 1 2 3 4 5

- רוב: 1 2
- רוגנים: 1
- רוה: 1
- רוח: 1 2 3 4 5 6
- רז: 1
- ריב: 1
- רפאים: 1 2 3
- רשיכם: 1
- שוב: 1
- שובה: 1 2
- שורה: 1 2 3
- שחר: 1
- שכר: 1
- שלמא: 1
- שמה: 1
- שמועה: 1 2
- שמנים: 1
- שמרים: 1
- שפת: 1
- שריקות: 1 2
- תאניה: ואניה 1
- תהו: 1
- תהו לא: דרך 1
- תהת: 1
- תורה: 1
- תורת: 1
- תנופת: יד 1
- תנין: 1
- תרן: 1

Latin Words and Phrases

- Contestatus sum testes: 1: 1
- Contestatus sum testes: 1
- Da tantum nomen inane Connubii: liceat tumulo scripsisse, Catonis Marcia: 1
- Denique apertos Bacchus amat colles: Aquilonem et frigora taxi: 1
- Educavi, vel sustuli: 1
- Enutrire: 1
- Feci magnos: 1
- Hunc mundum muliebrem appellarunt majores nostra: 1
- Jam canit extremos effoetus vinitor antes: 1
- Mors sola fatetur, Quantula sint hominum corpuscula: 1
- Nec dubium est, quin animos piorum a libidinoso coitu data opera abducere voluit Isaias, ut ad sacrum mysterium attenti forent. Et certe quamvis in conjugio, : 1
- Nictitantes oculis: 1
- Panicus: 1
- Puer: 1
- Quae ex coitu viri gravida esset futura: 1
- Quoniam Jehovae exercituum erit dies: 1
- Quoniam dies Iehovae exercituum super omnem superbum et exelsum erit: 1
- Quos ego: 1
- Residua manebit: 1
- Sibilabit ad eam: 1
- Spreverunt: 1
- Tollere liberos: 1
- Unde et aquam pedum urinam vocant; et pedes tegere pro alvum ex-

onerare: 1
- Unus Pellaeo juveni non sufficit orbis: AEstuat infelix angusto limite mundi, Ut Gyari clausus scopulis parvaque Seripho: Quum tamen a figulis munitam intraverit urbem, Sarcophago contentus erit. Mors sola fatetur, Quantula sint hominum corpuscula: 1
- ad terram terrendam: 1
- coacervare: 1
- defecerunt: 1
- et erunt in combustionem: 1
- excessus: 1
- feci: 1
- irritentur: 1
- modius: 1
- mundus: 1
- non rectum: 1
- oculis vagari: 1
- opus operatum: 1
- primi pravi: 1
- rebellarunt contra me: 1
- scelerate egerunt in me: 1
- sibilabit genti: 1
- superbum et elatum: 1
- toto ore: 1
- ulmus: 1
- usquedum: 1
- vae: 1
- vasa: 1
- vexillum: 1
- vigorem et vim: 1
- Contestatus sum testes: 1
- Da tantum nomen inane Connubii: liceat tumulo scripsisse, Catonis Marcia: 1
- Denique apertos Bacchus amat colles: Aquilonem et frigora taxi: 1
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- mundus: 1
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- vae: 1
- vasa: 1
- vexillum: 1
- vigorem et vim: 1
- Contestatus sum testes: 1: 1
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- Da tantum nomen inane Connubii: liceat tumulo scripsisse, Catonis Marcia: 1

- Denique apertos Bacchus amat colles: Aquilonem et frigora taxi: 1
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- Nictitantes oculis: 1
- Panicus: 1
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- Quae ex coitu viri gravida esset futura: 1
- Quoniam Jehovae exercituum erit dies: 1
- Quoniam dies Iehovae exercituum super omnem superbum et exelsum erit: 1
- Quos ego: 1
- Residua manebit: 1
- Sibilabit ad eam: 1
- Spreverunt: 1
- Tollere liberos: 1
- Unde et aquam pedum urinam vocant; et pedes tegere pro alvum exonerare: 1
- Unus Pellaeo juveni non sufficit orbis: AEstuat infelix angusto limite mundi, Ut Gyari clausus scopulis parvaque Seripho: Quum tamen a figulis munitam intraverit urbem, Sarcophago contentus erit. Mors sola fatetur, Quantula sint hominum corpuscula: 1
- ad terram terrendam: 1
- coacervare: 1
- defecerunt: 1
- et erunt in combustionem: 1
- excessus: 1
- feci: 1
- irritentur: 1
- modius: 1
- mundus: 1
- non rectum: 1
- oculis vagari: 1
- opus operatum: 1
- primi pravi: 1
- rebellarunt contra me: 1
- scelerate egerunt in me: 1
- sibilabit genti: 1

- superbum et elatum: 1
- toto ore: 1
- ulmus: 1
- usquedum: 1
- vae: 1
- vasa: 1
- vexillum: 1
- vigorem et vim: 1
- De his: 1
- Diesque longa videtur opus debentibus: 1
- Et erit tristis ac moerens: 1
- Exultabimus et lætabimur: 1
- Melo: 1
- Quelque trahison: 1
- Qui puras nubes, et cœli numen adorant: 1
- Rivi aggerum: 1
- Videbitis: 1
- ad fundendum fusile: 1
- baculus fundatas: 1
- facile princeps, femina princeps: 1
- geminus est sensus: 1
- genuinus est sensus: 1
- hospites: 1
- hostes: 1
- lenta: 1
- longa: 1
- mœstitia et mœror: 1
- principes: 1
- proceres: 1
- prope lucem, adventante luce: 1
- propuqnatorem: 1
- sericum: 1
- stadia: 1
- stadium: 1

German Words and Phrases

- As mirb bennoch bazu fummen: 1
- Gleichwie man erschrak, da man von Egyptian hörete; also wird man auch erschrecken, wenn man von Tyrus hören wird: 1
- Wie seyb ihr so verfehrt: 1
- muthwillen: 1
- orafel: 1
- querwege: 1
- verschmitztheit: 1

French Words and Phrases

- A quel propos? Pour quelle fin? : 1: 1
- A quel propos? Pour quelle fin? : 1
- Bailler pour une piece de pain: 1
- Ce qu'il aura espargne: 1
- Faire bresche ou overture: 1
- Follets: 1
- Il tremble: 1
- Ils se despiteront: 1
- J'ay este bien entendu et expert: 1
- Le: 1
- Loup-garou: 1
- Loups-garouz: 1
- Loyauté: 1
- Luittons: 1
- L'enfant: 1
- Remuer les affaires: 1
- a leur semblant: 1
- a pleine bouche: 1
- accueillir: 1
- entasser: 1
- on appellera: 1
- orme: 1
- prendre et ravir a toutes mains: 1
- un coustau: 1
- A quel propos? Pour quelle fin? : 1
- Bailler pour une piece de pain: 1
- Ce qu'il aura espargne: 1

- Faire bresche ou overture: 1
- Follets: 1
- Il tremble: 1
- Ils se despiteront: 1
- J'ay este bien entendu et expert: 1
- L'enfant: 1
- Le: 1
- Loup-garou: 1
- Loups-garouz: 1
- Loyauté: 1
- Luittons: 1
- Remuer les affaires: 1
- a leur semblant: 1
- a pleine bouche: 1
- accueillir: 1
- entasser: 1
- on appellera: 1
- orme: 1
- prendre et ravir a toutes mains: 1
- un coustau: 1
- A quel propos? Pour quelle fin? : 1: 1
- A quel propos? Pour quelle fin? : 1
- Bailler pour une piece de pain: 1
- Ce qu'il aura espargne: 1
- Faire bresche ou overture: 1
- Follets: 1
- Il tremble: 1
- Ils se despiteront: 1
- J'ay este bien entendu et expert: 1
- Le: 1
- Loup-garou: 1
- Loups-garouz: 1
- Loyauté: 1
- Luittons: 1
- L'enfant: 1
- Remuer les affaires: 1
- a leur semblant: 1
- a pleine bouche: 1
- accueillir: 1
- entasser: 1
- on appellera: 1
- orme: 1
- prendre et ravir a toutes mains: 1
- un coustau: 1

- A des petis enfans n'agueres sevrez: 1
- A se fier en Dieu: 1
- Afin de ne fascher les oreilles des lecteurs: 1
- Afin qu'ils mangent leur saoul: 1
- Aux despens de leurs freres: 1
- Avec mesme raison et equité: 1
- C'est à dire, Fonisseurs: 1
- C'est à dire, des enfans de Dieu: 1
- C'est-ci l Eternel: 1
- Car c'eust esté une chose trop ridicule et dont les petits enfans se fussent moquez: 1
- Car en France on n'escout point le bled sinon avec le fleau, excepté en Provence: 1
- Ce mot est deduit de verité, laquelle est tousjours accompagnee de fermeté et asseurance: 1
- Ce sera un preparatif pour les amener à repentance: 1
- Ce vaut-neant-ci: 1
- Cependant l'exposition que j'ay mise en avant est plus simple: 1
- Ces deux mots, Voici, Cestui-ci: 1
- Ces moqueurs: 1
- Ceux qui n'ont point honte de commettre leurs meschancetez devant tous: 1
- Ceux qui se levoyent de matin pour mal faire: 1
- Chantez à la vigne rouge: 1
- Comme si les meschans avoyent la bride sur le col: 1
- D'où viennent les chastimens, si non de nos pechez? S'ils sont pardonnez, aussi le sont les chastimens meritez a cause d'iceux.: 1
- De ce que la parole est au milieu de nous: 1
- De ces miracles-là: 1
- De fonds en comble: 1
- De la crainte de Dieu: 1
- De la vallee grasse: 1
- De toutes parts, ou, ligne apres ligne: 1
- Des enfans de Dieu: 1
- Des fideles et des infideles: 1
- Disant qu'ils demandent d'estre flattez: 1
- Duquel il soit le chef: 1
- En ceste vie: 1
- En sac ou cendre: 1
- Encor que les choses soyent du tout hors d'espoir: 1
- Enfans rebelles: 1
- Esperant avoir part de leur resurrection: 1
- Estans pleins de vent: 1
- Et comme faire passer la charue et la herse sur les peuples: 1

- Et les fideles sont sujets à beaucoup de miseres, voire plus que ne sont pas les reprouvez: 1
- Et les papiers des marchans espars çà et là: 1
- Et mis en chemin de salut: 1
- Et monstrer le chemin aux autres: 1 2
- Et pourtant il marque la repentance par les fruits: 1
- Et se retiennent en bride de crainte qu'ils ont d'estre fouettez: 1
- Faisoyent que la demeurance estiot plus estroite et moins libre: 1
- Il dit aussi que le juste est renversé sans raison: 1
- Il l'appelle Ariel: 1
- Ils sentiront la pesanteur de ma main: 1
- Isaie parle de ceste faveur speciale: 1
- J'ay mieux aimé le tourner, On dira: 1
- Je l'environneray: 1
- La doctrine de salut: 1
- La plaine du Jordain: 1
- La terre de droiture: 1
- Le sac et l'arrachement des cheveux: 1
- Le secours venant d'Ephraim cessara: 1
- Le voile qui cache la face de tous les peuples: 1
- Les Egyptiens: 1
- Les signes et sacramens: 1
- Leurs registres et papiers de comtes: 1
- Mais il me semble plustost qu'il se prend ici pour Helas: 1
- Mais s'estendra jusqu' a ceux qui viendront long temps apres: 1
- Ne plus ne moins que si le feu y avoit passé: 1
- Nous n'avons raison aucune d'accuser celuy qui nous frappe: 1
- Par le jugement de Dieu: 1
- Pensez y tant que vous voudrez, vous n'y entendres rien: 1
- Pour une prière articulee: 1
- Pourvenu que notre repentance ne soit hypocritique: 1
- Puis donc qu'ils sont coulpables d'une mesme ingratitude: 1
- Qu'il leur pend une horrible calamité sur leurs testes, laquelle ils ne voyent point: 1
- Qu'ils parleront bas, et comme du creux de la terre: 1
- Qu'ils peuvent savoir ce que nous faisons au monde: 1
- Qu'on renverse tout ordre: 1
- Que ces tourbillons et orages passent, et sont de petite duree: 1
- Que la playe a esté attachee au dos de l'Assyrien: 1
- Que le poete Horace s'est moqué d'une putain nommee Lydia: 1
- Que les ennemis feront en Jerusalem: 1
- Que les hommes sont enseignez à eraindre Dieu par les verges dont il les frappe: 1
- Que nous avons traduit Prière: 1

- Que nous en soyons remplis et rassassiez: 1
- Que nous regimbons contre l'esperon: 1
- Que tous apportent du ventre de la mere: 1
- Qui signifie enseigné: 1
- Quiconque se flatte en son ordure, il attirera sur sa teste infalliblement l'ire de Dieu: 1
- Sans feintise: 1
- Sera diminué: 1
- Ses organes et instrumens: 1
- Si quelqu'un est de cet advis, je n'empesche point qu'il ne le suive: 1
- Sous ceste pedagogie de la Loy: 1
- Sous des tentes de peaux: 1
- Tellement qu'il est constraint comme l'emprunter d'ailleurs quand il se courrouce: 1
- Tellement qu'ils n'ont pas mesme un pied de terre pour estre interrez: 1
- Tous les desirs et travaux des hommes: 1
- Tout ce que nous employons pour la necessité de nos freres: 1
- Toutes les fois donc que nous voyous les merchans avoir la bride sur le col pour nous ruiner: 1
- Tyran de Sicile: 1
- Voire en despit de leurs dents: 1
- Vous le verrez: 1
- avoir intelligence: 1
- ci-apres: 1
- la terre de droiture: 1
- lascheté: 1
- nos affaires: 1
- vins de garde: 1